

On Truth, the Truth of Existence and the Existence of Truth: A Dialogue with the Thought of Duns Scotus¹

Liran Shia Gordon

Abstract

In order to make sense of Scotus' claim that rationality is perfected only by the will, a Scotistic doctrine of truth is developed in a speculative way. It is claimed that synthetic a priori truths are truths of the will, which are existential truths. This insight holds profound theological implications and is used on the one hand to criticize Kant's conception of existence, and on the other hand, to offer another explanation of the sense according to which the existence of things is grasped.

Scotus' doctrine of truth is a concealed doctrine. Naturally, the concept of truth is frequently employed by Scotus; he even devotes a whole question in the sixth book of his commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* to it. This, however, is an early discussion and lacks the hallmark of his mature doctrines, i.e. the unique feature which makes the notion of truth in question a genuine Scotistic notion. The question of whether there is a genuinely Scotistic doctrine of truth at all becomes a serious research question when one notices the major role played by truth in the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, as well as that of Henry of Ghent, for whom the concept of truth in fact served as one of the keystones. It is generally accepted among Scotus scholars that although Scotus was Henry's greatest critic, his own thought draws upon Henry's notions, dialectic methods, and conceptual structures. These are adopted and remain intact throughout Scotus' criticism of Henry.² Thus the question arises, if Scotus' thought is so deeply rooted in

¹ In the interest of making the discussion accessible to the reader, quoted material is given in translation for the most part. For the sake of terminological uniformity, quotations are presented either according to the Wolter translation (and partners) or my own (without bibliographical reference).

² Though Henry is not discussed at length in the paper, he was certainly kept in mind throughout the reading/writing process. Due to space restrictions I cannot but refer the reader to important studies examining Henry's conception of truth and how it impacted Scotus and was criticized in Scotus' thought, see Steven P Marrone, *The Light of Thy Countenance: Science and Knowledge of God in the Thirteenth Century*, Studies in the History of Christian

Henry's thought and concepts, why is it that Scotus' system seems to be indifferent to the question of truth? The key to our puzzle lies in a particular straight-forward consequence of Scotus' mature thought. Scotus is famous for claiming that the intellect is rational in a diminished or qualified sense, while the will alone is fully rational. This claim, in a nutshell, holds within it the key to a new understanding of the concept of truth, for it divides between diminished truth, which is said of the intellect, and truth in a complete sense, which is said of the will. It is the aim of this paper to show that Scotus' doctrine of truth is composed of these two types of truth, and to present their full meaning alongside an exposition of Scotus' understanding of how the will perfects rationality.

I. Some preliminary remarks on Truth

This section examines Anselm and Aquinas's conception of truth as *rectitude* and *adequation of thing and intellect*, as well as the later adaptation of this notion by Scotus. After first examining Aquinas' view, we then turn to Anselm in order to show that he extends and enriches the notion beyond Aquinas.

a. Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas' discussion of truth in *De Veritate* is a good place to begin this introductory section, for his discussion catalogues the different conceptions of truth held by his predecessors while championing truth as adequation. In *De Veritate* 1.1, Aquinas distinguishes between three notions of truth:³ 1. The first focuses on the ontological character of truth. Its representatives are Augustine, who said "The true is that which is"; Avicenna who said that, "The truth of each thing is a property of the act of being which has been established for it"; and Philip the Chancellor who said that "The true is the undividedness of the act of existence from that which is." 2. The second view holds that truth is the conformity or adequation between what one thinks a thing is and what a thing is. As representatives of this type of truth, Aquinas quotes Isaac

Traditions (Brill, 2001); *Truth and Scientific Knowledge in the Thought of Henry of Ghent* (Medieval Academy of America, 1985); Stephen D Dumont, "Transcendental Being: Scotus and Scotists," *Topoi* 11, no. 2 (1992).

³ See also JF Wippel, "Truth in Thomas Aquinas," *The Review of Metaphysics* (1989): 310-11.

Israeli whom he supposes to have said that “truth is the conformity of thing and intellect,” and Anselm who said that “truth is a rectitude perceptible only by the mind.” (3) The last notion of truth, which is of less important to the current discussion, follows Hilary who says that “the true is that which declares or manifests being” and Augustine who writes that “truth is that whereby that which is shown”. Aquinas explains that while the second conception of truth captures truth in the full sense, the first conception captures truth only analogically. To explain this, Aquinas exemplifies and distinguishes the uses of analogy using the example of ‘health’. Health is said properly only of that in which health resides, e.g. in an animal. But we can also speak of medicine as healthy – as something which causes health. For this reason, we cannot properly attribute health to medicine, but refer to medicine as healthy only analogically.⁴ Truth therefore is spoken properly only when we speak of truth as the conformity of thing and intellect, and it is spoken analogically - as that which causes truth - of things as they are in themselves.

In *Sentences* I, d.19, q.5, a.1-3, Aquinas employs the notion of truth as conformity or adequation to explain how reality and the human mind are adequated to the divine mind:

1. Truth, in its full sense of truth as adequation, is “assigned to the intellect insofar as the intellect's grasp of a thing corresponds to that thing as it is in itself.” (Wippel 1995, 299)
2. The truth of the thing is truth in an imperfect and analogical way, since it is a truth only insofar as it has the potency to produce truth in the intellect. Truth in this second sense is therefore also a condition for the possibility of the primary sense of truth.
3. God, as the creator of things according to the divine exemplars, is the first measure of things and thus is the most perfect conception of truth.⁵

Truth is not the measurement itself but rather the adequation of the measure to the measured. The adequation of thing and intellect is the manner through which God's mind and the human mind are adequated. Truth thus carries a transitive property: while things are measured by the divine mind, the human mind is in turn measured by things. Wippel notes that truth as adequation can be applied both to the truth of things and the truth of the intellect, for “things may be regarded as true both in relation to the divine intellect and in relation to a human intellect.” (Wippel 1995,

⁴ Aquinas, *QDV* q. 1, a. 2, Reply.

⁵ More on God as Truth see William Wood, “Thomas Aquinas on the Claim That God Is Truth,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 51, no. 1 (2013).

315) In the order of nature, the definition of truth as adequation applies to the relation between the thing and the divine intellect; it is only afterward that we can speak of an adequation of the human intellect to the thing. A natural thing is called true according to its adequation, either to the divine intellect or to the human intellect. It is called true if “it fulfills the end to which it was ordained by the divine intellect.” A consequence of this account of adequation is that things “cannot exist except by reason of the divine intellect which keeps bringing them into being”. (*QDV* q. 1, a. 4)⁶ In adequation with the human intellect, a thing is called true if it “causes a true estimate about itself.”

b. Anselm

As was seen above, Aquinas holds that adequation and the Anselmian notion of rectitude belong to the same type of truth (the second). Anselm’s notion of rectitude is however richer than what appears in Aquinas’s analysis. Anselm begins his account of truth by an examination of the truth of statements, which is grounded upon correspondence. Williams explains that whereas a modern theory of correspondence typically appeals to a single correspondence, “Anselm’s theory invokes two correspondences,” according to which a “statement is true when it corresponds both to the way things are and to the purpose of making statements.” (Visser and Williams 2009, 42) This dual correspondence is grounded upon the fact that “when it [the statement] signifies that what-is is, it signifies what it ought to [be].” (*DV* 2, 120) By signifying what a thing ought to be, it signifies it correctly (*recte*), and when a thing is signified correctly, that signification is true, “that is, its signifying that what-is is.” And so Williams concludes that “truth is nothing other than its [the statement’s] correctness (*rectitudo*).” Anselm explains that the signification is composed of two rectitudes. The first signifies that which is invariant, and the second signifies that which is variant according to its use “because it signifies in keeping with the purpose for which it was made [by God].” (*DV* 2, 122)⁷

Anselm passes on from the truth of signification to the truth of thought and opinion, which are also grounded in rectitude. Through the voice of “the student”, the collocutor of his dialogue, he

⁶ See also *ST I*, q. 16, a. 5.

⁷ See also Sandra Visser and Thomas Williams, "Anselm (Great Medieval Thinkers)," (Oxford University Press, 2009), 45.

presents the following false deduction: “nothing can be more correctly called the truth of a thought than its rectitude. ... Therefore, if someone thinks that what-is is, he is thinking what he ought to think, and so his thought is correct. If then, a thought is true and correct for no other reason than that we are thinking that what-is is, or that what-is-not is not, its truth is nothing other than its rectitude.” (*DV* 3, 123) Strengthening his argument, the student explains that fire, by heating, is doing what it ought to do, and concludes that “the fire does the truth and acts correctly when it does what it ought to.” Anselm answers by distinguishing between a rectitude in action from necessity and from will: “when human beings do good, it is not out of necessity that they do the truth and act correctly,” and thus that “there is a natural truth in action as well as a non-natural truth [i.e. truth of necessity].” (*DV* 5, 125)

Anselm proceeds to discuss the truth of the being of things. He begins by stating that “whatever is, truly is, insofar as it is what it is in the supreme truth” and that “there is a truth in the being of all things ... in such a way that there can be no falsehood there,” so that “everything that is, is correct.” (*DV* 7, 128) This claim, that whatever is, is correct, raises immediately the question how is it that “God causes or permits anything unwisely or badly?” or “whether an evil deed ought to be?” (*DV* 8, 129) In this case, it would follow that the same thing ought to be, insofar as God permits it to be, and ought not to be, because it is evil. This problem, as will be seen later, plays a major role in Henry of Ghent and Scotus’ ontology and specifically in their understanding of essential and existential beings.

Perhaps one of the most interesting outcomes of Anselm’s doctrine of truth as rectitude, is his claim that God as the “supreme Truth” cannot be a rectitude in the same sense as the other rectitudes, since while the other rectitudes are rectified according to what they ought to do, God is not rectified according to what he ought to do. Reacting to this claim, Williams asks what Anselm means by calling God the supreme truth or rectitude, for if he claims that God holds a different kind of rectitude than the rectitudes mentioned above, what then does he mean when he speaks of the rectitude or truth of God? In the same vein, it seems that the unity, according to which “there is one truth in all true things,” is shattered. (Visser and Williams 2009, 51) Perhaps foreseeing and forestalling these problems, Anselm tried to arrange the different rectitudes into a causal dependency, claiming “this rectitude [of God] is the cause of all other truths and rectitudes, and nothing is the cause of it.” (*DV* 10, 133) Williams notes that although Anselm

managed to relate the two rectitudes as cause to caused, he was not able to determine whether these truths are of the same species or not. (see Visser and Williams, 54) As will be shown, these problems of unity, the relation between the rectitudes, and the existence of evil, continued to challenge later thinkers.

c. Scotus' Early Analysis of Truth

Scotus' early writings unfortunately offer no significant contribution to the history of the notion of truth. However, as Marrone notes, they do show that Scotus was familiar with current conceptions of truth, such as Aquinas's "adequation of object to intellect," Grosseteste's "conformity of exemplar to exemplified," Anselm's "mental rectitude," (See Marrone 2001, 400, and Wolter 1946, 111-18) as well as the notion that there are two types of measures: the absolute measure, according to which things are what they are (God) and accidental measure, whereby things serve as the measure for created minds.⁸

Scotus devotes the third question in book six of the *Questions on the Metaphysics* to "whether the true is the object of metaphysics?" In this question, Scotus discusses different types of truths. First he addresses the manner in which things manifest themselves to knowing minds. Marrone explains that "[h]ere the truth in things led to a description of 'true' already familiar from the works of Henry, as capable of manifesting itself to intellect or assimilating intellect to itself." (Marrone 2001, 404)⁹ When the truth of things is manifested to the intellect, it is converted from the truth of the thing into the truth of the intellect, a process whereby the mind becomes the object that is measured by comparison to the understood object. Scotus here follows Henry in maintaining that the intellect understands simple objects immediately. Such knowing generates simple concepts: "The idea of white conformed to whiteness and was in that sense true, regardless of conditions in the external world." (Marrone 2001, 404)¹⁰ Truths of this nature are not contrasted to falsity but rather to ignorance, i.e. the absence of particular knowledge.¹¹ But for Scotus, perception of the true is not equivalent to the non-simple knowledge of contained

⁸ Scotus, *In duos libros perihermenias*, q. 3, n. 3 (Vivès, 1:588a).

⁹ See also *QM VI*, q. 3, n. 26 (4:66).

¹⁰ See also *QM VI*, q. 3, n. 17 (4:62), and *QM I*, q. 4, n. 56 (3:112-13).

¹¹ *QM VI*, q.3, n. 32 (4:68). On Henry, see Marrone 2001, 273, 275-6.

truth which is known through intellection.¹² It is only on a more complex level, by means of an activity of the mind, that truth in relation to falsity comes to be known.¹³

Scotus explains that the referents of simple concepts are not external things or ideas, but rather the cognitive content of the concept itself. As a consequence, the building blocks of the true become internal and independent of reality, and for this reason “[t]here was therefore no separate measure against which to test a simple concept for truth or falsity.” The truth of complex propositions, on the other hand, is determined when their terms are exhibited and judged with reference to all previously considered propositions and terms. Knowledge of truth is thus, in this account, severed from the reality and truth of real things. Marrone remarks that “Duns had dared... to go further than any Augustinian... towards eliminating the question of existential import and emphasizing the logical nature of truth.” (Marrone 2001, 407) Because both the knowability and the truth of what is known is entirely grounded in an inner intelligibility of things, Scotus has no need to postulate any kind of external aid or intervening process to explain our capacity to know the truth. This position also forms the bottom line of his criticism against the theory of *divine illumination*, specifically that it is an unnecessary hypothesis “since indubitable certitude could be obtained by mind working solely in its own natural light.” (Marrone 2001, 410)¹⁴

It may perhaps be objected that the preceding account of Scotus’ view of truth is only partially accurate, insofar as it focuses on the truth of the intellect. We do, however, intend to claim that Scotus maintains an existential doctrine of truth which on the one hand is grounded in the things themselves, while on the other hand gives an account of intellectual knowledge which is not obtained immediately or naturally by the intellect.

II. Res

Anselm’s doctrine of truth as a rectitude of being, according to which “everything that is, is correct,” (*DV* 7, 128) presented us with the problem of accounting for why God causes or permits evil things to be. As shall be seen, Anselm’s confrontation with the theological problem

¹² Marrone 2001, 405.

¹³ *QM*. VI, q. 3, n. 35 (4:69).

¹⁴ See *Lect.* I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 3, nn. 165-6 (16:290-91); *Ord.* I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 4, n. 258 (3:156-57).

of evil and the reality of sin, leads us to a deeper understanding of the relation between truth and things. Before we continue, we need first to examine the notion of a thing (*res*).

According to Avicenna, *Thing (res)* and *Being (ens)* are notions impressed immediately upon the soul by a first impression (*prima impressio*) rather than being acquired from other and better known notions.¹⁵ Avicenna presents two accounts of these first impressions:

1. Analogy: Just as there are first principles which are known through themselves and ground our ability to assent to propositions, so there are first principles that are conceived *per se* and ground all conceptions: “If every conception requires a prior conception, then this state of affairs would lead either to an infinite regress or to circularity.” (Avicenna 1977, 33)
2. Bookmark. Communissima: “What is most suited to be conceived through itself is that which is common to all things, as are [the concepts] ‘thing’, ‘being’ and ‘one’.” These concepts transcend the Aristotelian categories, they are *transcendentia* and are predicated of all of them. They come prior to everything that is cognized – they are the first conceptions of the intellect.¹⁶

Aertsen explains that at first blush, the introduction of the notion of ‘thing’ does not seem to introduce anything new: “The Avicennian ‘thing’ is related to the *certitudo* of a thing, it signifies its “whatness,”” which expresses the intelligibility of the thing as what it is. What is new then, is not the introduction of an intelligible element of things, but rather the conceptual relationship between that which signifies the whatness of things, *res*, and that which signifies the existence of things, *ens*. *Res* addresses that aspect of things according to which they possess a “stable nature” (*certitudo*) which makes them be what they are, so that there is within a triangle or whiteness that by which it is a triangle or whiteness. This *certitudo* of the thing is the “proper being” (*esse proprium*) of everything and its “whatness” (*quidditas*).¹⁷ *Res* grounds an object’s stability and acts as the ground for the certainty of its cognizer. This, according to Avicenna, is to be

¹⁵ Avicenna, *Avicenna Latinus. Liber De Philosophia Prima, Sive, Scientia Divina: Iditio Critique De La Traduction Latine Midiivale*, ed. Simone Van Riet (Brill, 1977), I, ch. 5, 31-2.

¹⁶ Cf. JA Aertsen, “What Is First and Most Fundamental? The Beginnings of Transcendental Philosophy,” in *What Is Philosophy in the Middle Ages?*, ed. JA Aertsen and Andreas Speer, *Miscellanea Mediaevalia* (De Gruyter, 1998).

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 35: “Redeamus igitur et dicamus quod (. . .) est hoc quod unaquaeque res habet certitudinem propriam quae est eius quidditas.”

contrasted with the "affirmed being" (*esse affirmativum*) or existence of something, which is signified by the term *ens*.

Anselm's account of *how evil comes to be*, is developed through the notions of *res* and *ens*. In *Sentences* II, d.37, Bonaventure discusses the ontological status of sin. Augustine's statement that "the works of the devil, which are called vices, are acts but not things (*res*)," seems to entail a contradiction, because vices are acts and an act denotes a difference of being or a thing. And so it seems to follow that Bonaventure affirms that vices are differences of being, while denying that they are things or beings – which is impossible.¹⁸ Bonaventure explains that *res* can be said in three ways: commonly, properly and more properly. Commonly *res* is derived from *reor/reris*, i.e. *res* of thought "I/you reason" and addresses everything that falls under cognition. Properly, *res* is derived from *ratus/rata/ratum* – as ratified or valid *res*. In this sense, a thing is said to be not only in regard to the mind but also in reality, in itself or in another (as accident), and is convertible with *ens*. More properly, *res* is derived from *ratus/rata/ratum*, and is said of ratified things which are in reality through themselves and not through another, i.e. only of substantive beings.

Whereas for Avicenna, *res* is the primary transcendental which expresses the quiddity or *certitude* of something, for Thomas, *ens* enjoys primacy since it expresses that by which a thing is in act. Being can only be understood as being, not from its *reality*, but from its *actuality*, from its act of being, which is also the ground of the intelligibility of a thing. *Ens* is "the first intelligible... because everything is knowable insofar as it is in act." (*ST* I, q. 5, a. 2) Following Avicenna's two accounts of *res*, 'thing' is understood as a singular either outside the soul or in the soul, insofar as it is apprehended by the intellect. "Thing" as *reor/reris* is related to what is in the soul, while "thing" in the sense of *ratus* is related to what is outside the soul.¹⁹ Addressing the same problem as Bonaventure regarding the reality of sin, Aquinas extends this distinction between the two modes of *res*: 1. the primary ontological meaning of *res simpliciter* as determinate and stable being (*esse ratum et firmum*) in nature which has a quiddity or essence. 2. *res* as knowable through its essence, and thus signifying everything that is apt to enter into

¹⁸ Bonaventure, *Sent.* 2.37, dub. I (ed. Quaracchi, *Opera Omnia* II)

¹⁹ Aquinas, *Sent.* 1.25.1.4.

knowledge or into the intellect. This latter mode derived from *reor/reris* signifies things which may not have stable being in nature, such as negations and privations.²⁰

While Bonaventure and Thomas emphasize the cognizable mode of *res* when they try to explain the reality of sin as a privation of being, Henry of Ghent's point of departure is *res* in its most general mode: "The ratio of thing derived from *reor/reris* is the first in every created being." (*SQO* 34.2, 174) Henry's discussion in *Summa* 34.2 of cognizable "things" frees itself entirely from the issue of evil and sin. It occurs rather in the conceptual context of *fictitious being*, a notion which does not include a privation of being and is ontologically indeterminate. *Ens*, according to Henry, is what has a quidditative being (*esse quidditativum*) that belongs to it as a product of its relation to the form of the divine exemplar; it is what is determined by the quiddity, the *certitudo* of Avicenna. *Ens* is a *res* according to *ratio*, because "quidditative being" and "fixed being" are convertible. So while Aquinas identified *ens* according to the act of being, Henry's ontology begins not from things' actuality, but on the contrary from their essential reality. *Ens* is a ratio for Henry, and as such it is the first or original concept in the intellect as an object. *Res* in the sense of *reor/reris* is the thing's *quid intelligibile* which is grounded on *verum*, truth, according to the relation between *res* as a quidditative being and the divine exemplar, which makes truth perceptible to the mind. The character of being cannot be predicated of things if it is not considered first according to its most general sense, i.e. according to the ratio of thing in the sense of *reor/reris* - which is the ground of the relational foundation of being: "Something cannot have the character of being unless it first has the *ratio* of thing in the sense of *reor/reris*, in which the ratio of that being is founded (*foundatur*)." (*SQO* 34.2, 175)

Henry distinguishes between the *being of essence* and the *being of existence*. "[The] being of essence is... a disposition of a thing in itself by which it is what it is and nothing other than itself, related indifferently to anything else to be attributed to it." (*SQO* 27.1, 159) The being of existence is actual being that "has been acquired by the essence" and is further distinguished into two kinds: (1) diminished being within the mind, e.g. concepts, and (2) being which exists outside the mind "which is said to be the true being of the things." Existential being is also subdivided into "*esse existentiae simpliciter*" such as matter and form, and "*esse subsistentiae*", "which is the being of a thing that is supposed to subsist in itself."

²⁰ Aquinas, *Sent.* 2.37.1.1.

III. Scotus' Ontology of quidditative and existential beings

While Henry distinguishes primarily between existential and essential beings, and only secondarily between mental and extramental beings, Scotus inverts the order. His primary division is between beings within and without the mind, both of which are beings of existence.²¹ While things outside the mind are construed as actual things composed of matter and form, mental things in the soul do not have their own absolute being except “insofar (*esse secundum quid*) as [they are] related to the soul as the foundation of that being in the soul (*esse in anima*).”²² Thus mental beings do not have their own being absolutely but only derivatively, dependent on the actuality of the thinking subject.

Scotus examines Henry's threefold distinction of types of realities: opinable reality (*res* capable of being thought according to *reor/reris*), quidditative reality, and the reality of existence (reading *ratitudine* according to *ratus/rata/ratum*).²³ He agrees that impossible things possess no real being²⁴ but only a fictitious one.²⁵ But with respect to Henry's distinction between the being of essence and of existence, Scotus maintains that Henry simply misunderstood the duality of reality implied by *ens ratum* as ratified/valid being:²⁶

1. “It has of itself firm and true being, whether of essence or existence” and “it is what is first distinguished from figments, namely that to which the true being of essence or of existence is not repugnant.” (*Ord. I, d. 36, n. 48 (4:290)*).
2. Something possesses *ens ratum* only insofar as its formal content does not contain an internal repugnancy. This is a “ex se ens ratum”.

²¹ *Lect. I, d.36, n. 26 (17:467)*

²² *Ord. I, d.36, n. 36 (6:285)*: “first distinction of being seems to be into being outside the soul (*extra animam*) and being in the soul (*ens in anima*)... and the being ‘in the soul’ is other than every ‘being outside the soul’ and therefore about no entity nor about any being does it follow that, if it has diminished being in the soul, it has because of this being simply - because the being is in a certain respect, absolutely, which however is taken ‘simply’ insofar as it is compared to the soul as foundation of the being in the soul.”

²³ *Ord. I, d. 3, p. 2, n. 310 (3:188)*.

²⁴ *Ibid, n. 313 (3:190)*.

²⁵ *Ibid, n. 311 (3:189)*.

²⁶ More on Scotus' criticism and absorption of Henry's ontology see Marrone, *The Light of Thy Countenance: Science and Knowledge of God in the Thirteenth Century*, 460-80.

According to the first sense, an abstract thing such as man is not of himself “a valid being but from its efficient cause” and thus “there is never a valid being save an existent one.” Honnefelder explains that in this sense of *ens ratum*, a being is ratified only insofar as it is caused and really in existence. (Honnefelder 1990, 49) However, when *ens ratum* is considered according to the second sense, the only thing determining whether something is *ens ratum*, is whether its formal content contains an internal repugnancy or not. Scotus argues that Henry has simply misunderstood the latter kind of *ens ratum* as non-repugnance to being by concluding that the eternal understanding of a stone in the divine mind, for example, requires a second type of being for its subsistence, i.e. the being of the essence of a stone.²⁷ It follows that the dual structure found both in thinking and non-thinking beings is grounded in these two levels of *ens ratum*. The first sense of *ens ratum* refers to a being’s reality and is a product of causation or creation. The second sense of *ens ratum* refers to the whatness of a being, which is not caused or created by an external agent, but rather conditioned by the being itself insofar as it contains no internal contradiction.

Although Anselm’s terminology and the problematics to which it gives rise are no longer visible in Henry’s ontology, Henry’s system remained within Anselm’s logical structure of truth. As mentioned above, Anselm affirmed a rectitudinal difference between God and creatures with respect to causal dependency, for “this rectitude [of God] is the cause of all other truths and rectitudes, and nothing is the cause of it.” (*DV* 10, 133) Henry’s conception of *res* is rooted in the manner by which the intelligible participates in the divine intellect, for “man is not of himself a true or valid being [*ens ratum*]”, but only “insofar as he participates in the first thing as exemplar... insofar as he has an eternal relation to God as knower and exemplar.” (*Ord.* I, d. 36, n.1 (4:271)) When Scotus examines the difference between a thing and the foundation by which the thing is, he offers the opinion that every caused thing has “that whereby something is” and “what something is”. After advancing an argument based on the notion of *participation*, Scotus claims that just as created things possess their being only through a participation in God’s *esse*, so too, as a first principle of intelligibility, participation in the divine exemplar is required.²⁸ This is very similar to Anselm’s idea of ‘dual rectitudes’, and likewise suffers from the disadvantage of postulating two distinct species of truth. Against this relational position, Scotus argues that

²⁷ *Ord.* I, d.36, n.53 (6:292).

²⁸ *Ord.* I, d. 3, p. 2, n. 305 (3:186)

ratified being cannot be a product of a relation, because if it were founded by relation, then it would be founded upon that by which it is related. But that to which it is related itself needs to be ratified in order to serve as the foundation of the relation. If ratification occurs through a relation, the series will continue to infinity. Thus Scotus concludes that ratification must be internal and not through any external relation.²⁹

The same rationale can be observed in Scotus' treatment of the notion of *vestige*, which typically served as an account of the manner in which humans carry a footprint of the Divine Trinity within them. Vestige designates a similitude which is deficient or imperfect, yet leads to actual, though partial, knowledge of that of which it is a likeness. Scotus here follows Bonaventure's claim, according to which creatures are said to contain a vestige in respect to the ideas of One, True and Good. 'One' since it is "distinct from any other, looks back to God as its efficient cause". 'True', since "it has a true 'being', looks back to Him as [its] exemplar cause"; and 'Good' insofar as "it has a good 'being', it looks back to the same as [its] final cause." (Bonaventure, *Sent.* 1.3.2.4, Scholium) Scotus rejects Bonaventure's view that the vestige is composed of a threefold causal relation. Just as he rejects a real relational participation in *Truth*, following Aristotle, he also explains that all relations between creatures and God are non-mutual, and that the vestiges belong to a third absolute non-mutual relation³⁰ which is "a relation of knowledge to the knowable... as measured to the measure." He concludes that the vestige is an "absolute... in which that [non-mutual] relation is founded" which "shows in [itself] a certain unity, and form, and order." (*Ord.* I, d. 3, p. 2, nn. 295-98 (3:179-81))

This long discussion can be summarized by the following claims: 1. The argument for real participation in Truth, according to Scotus, is false. This is tantamount to a rejection of Anselm's claim that the truth of things "whereby something is," is caused by an external supreme truth. It follows that rectitude is primarily grounded internally in an absolute non-mutual relation that is contained virtually in things insofar as they are things. 2. Contrary to Henry, who postulates two types of *res*, of existence and of essence, Scotus identifies them as two aspects of *ens ratum* itself, and thus maintains that the truth of things can be addressed both according to the aspect of

²⁹ Ibid, n. 313 (3:190).

³⁰ *Ord.* I, d. 3, p. 2, n. 296 (3:180): "that those three relations belong to the three modes of relatives, this appears to be false, because... in the first two... it is a mutual relation, in the third it is not... but not all relation of creature to God is mutual... therefore every relation of creature to God is according to the third mode."

the whatness and according to their *existing there*. The argument advanced in the following section aims to convince the reader that only when the thing is understood according to the truth of its *existing-there*, can it be conceived in its full rationality.

IV. On the Intellect and Will as two perfections of rationality

As was seen, rectitude is used both in regard to the whatness of things and in an existential-teleological manner. It is the purpose of this section to show that these two rectitudes can be understood as truth of the intellect and truth of the will. Scotus explains that the division between agents which act according to nature and those acting according to will³¹ is not equivalent to the distinction between those who act necessarily and those who act contingently, because natural chains of events can be contingent, not only for us but also for God, due to impediments in the chain of causation resulting from the intervention of other natural agents. (*Quodl.* q. 16, n. 34) What constitutes a natural act is that “when the agent and patient meet in the way appropriate to the potency in question, the one must act and the other be acted upon.” (ibid. n. 13) A natural agent, although capable of producing opposite contingent effects, acts necessarily when a thing is in a position to receive its action. While natural contingent action must act with necessity when a proximate reception relation is constituted with the thing acted upon, free action can elicit opposite effects without necessity whenever there is no impediment between the agent and that which it acts upon. Thus, when proximity is established, natural action constitutes a correlative non-dependent relation, whereas free action constitutes a disjunctive dependent relation.

Scotus not only wishes to demonstrate that the will is a rational power, but by relying on Aristotle, he also equates the distinction between natural and free acts to that of irrational and rational powers, respectively.³² For while natural-contingent-acts are dependent on impediments,

³¹ For more on that See Cruz González-Ayesta, "Scotus's Interpretation of Metaphysics 9.2" (paper presented at the Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, 2009), 218. Ayesta First outlines the different senses Scotus uses nature in his writings. See *Ord.* IV, d. 43, q. 4, n. 2; *Rep* I-A, d. 10, q. 3, n. 54; *Quodl.*, q. 16, n. 13; *QM* IX, q.15, nn. 21-22 (4:680-1); See also Tobias Hoffmann, "The Distinction between Nature and Will in Duns Scotus," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen-âge* 66(1999).

³² Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 9.2, 1046b 5-8: “Each of those which are accompanied by reason is alike capable of contrary effects, but one non-rational power produces one effect; e.g. the hot is capable only of heating, but the medical art can produce both disease and health.” Aristotle, *Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, vol. 2 (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1652. See also 9.5, 1048a 8-10 (1654-1655): “Non-rational

and so determined by an external cause, a free agent “has of itself the ability to elicit contrary actions as regards the same thing.” (*QM IX*, ch.15, n. 73 (4:698)) Thus, whereas the will is a rational power absolutely, for it wills or nills between opposites, the intellect, as a natural agent, is a rational power only in a qualified way since it cannot but be “determined of itself in regard to what it directs” (*ibid.*, n.38 (4:685)):

[T]o have opposites in its power is something a rational potency possesses primarily and *per se* as a proper attribute of it qua rational. For this is what distinguishes it from an irrational potency. (*ibid.*, n.61 (4:694))

Nevertheless, although the intellect is not a rational power properly, it might be considered rational in two qualified senses. Firstly, because it acts under the will's direction (*ibid.*, n. 36), secondly, as a precondition for willing, since the will wills only with respect to the range of possibilities presented by the intellect.³³

V. The Truth of the Will

Scotus' dual conception of *ens ratum*, which is taken according to its formal content as “*ex se ens ratum*,” as well as insofar as it “has of itself firm and true being, whether of essence or existence,” (*Ord. I*, d.36, n.48 (6:291)) corresponds to two levels of truth. The first is the truth of things insofar as they are intelligible, i.e. insofar as their terms contain no internal contradiction; the second level of truth obtains when things have of themselves “firm and true being”. But what does this mean? If we were to adhere to Henry's line of argument, one could maintain that just as there are two types of being, that of essence and that of existence, there should be two types of truth corresponding to them. Such a view, it is clear, would be rejected by Scotus. Scotus' view of the hierarchy of rationality conceives the rationality and truth of the intellect to be of lesser perfection than that of the will, which makes it clear that the distinction between the truths is

potentialities are all productive of one effect each but the rational produce contrary effects, so that they would produce contrary effects at the same time.”

³³ *Ibid.*, n.38 (4:685): “[the intellect] not only as regards its own acts is it not rational, but it is not fully rational even as regards the external acts it directs. As a matter of fact, speaking precisely, even as regards its intrinsic acts it is irrational. It is rational only in the qualified sense that it is a precondition for the act of a rational potency.” More on the relation between the will and the intellect see Mary Beth Ingham, “Did Scotus Modify His Position on the Relationship of Intellect and Will?,” *Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales* 69, no. 1 (2002).

formal, just like the distinction between intellect which acts according to necessity, and the will which acts freely. But, then again, what does ‘truth of the will’ mean?

The common medieval doctrine of voluntarism holds that when one chooses one thing, it is open for him to choose otherwise. Hoffmann explains that Scotus asks an additional question: “where does the structure of my willing come from? ... what causes the order in my wanting?... One might say that in this case the order came from the consideration of an option that was judged... . But Scotus allows for a different possibility: the order or structure of my willing need never have been considered by the intellect at all, even as a discarded option. My will itself can structure its own willing [of one good to another].” (Hoffmann 2013, 1072) Generally, medieval thinkers hold that the intellect does not stand in any real relation to its objects, but only a relation of reason. Relations of reasons are not part of reality, rather they are constructed by the intellect as a result of the consideration of things in opposition to others.³⁴ Hoffmann explains that this dual conception of willing suggests that relations of reason can be subdivided into two groups: (1) relations of reasons which are intellect-dependent, i.e. which are established according to intellectual comparisons, and (2) relations which are will-dependent, i.e. which are ordered according to the will’s volitions. Hoffmann’s position finds support in certain passages of Scotus.³⁵ However it also seems that Scotus came to realize that though the relation of the will to its objects is not a real relation, it is also not a strict relation of reason: “[this] relation is not real, because it is not from the nature of the object in itself... nor is it a relation of reason, because the power ‘causing the comparison’ is not reason, - whether intellect or imagination is said to be such a comparing power, or anything else.” (*Ord. I, d. 45, nn. 8-11 (4:373-375)*)³⁶ What kind of relation is it then and what purpose does it serve?

Hoffmann explains that by practical deliberation, which is carried out by the intellect and prior to any act of the will, things are ordered in the mind according to the desired good, for otherwise the will acts blindly.³⁷ It seems Hoffmann is very well aware that it is unclear what additional

³⁴ *Ord. I, d. 2, p. 2. qq. 1-4, n. 395 (2:353)*

³⁵ *Ord. I, d. 30, n. 41 (4:186-188)* supports Hoffman’s position: “hence just as in eternity he compares his will ‘as creative’ to the soul of Antichrist as possible for a certain time, so he compares in eternity his will ‘as creating’ to the soul of Antichrist as actually existing for the now for which he wishes to create that soul; and these indeed are two relations of reason, as they are two extremes, - but each is eternal, although not for eternity.”

³⁶ The continuous repetition of this point in these paragraphs suggests its importance.

³⁷ *Ord. III, d. 33, n. 76 (10:175).*

purpose the will serves in this theory and thus concludes: “Nonetheless, one remains free to will either in conformity with one’s deliberation or not. When one wills contrary to a practical judgment, then the order of the goods correlated by the will does not match the order of those correlated by the intellect.” (Hoffmann 2013, 1076)³⁸ This conclusion, however, holds little power to convince us that that act of the will grounds rationality in the fullest sense, for it is not clear what additional rationality comes through the will which cannot just as well come from the intellect. Hoffman makes a more cogent point when he explains that when God decides what to create, “[t]he decision about which creatures should exist is not derived from a practical dictate by the divine intellect, but rather is freely determined by the divine will itself.”(ibid., 1084) This vague *should exist* can be taken in two senses: 1. ‘Should exist’ insofar as it serves other desirable things. 2. That the idea should be put into existence, not just insofar as it is in this place as opposed to that place, but insofar as it should exist as placed or positioned at all. Whereas the first sense of ‘should’ addresses existence as that which serves a whatness and purpose, the second brings to the fore the plain fact that all existence, be it what it may, needs to be placed (and receive other related properties). Placement is [1] common to things which exist within a world, and [2], conditions existing-things in a manner which is not derived from their whatness. Let us now examine Scotus’ conception of place.

VI. Essential and Existential Place

Scotus formulates five relationships within Aristotle’s conception of place: 1. to be in place of actuality, i.e. that the place is really distinct from the contained body. 2. to be in a determined place because of equality of the bodies, i.e. equality of the surface size. 3. that the parts of the contained body correspond to the parts of the containing body. 4. to be in a place in determinate manner as excluded from another. 5. to be in place naturally or violently.³⁹ As Suarez-Nani

³⁸ See also *Lect III*, d. 33, n. 71, (21:292).

³⁹ *Ord. II*, d. 2, p. 2, qq. 1-2, n. 216 (7:253); *Lect. II*, p. 2, q. 2, n. 2, n. 191 (18:161). See also Richard Cross, *The Physics of Duns Scotus: The Scientific Context of a Theological Vision*(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 194-5; Tiziana Suarez-Nani, "Angels, Space, and Place: The Location of Separate Substances According to John Duns Scotus," in *Angels in Medieval Philosophical Inquiry: Their Function and Significance*, ed. Isabel Iribarren and Martin Lenz, *Studies in Medieval Philosophy* (Ashgate, 2008), 99; Olivier Boulnois, "Du Lieu Cosmique À L’espace Continu? La Représentation De L’espace Selon Duns Scot Et Les Condamnations De 1277," in *Raum Und*

notes, whereas the first four relations treat the body as a quantum, only the fifth relates to it as a natural entity.⁴⁰ Adopting this distinction between a body taken as a quantum and a body taken naturally, Scotus lays the groundwork for a break with the Aristotelian conception of place. According to Aristotelian physics, body requires place, while place is independent of body. The primacy of sublunar place over body grounds the absolute immobility of place and the fixity of its directions, e.g. up and down. It also underpins the distinction between natural and violent acts of physical bodies, as when a stone falls naturally downward, or flies violently upwards when it is thrown.⁴¹ Scotus explains that when a body shifts from one place to another, the two places are always of the same size and shape, and place thus remains incorruptible insofar as a body always occupies the same dimensions. Place, as the container, remains the same not in actuality, but only mathematically according to its dimensions. The absolute character of place is thus separated from its natural character, which is contingent. Up and down are therefore only products of the contingent and relative actuality of bodies and not properties of absolute place. Place is “incorruptible mathematically (*secundum aequivalentiam*), but is not incorruptible accidentally (*per accidens*).” (Lang 1983, 253-4)⁴² Whereas the Aristotelian conception of place holds directionality to be an essential property of place, Scotus severs place from its directionality and thus distinguishes between place taken in itself, and place as taken according to the contingent actuality of the objects. By laying directionality aside, Scotus is able to distinguish between the thing as it could be in any possible world, and the thing as it exists in this or that specific physical setting. Accordingly, he is able to determine when things act naturally, as when things fall down, and when they act violently, as when an external force acts against natural inclination, e.g. a stone is thrown upward. It is important to note that this distinction does not imply that Scotus holds that bodies do not have places, but rather that their specific places are by nature contingent. As a result, the immobility and incorruptibility of place is no longer tied to the containing cosmos, for according to Scotus, place is immobile and incorruptible only

Raumvorstellungen Im Mittelalter, ed. Jan A. Aertsen and Andreas Speer, *Miscellanea Mediaevalia* (Berlin ; New York: de Gruyter, 1998), 320.

⁴⁰ Suarez-Nani, "Angels, Space, and Place: The Location of Separate Substances According to John Duns Scotus," 99-100.

⁴¹ Helen S Lang, "Bodies and Angels: The Occupants of Place for Aristotle and Duns Scotus," *Viator* 14, no. 1 (1983): 249.

⁴² See also Pierre Duhem, *Medieval Cosmology: Theories of Infinity, Place, Time, Void, and the Plurality of Worlds*, trans. Roger Ariew (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 186.

dimensionally. However, when place is taken according to its actuality, then it comes to exist every time a body is occupying it and ceases to exist when it is no longer occupied.⁴³ Bodies, according to Scotus' view, are thus considered according to the aspects which apply to them absolutely, i.e. their dimensionality, as well as that which applies to them contingently, i.e. their specific places and relations to other bodies, including motion, from which up and down are derived. Moreover, being at motion or rest is no longer considered an internal property of thing, but one of its relative features. For this reason, Scotus explains that there is no contradiction in saying that a thing is both moving and at rest, for these terms only express relations.⁴⁴ Scotus' conception of place, a conception no longer conditioned absolutely by the outer spheres, allows him to claim for the first time that a body can be considered without having a place, i.e. as not being contained by other bodies:

Nevertheless, the opposite seems to be true according to the Catholics, for God could make a stone, not to exist in any other locating body, nor existing separately from every other body, because he could make it outside of the universe [and thus not contained by the outer spheres]; and in both ways it would be 'not in place', and yet it would be the same regarded absolutely in itself. (*Ord.* II, d. 2, p. 2, qq. 1-2, n. 231 (7:231))⁴⁵

This passage, which is part of a thought experiment based on the possibility of placing a stone so that it is not contained by anything, is carried out by Scotus precisely in order to distinguish between "two kind of 'where': One which is definite, which belongs to matter by virtue of its own proper essence insofar as it is a certain substance." The second sense of 'where', the dimensional, "belongs to matter by virtue of quantity, which is founded in matter and through which [matter] receives dimensional extension." Scotus proceeds to explain that it is the first

⁴³ *Ord.* II, d.2, p.2, qq.1-2, n.229 (7:258-9).

⁴⁴ *Quodl.*, 10.42 (248): "Take the first case, viz., that the same thing that was moving in one place was at rest in the other. There is no contradiction here any more than there is for it to be both here and there. For local motion and rest are posterior by nature to ubiety itself and hence can be varied according to variation in what is prior." This suggests that Scotus distinguishes between the thing as it is in itself which is determined internally and the thing in relation to others which is determined contingently, as a phenomenon.

⁴⁵ See as well *Quodl.*, q. 11, n. 12 (260). On the difference between Categorical and Quantitative positions see Marilyn McCord Adams, *Some Later Medieval Theories of the Eucharist: Thomas Aquinas, Gilles of Rome, Duns Scotus, and William Ockham* (Oxford University Press, 2010), 116-18. See also "Bodies in Their Places: Multiple Location According to John Duns Scotus," in *Johannes Duns Scotus 1308-2008: Investigations into His Philosophy*, ed. Ludger Honnefelder, et al., *Proceedings of »the Quadruple Congress« on John Duns Scotus* (Aschendorff Verlag, 2010).

kind of “where”, the definite kind, which makes it possible for matter to “receive its dimensional ‘where’ when a new quantity arrives, because matter founds quantity.” (*Rep IV-A*, Vat. lat. 883, d. 11, nn. 45-6)⁴⁶

VII. On the Truth of Existence

The discussion regarding the truth of the will ended up dealing with the place of material things, and consequently, at least in the background, also with the forces which govern their movement. This does not mean that the truth of the will is a matter of empirical corporality, but only that empirical corporality exemplifies the difference between essential truths and existential truths. As was explained above, existential place is not rooted in matter *per se* but rather “belongs to matter by virtue of quantity, which is founded in matter and through which [matter] receives dimensional extension.” But how is all this related to the will? One might reasonably conclude that the distinction between the truth which belongs to the essence of things and the existential truth which belongs, for example, to place, suggests no dependency of truth on the will. The will might be involved in preferring that the stone move upward than downward, or placing the stone somewhat to the left or to the right, but these are all possibilities that are presented to the will by the intellect. The will does not really contribute anything to them but existence. To understand Scotus’ point, we need to show that there is something about existential place that contains an element of rationality which is not rooted in the intellect, but in another kind of rationality. Let us examine Kant’s famous treatment of the triangle which corresponds beautifully to Scotus’ structure (note: the following examination of Kant’s philosophy is an instrumental one which is making use of Kant’s philosophy to elucidate Scotus’ point. Thus it does not aim to transcend into the Kantian discussion itself):

Give a philosopher the concept of a triangle, and let him try to find out in his way how the sum of its angles might be related to a right angle. He has nothing but the concept of a figure enclosed by three straight lines ... [and] may reflect on this concept as long as he wants, yet he will never produce anything new. He can analyze and make distinct the concept of straight line, or of an angle, or of the number three, but he will not come upon

⁴⁶ I wish to thank Oleg Bychkov for allowing me to use his forthcoming translation of this distinction.

any other properties that do not already lie in these concepts. But now let the geometer take up this question. He begins at once to construct a triangle. ... [and] through a chain of inferences that is always guided by intuition, he arrives at a fully illuminating and at the same time general solution of the question. (Kant 1998, A716-7/B44-5)

To translate this insight back into Scotus' terminology, we could say that the essence of a triangle has nothing to say about whether or not a triangle contains 180° .⁴⁷ Kant teaches us that the fact that triangles consist of angles whose sum is 180° is true *a priori*, but not analytically. That is, it is not a truth embedded within the concept of the triangle, but is rather a truth which is grounded in the nature of space, which could be otherwise. Moreover, modern mathematics has constructed various possible geometries and holds that in non-Euclidian geometries, a triangle has, in a synthetic *a posteriori* manner, more or less than 180° .⁴⁸ This means that just as the proposition "a triangle has 180° " is true only on the basis and assumption of a specific geometry, so there are numerous mathematical truths that are true synthetically *a priori* due to their actual existence.⁴⁹ Thus it follows that the Euclidean or non-Euclidean nature of the world is not

⁴⁷ Friedman explains that "[f]or us, the conjunction of "X is a triangle" with these axioms does of course imply "X's angles sum to 180° " by logic alone. ... [However] once we remember that Euclid's axioms are not the axioms used in modern formulations and... [that] our axioms for Euclidean geometry are strikingly different from Euclid's" then "it is easy to see that the claim in question is perfectly correct." Michael Friedman, "Kant's Theory of Geometry," *The Philosophical Review* 94, no. 4 (1985): 460-1.

⁴⁸ Following Kant who says that "in the concept of a figure that is enclosed between two straight lines there is no contradiction, for the concepts of two straight lines and their intersection contain no negation of a figure; rather the impossibility rests not on the concept in itself, but on its construction in space, that is, from the conditions of space and of its determination" (B268), Wiredu concludes that "[t]he existence of non-Euclidean geometries merely as logically admissible systems does not conflict with Kant's doctrine that the theses of Euclidean geometry are synthetic a priori". JE Wiredu, "Kant's Synthetic a Priori in Geometry and the Rise of Non-Euclidean Geometries," *Kant-Studien* 61, no. 1-4 (1970): 6. Against this Friedman claims that for Kant "the concept of a non-Euclidean figure remains "empty" and lacks both "sense and meaning," for "if one assumes an object of a non-sensible intuition as given... then I have not represented the possibility of an object" for my pure concept of the understanding at all, since I cannot give any intuition that would correspond to it." (B149) Friedman, "Kant's Theory of Geometry," 504. To this Carson replies that "it may be true... that only the intuitive representation of a line is adequate for mathematical reasoning, [but] it by no means follows that there can be 'no idea' of a non-Euclidian line or figure. ... [W]hat is required is that we be able to entertain the possibility of other spaces; there need be no determinate conception of what that space would be like. Kant explicitly recognizes the possibility of other creatures with different modes of intuition," Emily Carson, "Kant on Intuition in Geometry," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 27, no. 4 (1997): 503.

⁴⁹ "[T]he discovery of logically consistent systems of non-Euclidean geometry... shows conclusively that Euclid's axioms are not analytic and, therefore, that no analysis of the basic concepts of geometry could possibly explain their truth... then, there is no alternative but to appeal to a synthetic source: hence pure intuition." Friedman, "Kant's Theory of Geometry," 487.

derived in an intellectual manner but is rather tied to existence which is not just a matter of predication, to exist or not to exist, but rather refers to a *manner* of existence which applies to existing things in a synthetic *a priori* manner. What characterizes synthetic *a priori* truth is that although it is evident, its truthfulness is not contained within it analytically, but can be known only through something which does not belong to it.⁵⁰ In other words, since the intellect cannot ground synthetic *a priori* truth in itself, it follows that such truth is determined or grounded in something other than intellect. As was seen above, the intellect is characterized as a rationality which knows according to necessity. If the 180° contained by all triangles is not grounded by the intellect alone, it follows that the rationality which demonstrates the 180° of the triangle is not a rationality according to necessity like the rationality of the intellect. This does not mean that the properties of the triangle are known through something irrational, for nothing can force the concept of a triangle to contain a contradiction and still remain conceivable.⁵¹ On the contrary, the plain fact that the concept of triangle is in itself indifferent to existence, and therefore to whether it will be actualized according to Euclidian or non-Euclidian geometry, makes it possible for it to be actualized freely according to different actualized geometries, none of which is inherently preferred by the intellect.⁵² From all this, it follows that synthetic *a priori* truths do not fall under the type of rationality of the intellect, i.e. of necessity, but rather under a rationality

⁵⁰ Contrary to Leibniz's claim that "in every affirmative true proposition, necessary or contingent, universal or singular, the notion of the predicate is contained in some way in that of the subject, *praedicatum inest subjecto*. Or else I do not know what truth is." Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, "Correspondence with Arnauld," in *Leibniz: Philosophical Writings* (Dent, 1934), 73 (14 July 1686).

⁵¹ The contrary is the case, for only after determination can a concept be considered according to its objective reality: "It is, indeed, a necessary logical condition that a concept of the possible must not contain any contradiction; but this is not by any means sufficient to determine the objective reality of the concept, that is, the possibility of such an object as is thought through the concept." (A220/B267-8)

⁵² Friedman explains that while D'Alembert viewed kinematical interpretation as damaging to "pure" mathematics, since it "should be independent of and prior to mathematical physics...[and] should be developed in complete independence of the idea of motion. For Kant, on the other hand, this "mixing" of physical and mathematical ideas is not a defect but a virtue... [and such] "mixing" of physical and mathematical ideas is essential to the unity of Kant's system." Friedman, "Kant's Theory of Geometry," 481-2. Thus, just as for Scotus the will perfects the intellect, so according to Kant, mathematical physics perfects pure mathematics. Moreover, Friedman explains that this perfection, i.e. the singularization of pure and abstract mathematics by the intuition, makes mathematical proofs, as opposed to philosophical ones, concrete while remaining *a priori*. This means "every false step becomes visible (A734/B762)" which allows us "to be assured of the correctness of its substitutions and transformations." Ibid., 492-3. Following this logic, it could be said that truths of the will do not merely add contingent truths, but also perfect abstract truths into concrete truths, which make visible false steps in reasoning.

which is determined in a non-necessitated manner. The truths that fall under this type of rationality will be called truths of the will, whether the willing agent can be located or not.⁵³

Kant is famous for his so-called refutation of the *ontological argument*.⁵⁴ In it, he argues that being is not “a real predicate... that could be added to a concept of a thing,” but “merely the positing of a thing. ... In the logical use it is merely the copula of a judgment.” When considered from a logical point of view, Kant is absolutely right that predicating being of a thing adds nothing to the concept of that thing. However, when Kant states that “the actual contains nothing more than the merely possible,” he seems to fall into a fallacy. His explanation is that if the actual hundred dollar bill were to add something to the possible hundred dollars, it would then be the case that the concept of a hundred dollars “would not express the entire object and thus would not be the suitable concept of it.” Against this position held by Kant, we have shown that the distinction between conceptual truths of the intellect and existential truths of the will is exactly what enables the claim that the concept of a triangle applies to both Euclidian and non-Euclidian geometries. It follows that the existence of a triangle (or an actual hundred dollars) necessarily “contains more” than the merely possible concepts of them, for example that a triangle has 180° , or that \$100 can buy more or less (properties which are of course contingent). What is important is that something which is taken according to its actuality, necessarily adds contingent *a priori* truths to its concept).⁵⁵ Kant might object to all this by

⁵³ This does not mean that all truths of the will are synthetic *a priori* truths. Although this article is concerned primarily with synthetic *a priori* truths as truths of the will, it can be inferred that *a posteriori* truths are truths of the will as well. Not, however, existential truths insofar as they are fixed truths resulting from existence itself, but more “existential” truth in the modern sense of existing subjects determining the meaning of their existence.

⁵⁴ *Critique of Pure Reason*, section IV, particularly A598-9/B626-7.

⁵⁵ Uygur Abaci analyzes Kant’s conception of existence in order to explain what Kant meant by saying that “every existential proposition is synthetic” (A598/B626). Following Kant’s conclusion that existence is not contained in the subject, i.e. that “it does not add any further determinations to any subject, and thus does not enlarge it”, he asks, following a very similar rationale to the analysis undertaken in this paper, what “actually [is] added to the subject in existential propositions, or more generally, what kind of synthesis is conducted in existential propositions?” Uygur Abaci, “Kant’s Theses on Existence*,” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 16, no. 3 (2008): 574. However, by way of contrast to what is suggested here, i.e. by following Kant on the matter, Abaci contends that “the ascription of existence, or of other modes, to a subject can by no means contribute to the determination of the content or whatness of the object of that subject... for existence is not a real predicate or determination (A599/B627), no matter to what subject it may be ascribed, but is always a merely logical predicate.” (Abaci, 580) Abaci explains that this is why a “hundred possible dollars is what is merely thought in the concept, a hundred actual dollars is what is also absolutely posited as the existing object that corresponds to the concept. Neither of them, however, is more real in the Kantian sense of the term; they have exactly the same what-content, ‘not more, not less’. Otherwise, the actual money would not correspond to what I think in its concept as merely possible, and we

saying that he is not speaking of actual or extramental existence⁵⁶ but only of the phenomena that are indeed real, but in the secondary sense of appearing in experience, which is rooted in an intuition of space and time that “only points to a being (“something existing”).”⁵⁷ To this

would be talking instead about two concepts with different contents.” (Abaci, 584-5) Abaci distinguishes between three modes of *being*: 1. Being “in an unqualified sense is positing in general.” 2. The being of the copula: “the ‘is’ of predication is relative positing.” 3. Existential being: “the ‘is’ of existence... [which] is absolute positing.” Following what was said above, Abaci explains that *being* is not a real predicate and thus that existence is a merely logical predicate. He concludes that this is why Kant states that “By the predicate ‘existence’ I add nothing to the thing, but rather add the thing itself to the concept... [for] I go beyond the concept... to the thing itself with just the very same predicates, not more, not less, except that absolute position is now added” From *Werke*, Akademieausgabe vol. XVIII, n. 6276 (quoted in Martin Heidegger, “Kant’s Thesis About Being,” in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 344.) Thus Abaci concludes that existence ascribes to a subject “the actual thing which is added to that subject concept” and that the “addition does not, however, increase or enlarge the content of the concept I have of the object whose actuality is asserted” but only “an actual correspondence or match is asserted between the actual object and the subject concept through which the object is thought as merely possible with exactly the same content.” (Abaci, 588) Abaci further maintains that when predicated of something, existence does not add anything to the concept in question, but only asserts a correspondence between the concept and the actual object. But as was explained, the 180° of the triangle is an existential truth. Once this has been duly considered, it will be seen to follow that if the predicate existence only added a correspondence between the concept and actual object, then it would become impossible to know that a triangle has 180°. In other words, the actualization of a thing necessarily adds truths to its concept which cannot be derived from the concept alone. This brings us back to Scotus and Henry. As was shown above, Scotus accepted Henry’s distinction between three levels of reality, calling them opinable, quidditative, and existential realities. But Scotus went on to criticize Henry for thinking that the latter two levels have a different type of being. He claimed that essential beings are contained virtually in existential being. This seems to indicate that the third level of being, existential reality, simply perfects essential realities as being actual. However, the result of the investigation undertaken in this paper suggests that such perfection is not only related to becoming “actual”, but more accurately, by attaining the perfection of actuality, existential truths are synthesized or assimilated to essential truths, as a result of the process of their actualization into existence.

⁵⁶ “Now the whole distinction which we draw between the merely possible and the actual rests upon the fact that possibility signifies only the positing of the representation of a thing relative to our concept, and, in general, to our capacity of thinking, whereas actuality signifies the positing of a thing in itself apart from this concept.” Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement* trans. James Creed Meredith (Oxford University Press, 2007), 229.

⁵⁷ Wolfgang Schwarz, “Kant’s Categories of Reality and Existence,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 48, no. 2 (1987): 346. Kant explains that “[o]ur transcendental idealism, on the contrary, allows that the objects of outer intuition are real too, just as they are intuited in space, along with all alterations in time, just as inner sense represents them. For since space is already a form of that intuition that we call outer, and without objects in it there would be no empirical representation at all, we can and must assume extended beings in space as real; and it is precisely the same with time. Space itself, however, together with time, and, with both, all appearances, are not things, but rather nothing but representations, and they cannot exist at all outside our mind.” (A491-2/B520) An extensive and “medieval” analysis of the difference between real, existence/actuality is made by Heidegger: “Realis is what belongs to res... what belongs to the what-content... extension is a reality of a natural body... regardless of whether the body actually exists or not. ... Actual being or existence is something which must first be added to the essence. ... Kant first demonstrated that actuality, being present-at-hand, is not a real predicate of a thing; that is, a hundred possible dollars do not in the least differ from a hundred real dollars according to their reality.” Martin

counter-suggestion that the notion of a phenomenal realm deprives the predicate ‘existence’ of meaning, it is possible to answer as follows. Leaving aside the question of the ontological status of the actual hundred dollars - whether they have extramental or mental being - the hundred dollars must stand in some relation to something actual (the world, the subject, etc.). Thus it follows that regardless of whether a thing is taken to exist extra-mentally or only as a phenomenon, existential truths are contracted in a synthetic *a priori* manner to their essential truths,⁵⁸ such as containing 180° or other properties, truths without which it would be impossible to refer to anything as an actual phenomenon or extramental thing.⁵⁹

Heidegger, *What Is a Thing?*, trans. William Baynard Barton and Vera Deutsch (H. Regnery Company, 1967), 212-3. See also *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (Indiana University Press, 1997), 61.

⁵⁸ It is clear that Kant did not think that synthetic *a priori* truths, e.g. that the triangle has 180°, were conditioned by the transcendental notion of being: “The mathematical concept of a triangle I would construct, i.e., give in intuition *a priori*, and in this way I would acquire synthetic but rational cognition. However, if I am given the transcendental concept of a reality, substance, force, etc., it designates neither an empirical nor a pure intuition, but only the synthesis of empirical intuitions (which thus cannot be given *a priori*.)” (A722/B750) In the same spirit however under different approach, Axel Schmidt tries to show the affinity between Scotus and Kant, especially between *Ding an sich* to *Haecceitas* and through this means to open up Kant to a more realistic interpretation. See Axel Schmidt, “Scotus Und Kant. Rationale Anti-Rationalisten,” *Theologie und Glaube* 89, no. 2 (1999).

⁵⁹ If synthetic *a priori* truths are all existential truths of the will, then Kant’s transcendental system can be seen as belonging to the classic medieval tradition of the transcendentals of *ens, res, unum, verum, bonum*. Typically, when these transcendentals are considered they are considered by the intellect, i.e. according to necessity. But following Scotus, it can be said that the transcendental system gains its full rationality only on the level of the will, i.e. as a result of being willed into existence in an unnecessitated manner. That is the gist of the Kantian questioning, which presupposes the actuality of contingent principles which make experience possible. Putting it differently, we might say that intuition and concepts, without which no cognition is possible (B75), to some degree correspond to the two levels of the transcendental system, which are in fact distinct only formally: concepts pertain to the intellect and intuition to the will, so that a full cognition of a thing must combine both of them. If this is so, then the medieval transcendental system still resides within Kant’s transcendental system, but since it is focused there on the question of possibility, the transcendental is understood primarily according to the will and less according to the intellect. This is of course very preliminary and structural observation on the matter. For further reading on the manner the transcendental system was transmitted to Kant see Ludger Honnefelder, “Metaphysics as a Discipline: From the “Transcendental Philosophy of the Ancients” to Kant’s Notion of Transcendental Philosophy,” in *The Medieval Heritage in Early Modern Metaphysics and Modal Theory, 1400–1700* (Springer, 2003); Norbert Hinske, *Kants Weg Zur Transzendentalphilosophie: Der Dreissigjährige Kant* (W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1970); Ignacio Angelelli, “On the Origins of Kant’s ‘Transcendental’,” *Kant-Studien* 63, no. 1-4 (1972); John P Doyle, “Between Transcendental and Transcendental: The Missing Link?,” *The Review of Metaphysics* (1997). JA Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought: From Philip the Chancellor (Ca. 1225) to Francisco Suárez*, vol. 107, *Studien Und Texte Zur Geistesgeschichte Des Mittelalters* (Brill, 2012), 694.

VIII. Intuitive Cognition

The generally accepted account of Scotus' theory of cognition is that it distinguishes two types of cognitions: 1. Abstractive cognitions, by which a thing is understood through an abstraction from existence; 2. Intuitive cognitions, by which the intellect cognizes "a thing insofar as it is present in its own existence."⁶⁰ In a striking similarity to Kant's doctrine of the *unity of apperception*, Scotus affirms that there is a cognition which attaches to everything else that is cognized.⁶¹ Scholars further agree that Scotus maintains that due to man's fall, or for some other reason, "we have no intuitive intellection of material substances as such." (Wolter 1990, 111) Though for centuries many have been drawn to Scotus' conception of intuitive cognition, a fundamental question lingers: what is it that we conceive as being in a thing "insofar as it is present in its own existence"? The distinction we have suggested between conceptual truths of the intellect and existential truths of the will, makes it plausible to claim that it is not the naked existence as such that is cognized in intuition but rather the existential truths that accompany it, for as Kant famously argues, there is nothing to distinguish between existence-in-itself and the concept of existence. It is precisely because existence grounds synthetic *a priori* truths, which are not determined according to natural necessity, that existence is cognized.⁶² For if existence were not to produce contingent synthetic *a priori* knowledge, beyond and external to the internal necessity of the intellect, things could not be presented as independent from the intellect.⁶³

⁶⁰ *Lect. II*, d.3, n.285: "a twofold cognition or intellection in the intellect is possible, for there can be one that abstracts from all existence and a second that is of a thing insofar as it is present in its own existence." (trans. Dumont 1989, 582)

⁶¹ *QM II*, q.3, n. 24: "If, however, one held that the intellect could be known intuitively here, one could say that every distinct act of the sense is accompanied by an act of the intellect about the same object; and this intellection is vision."

⁶² The will which brings things into existence, is not itself seen, for it is the intellect that sees, and the intellect comprehends nothing but what is thinkable. Thus existence is perceived through the truths that accompany it. "But in this way of knowing there seems to be something discursive, as if the divine intellect, seeing the decision of the will, would see an aspect of the existence of a contingent thing only on further reflection. ... [W]hen the will has decided for one component, that [component] has the aspect of being made and being produced. Then the intellect sees that proposition not by the fact that it sees the decision of the will, but its essence is then for itself the immediate ground of representing that proposition." John Duns Scotus, *Contingency and Freedom: John Duns Scotus Lectura I* 39, trans. Anthonie Jaczn Vos, et al., vol. 42(Springer, 1994), nn. 64-5.

⁶³ The question arises: what is the difference between an existential truth that follows the self and an existential truths that follow the grasp of things. Scotus' answer might be that we can distinguish between two types of existential truths: 1. External, that things are conceived through synthetic *a priori* truth such as a triangle has 180°. 2.

In *Ordinatio* III, d.14, Scotus investigates the manner in which Christ understands (as opposed to the angels and man). His reflection there supports the view we are advancing here. What is interesting about this passage is that Christ, as the Son of God, is more perfect than the angels, who according to some theologians (e.g. Aquinas) understand through innate species, while on the other hand, Christ, due to his human rather than angelic nature, possesses an ‘active intellect’. The main problem Scotus highlights here, and which can be understood in part as a major criticism of Aquinas's theory of angelic intellection, is that intelligible species, whether abstracted or infused, are likenesses which do not represent things in their existence, and cannot be used in order to derive any contingent knowledge of things.⁶⁴ And so in order to handle such “contingent truths knowable by intuitive cognition (which are contingent truths about existents insofar as they are existing), it is necessary to have the objects themselves present to the subject so that they can be intuitively known and understood in themselves.” (Wolter 1990, 116) Scotus concludes that innate species cannot suffice in order to know reality and therefore an intuitive knowledge must be responsible for contingent knowledge of reality. Disputing or qualifying Scotus’ opinion that humans have no intuitive cognition of things due to our fallen state, we argue rather that by tying intuitive cognition to the possibility of contingent knowledge, together with an identification of synthetic *a priori* truths with the contingent truths of the will, it comes about that knowing reality in its contingencies is not based upon knowing ‘this or that thing to be this or that’, but rather upon intuitive cognition of the contingent synthetic *a priori* truths that accompany things’ existence, and which brings us to a certain knowledge of things, which is nevertheless transcendently contingent, such as the truth that a triangle has 180°.

One might object that the overall conclusions of this paper stand in contradiction to Scotus’ explicit statement that truth is not the proper object of our intellect, but being. Scotus answers this objection himself by explaining that the “truth which is in stone does not include stone essentially or virtually; but, just the reverse, the being which is in stone includes truth, and so it is for any other beings and their truths.” To use Scotus’ terminology, the truths of existence perceived through intuitive cognition are but “attribute[s] of [existing] being.” (*Ord.* I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 3, n. 172 (3:106))

Internal, that the conceiver is grasped transcendently as that who follows every act of conceiving (an extrapolation of Scotus’ discussion of memory in *Ord.* IV, d. 45, q. 3).

⁶⁴*Ord.* III, d. 14, n. 113 (9:468-9).

Summary of the article: This article argues that intuitive cognition, which according to Scotus cognizes the actual presence of things, does not in fact cognize existence itself, but rather existential truths that follow from the existence of a thing (*res*). In order to understand the relationship between existence, the being of a ‘thing,’ and truth, we examine an internal tension in Anselm’s dual conception of truth as ‘rectitude’. His doctrine maintains that rectitude follows a. essentially according to the whatness of a thing, b. teleologically as a thing’s existence serves a purpose. We show that the tension between the two rectitudes finds an echo in the later development of the transcendental notion of a *thing*. We further show how Scotus’ criticism of the ontology of *things* can be interpreted at once as a criticism and a correction of Anselm’s dual conception of rectitude. We claim that these two types of truth are formal truths and reflect the duality of the truth of the intellect and of the will. Scotus submits that only the will perfects rationality. But how are we to understand the meaning of the ‘truth of the will’ or the way in which it perfects rationality? The answer lies in a dual interpretation of what it means to will something into existence: a. as to whether a thing should come to be, b. as the act of *putting* into existence. *Putting* into existence can be further interpreted according to two senses of being *placed*: Either, a. placed into an *essential place* that corresponds to the intellect, or, b. placed into an *existential place* that produces new contingent “truths” as a result of the actualization. Through an instrumental comparison with Kant’s treatment of geometry, we establish that truths of the will can be conceived as synthetic *a priori* truths. This explains why they perfect rationality. And by interpreting synthetic *a priori* truth as truths of the will, which are actually truths of existence, we are able to turn Scotus’ argument against Kant’s claim that “the actual contains nothing more than the merely possible”. The arguments above corroborate the claim that it is not existence itself that is cognized but rather the existential truths that follow from existence and which are cognized by us as synthetic *a priori* truths.

Abbreviations

John Duns Scotus:

Lect. = *Lectura: Prologue, I-III*. Opera Omnia. edited by Commissio Scotistica. Vol. 17-21: Città del Vaticano: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 17-21: 1966-2004.

Ord. = *Ordinatio, Prologue, I-IV*. Opera Omnia. edited by Commissio Scotistica. Vol. 1-13: Città del Vaticano: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1-14: 1950-2013.

Quodl. = *God and Creatures : The Quodlibetal Questions* trans. Allan B Wolter and Felix Alluntis (Princeton University Press, 1975);

QM = *Questions on the Metaphysics of Aristotle by John Duns Scotus, Bk. I-IX, Vol. 1-2*. Translated by Girard J Etzkorn and Allan B Wolter. Text Series 19. St. Bonaventure, N.Y: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1997, 1998.

Rep I-A = *Reportatio I-a, Prologue, D. 1-48: Latin Text and English Translation*. Translated by Allan B. Wolter and O. V. Bychkov. Vol. 1-2, St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2004, 2008.

Thomas Aquinas:

ST = *Summa Theologiae, Benziger Bros. edition, 1947, Trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province*;

QDV = *Questiones Disputatae de Veritate, Chicago: Henry Regnery Company 1952-4, trans. Mulligan, McGlynn and Schmidt*.

Anselm:

DV = *De Veritate*,

Henry of Ghent:

SQO = *Summa Quaestiones Ordinare*; Gandavo, Henrici de. *Summa (Quaestiones Ordinariae), Art. XXXI-XXXIV*. Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, Series 2: Henrici De Gandavo Opera Omnia. edited by R Macken: Leuven University Press, 1991. «*Summa*», *the Questions on God's Unity and Simplicity (Articles 25-30)*. Translated by Roland J Teske. *Dallas Medieval Texts and Translations. Vol. 25: Peeters Publishers, 2006*.

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