

Analecta Husserliana

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The Presence of Duns Scotus in the
Thought of Edith Stein

The question of individuality

Francesco Alfieri

Translated by
George Metcalf

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Founder

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*To
Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka,
In memory of our philosophical discussions
in Vermont*

Foreword

The people that we meet are always experienced as individual beings; we deal with the individual person, never the human being in the abstract. This seemingly banal observation prompts us to reflect on our capacity to grasp what is universal in the particular. Indeed, on meeting an individual, we see him or her in all their physical, mental and spiritual distinctiveness, and yet we are able to say that they are *a* man or *a* woman or *a* human being, thereby abstracting their essential characteristics. This is the famous “intuition of essences” referred to by Edmund Husserl and taken up by his student Edith Stein.¹ And it is precisely the latter phenomenologist who stresses individuality, because any encounter with the “other” always has this univocal character, although we express ourselves through universalising forms.

We are thus faced with an age-old problem that Aristotle himself faced: how do we acquire knowledge of the individual if our knowledge always seems to be of the universal?

Anthropology was the basic theme of Edith Stein’s research, but it is precisely within this field that the above-described question is posed, and those who concern themselves with philosophy cannot ignore it. The question was a constant feature of Stein’s research, from her first phenomenological analyses inspired by the method proposed by Husserl until her final writings, via the study of the salient moments of medieval thought.

Knowing that he is a Franciscan monk, when Francesco Alfieri told me of his intention to conduct research into the phenomenological anthropology of Edith Stein, it came to mind that she had discussed the question of individuality in her work *Finite and Eternal Being*, comparing Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus; what better occasion could there be to explore on the one hand Stein’s relationship with medieval thought and on the other, take stock on the question of individuality?

Francesco Alfieri accepted the proposal and indeed, he has developed it beyond expectations, not only reading the works of Stein and the main works of Duns

¹ A complete bibliography of the works of Edith Stein, their translations into various languages and critical studies of the author and her thought in the world can be found in Alfieri F. (2012).

Scotus, but also conducting a critical analysis of the latter. He was supported in this undertaking by recent studies concerning the attribution of certain manuscripts to the Franciscan thinker. These studies helped clarify the question of which of Scotus' works Stein had read and whether they were authentic, an issue that needed to be resolved before assessing the validity of her interpretation.

Alfieri's research therefore broadened to the point where it began to encompass not only exegetics, but also philology. His work was supported by the results obtained by scholars on the Scotus Commission of the Order of Friars Minor. This forms the basis of the second and third chapters of this doctoral thesis, *A historic and critical study of the "Scotist" sources used by Edith Stein* and *The question of the principium individuationis in the writings of Duns Scotus. Ordinatio/Lectura – Quaestiones super Libros Metaphysicorum (q. 13)*.

This research is highly appreciated by specialists because it is founded on the most recent knowledge and clarifies the relationship between Scotus and his disciples. Obviously Edith Stein was unaware of this, in the first place because her education had involved no contact with medieval thought, and in the second place because, despite having excellent knowledge of classical languages, she had never conducted a philological study. In any case, it was not her purpose to tackle such topics, but rather to understand the theoretical contribution of the thinkers she was examining. After her conversion to Catholicism she realised that medieval thinkers had already analysed and in some cases resolved questions that were subsequently posed again, despite having already had a convincing clarification.

With characteristic precision, Stein went beyond questions of attribution and understood Scotus' deeper meaning, expressing it in the terms of the phenomenological language inherited from Husserl. Comparing Thomas Aquinas and Scotus, she observed that the prevailing interpretation of Aquinas' position concerning the principle of individuation, based on *materia signata quantitate*, was not convincing. She preferred the concept of *haecceitas*, as the *ultima solitudo* of Duns Scotus. She did not know that the former term perhaps did not come directly from Scotus but from his disciples, but she understood the sense of the Scotist proposition. All this is to be found in the fourth chapter of this volume on *The intangible individuality of human beings. The originality of Edith Stein's perspective*.

Stein's position, inspired by Husserl's analyses in *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, stresses that from the formal point of view there exists an empty form, but in order for it to become real it needs to be filled by concrete individuals. For human beings, this "filling" is not a question of matter but a qualitative fullness, which can be expressed in Scotus' terms as the *ultima solitudo*, or in phenomenological terms as the immutable and intangible personal nucleus.

In the case of Thomas Aquinas she criticises his criterion of matter as the principle of individuation. How then to interpret the relationship between matter and form with respect to the human individual? It is here that Scotus' idea of the *ultima realitas* or the *ultima solitudo* acquires greater specificity via a qualitative fullness based on the personal nucleus. In this sense Stein can be said to have fulfilled, albeit inadvertently, the objective which was very clear in her research: to identify convergences in the theoretical results of many thinkers in their enquiries into various

aspects of reality. Her aim in this was not merely to arrive at a cosy syncretism; she held that each of them, examining the “same things”, highlighted something positive and this should be valued. Nor was this facile irenicism. Indeed, when examined retrospectively, the violent contrasts that characterised medieval thought actually suggest – all things considered – that there was greater convergence and unity among them than traditionally believed, a unity that emerges especially if that thought is compared with the history of the philosophy that was to follow. Stein’s return to medieval thought was not determined therefore by any need for an apology, and this is also demonstrated by the freedom with which she deals with the great philosophers of the epoch, while acknowledging their authority. On the contrary, she argued that the contribution of those philosophers should be valued because they clarified aspects that were re-examined subsequently but without obtaining the same results. The basic idea is that the history of philosophy is established by thinkers who support each other beyond time and space, because philosophy is a “perennial” form of research.

Francesco Alfieri’s book makes these observations, breaking down an extremely complex field with great critical ability, precise analysis and cogent results. Systematically tackling the comparison of Duns Scotus and Edith Stein for the first time, he helps clarify, from a historic and theoretical point of view, a highly complex and crucial argument: what is the individual and how do we come to know them?

Angela Ales Bello

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Chapter 1

Introduction

An introduction provides an opportunity to explain, albeit just in outline, the elements which – first and foremost from a scientific point of view – made this study possible. Themes linked to philosophical anthropology, above all the principle of the human person and individuality, were the object of research by numerous twentieth-century philosophers, from those associated with neo-Aristotelianism – which was to develop into the hermeneutic currents of existentialism – such as Gadamer and Buber, to those linked to neo-Thomism. The field also includes authors associated with the reassessment of political philosophy, such as Hannah Arendt, who is the author of classics on political philosophy that may be considered just as valid for their contribution to anthropology, since the problem of individual liberty and the primacy of personal space is at the heart of the reflections contained in works such as *Vita Activa* or *The Life of the Mind*. It even includes authors that sought to establish the democratic foundations of *libertarianism*, such as Nozick. Among these authors, reflection on (and thus the centrality of) the human person and individuality is a constant characteristic.

This cultural climate affecting twentieth century philosophy, particularly the need to clarify the ultimate assumptions regarding the human person and individuality, was shared by Edith Stein. With Aristotelianism and Thomism as her main points of reference, she succeeded in retrieving, from outside these traditions, important suggestions and themes associated with other currents of medieval philosophy, grafting them on to the ontological-formal and gnoseological *corpus* of Edmund Husserl's phenomenology.

Just over 20 years ago, the field of Italian philosophical studies saw the start of a new season of research into the writings of Edith Stein, a disciple of Edmund Husserl whose existential and spiritual journey was by then well-known. In fact, thanks to Angela Ales Bello, founder of the Rome-based Italian Center of Phenomenology, it had been possible to discuss and conduct research into Stein's intellectual contribution since the 1970s, due to her forward-looking decision to produce a critical edition of the works of Edith Stein at a time when she was still virtually unknown in Italy. Angela Ales Bello's long process of reflection was to

culminate in 1992 with the publication of *Fenomenologia dell'essere umano. Lineamenti di una filosofia al femminile*,¹ which enabled scholars and researchers to learn about the female exponents of phenomenology who had graduated from the Husserl “school” during the master’s teaching in Göttingen, such as Hedwig Conrad-Martius and Edith Stein, and later, in Freiburg, such as Gerda Walther. Ales Bello’s book and my frequent theoretical conversations with the author have influenced my own intellectual development and the studies contained in this thesis.

Generally speaking, this study seeks above all to address an issue that appears to me to have been neglected in Steinian studies, both in Italy and elsewhere (with very few exceptions, such as the work of Angela Ales Bello² and Francesco Bottin,³ who are cited in this study). With reference to historiographical reconstruction, the question of the person and individuality in the work of Edith Stein has always been considered by scholars and commentators in terms of a continuity with Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas. Obviously, Stein’s writings contain many references, indeed whole chapters, in which the relationship with the Aristotelian-Thomist school is very strong. But from my point of view, historiographical studies on this theme fail to give sufficient emphasis to two important aspects: firstly, Stein’s contacts with these two great philosophers were mainly mediated by secondary sources (with the exception of *De Veritate* by Thomas Aquinas and certain works by Aristotle, such as *Metaphysics*); secondly, and more importantly, Stein’s interest in the tradition of Thomist-Aristotelian thought was no more intense or productive than the relationship that she sought to establish with Duns Scotus, although here too, she does not appear to have always had access to original and primary sources.

It was decided therefore to address this clear gap in the Italian and international historiographical tradition. With specific reference to the present question, identifying what may rightly be termed the *Scotist convergences* in Stein’s works was thus held to be indispensable. The chosen point of reference here is *Finite and Eternal Being*, and specifically chapter VIII, which clearly represents the culmination of a whole series of reflections to be found throughout her works, starting with *On the Problem of Empathy*, written in 1916. These Scotist influences are reconstructed by means of a reverse process, of which Chapter VIII of *Finite and Eternal Being* represents the starting point. This process is not always linear, and is made even more difficult by the fact that at first sight it is Thomist works that appear to have pride of place in Stein’s research. Indeed, Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle initially seemed to constitute the doctrinal boundaries within which Stein’s phenomenological research into the problem of individuation should be interpreted. However, as was evident even to Stein herself, more detailed phenomenological analysis led her – quite naturally – to a closer and closer comparison with the thought of *Doctor Subtilis*. Obviously Scotist themes are not merely transposed or accepted acritically by Stein. Indeed, we have just spoken of *convergences* towards Scotist doctrines, by which we mean that Stein was able to interpret the phenomenological method in a highly

¹ Ales Bello A. (1992).

² Ales Bello A. (2010).

³ Bottin F. (2009).

original way by applying it to the themes of medieval metaphysics. Drawing ideas, knowledge and theoretical results from both traditions, she was able to conduct, while working within the phenomenological tradition, an analysis of the question of individuation that was characterised by absolute originality. This originality was to objectively make the author one of the most important figures in twentieth century philosophy, especially with regard to anthropological issues.

Among other things, this study seeks to show that the distinctive value of Stein's work lies in the fact that from the very start it was *collective*: her work is everywhere full of comparisons and references to other authors, who, in the spirit of Stein's research, are fundamental to the journey that leads to the truth. The method learnt in Husserl's school consisted of work that was absolutely alien to forms of pure soliloquy. Husserl himself invited his pupils to follow given lines of research in such a way as to make them converge towards a sort of "compensation chamber" in which they would be reassessed, reorganised, discussed and revised under the aegis of the *immer wieder* that was the key aspect of Husserl's method. His pupils, which included Hedwig Conrad-Martius, Alexander Pfänder, Max Scheler, Jean Hering, Alexandre Koyré, Gerda Walther etc., were forged in this collective spirit, which shaped their way of working to the point that it enabled them – particularly Stein and Conrad-Martius – to follow the principle of *epoché* and phenomenological reduction with regard to "archaeological excavations" that were not directed, as in Husserl, purely and exclusively towards the vastness of the Transcendental Ego, but also towards the contributions of the medieval tradition.

This collective spirit in the research of the phenomenologists has been highlighted by Angela Ales Bello, who considers it to be a defining feature of the discipline. And, over 40 years of research, she has succeeded in transmitting this same spirit of collective collaboration to her own students – Italian and foreign – at the Center of Phenomenology in Rome. Indeed, as Ales Bello herself argues, "an interesting characteristic of our women philosophers, and more generally of the philosophical circles that were created around Husserl, is the way they conduct their research, research that is not only individual, but truly collective, as all research into what is true should be".⁴

It is fair to say that within this community of pupils that formed around the charismatic figure of Husserl, there were many who, at the beginning of the twentieth century, showed a factual, concrete interest in the works of Scotus. The Göttingen Circle had already established a certain convergence with Scotist texts, which however proved to be apocryphal on the basis of the modern annotated edition of his works. Heidegger himself wrote *Die Kategorie und Bedeutungslehre des Duns Scotus* in 1916, and in 1921 Stein and Conrad-Martius jointly carried out a translation of Alexandre Koyré's *Essai sur l'idée de Dieu et les preuves de son existence chez Descartes* from the original French into German. In this task they became familiar with the *Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio*, some of which Stein would later take up in *Finite and Eternal Being*. These *Quaestiones* were for a long time attributed to *Doctor Subtilis* but have since been shown to be spurious. In this

⁴Ales Bello A., Alfieri F., Shahid M. (Eds.) (2010), p. 19.

thesis it will be argued – on the basis of an attentive analysis and historical-critical collation of the codices⁵ – that the real author of these *Quaestiones* is without doubt the Franciscan Vitalis de Furno, something that Stein could not possibly have known given that it was precisely in that period that systematic studies for the critical edition of Scotus' works began.

It will also be argued that Stein's interest in medieval philosophy, commonly assumed to have begun around 1929 with the publication of her translation of *De Veritate* by Thomas Aquinas, in reality dates back to 1921, as is clear from the analysis of some excerpts conserved in the *Edith-Stein-Archiv* in Cologne. The knowledge Stein gained as a result of translating Koyré's work helped to both forge and consolidate the collective approach described above, to the point that Stein herself subsequently entrusted Koyré with the task of reviewing the first part of *Finite and Eternal Being* concerning medieval philosophy.

The discovery of the authorship of the *Quaestiones* made it necessary to conduct an analysis, as thorough as possible, of the writings of *Doctor Subtilis* on the question of the principle of individuation. This analysis was of absolute importance, given the objective of assessing Stein's above-mentioned convergences with Scotist themes. The analysis, which is primarily philological, will seek to establish the exact position on individuation in the mature stage of Scotus' thought, with particular reference to *Ordinatio/Lectura* and *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum* (Q. XIII).

The central theme of this study will be the reconstruction of Stein's works, at all times following the thread of the question of individuation, since it is in connection with this theme that the *convergences* with Scotist thought become explicit. The text will seek to show that the Thomist position of *materia signata quantitate* is no longer sufficient, in Stein's eyes, to explain the deeper meaning of the principle of individuation, which is singular, not dual in nature. I will use the term "singularity" coined by Angela Ales Bello to consider the essence of human beings, not only in metaphysical, but also anthropological terms, seeking in this way to broaden the phenomenological point of view by establishing common ground with medieval metaphysics.

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⁵In reference to the codices, note that in this study the following abbreviations will be used: V=Vatican City, Vatican Library, cod. lat. Borghesiano 192; T=Todi, Biblioteca Comunale, cod. 95; Is=Rome, Collegio S. Isidoro, cod. 1/15.

Chapter 2

A Historic and Critical Study of the “Scotist” Sources Used by Edith Stein

Analysing the “Scotist” sources used by Edith Stein, I soon perceived the need to establish exactly when she first began to study Duns Scotus. I sought to do this by means of a reverse process conducted within the phenomenological school, based on a study of her correspondence. The task also entailed analysing the direct and indirect sources for Scotus that the author used in her phenomenological studies, particularly with reference to the *Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio*. The *status quaestionis* of this pseudo-epigraph, for a long time attributed to *Doctor Subtilis*, will be carefully assessed in order to establish its literary paternity.

2.1 The Possibility of a Scotist Philosophy in the Context of Phenomenology

The renewal of interest in the “writings” of *Doctor Subtilis* was to affect the intellectual development of many phenomenologists. Martin Heidegger was the first to re-read medieval speculation in a phenomenological key, and this interest assumed a more concrete form in the analyses conducted by Alexandre Koyré, Edith Stein and Hedwig Conrad-Martius. In order to determine Stein’s position with respect to the doctrine of Duns Scotus, her reception of the *Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio*, together with the studies conducted by Koyré, is fundamental.

2.1.1 *The Disciples of Edmund Husserl and the Recovery of the “Writings” of Doctor Subtilis*

The systematic study of medieval philosophy within the phenomenological school, with particular attention to the “writings” considered to be the work of *Doctor Subtilis*, may be said to have begun with a work by the young Martin Heidegger, *Die Kategorien und Bedeutungslehre des Duns Scotus*,¹ published in 1916. In practice, in the case of Edmund Husserl (of the first generation of phenomenologists), the return to Greek philosophy was not accompanied by an equally intense interest in medieval philosophy.² This contrasts with the approach of Martin Heidegger, Max Scheler (of the second generation) and subsequently Alexandre Koyré, Edith Stein and Hedwig Conrad-Martius (of the third generation), who sought, in their phenomenological studies, to reassess some of the fundamental figures of scholastic philosophy.

Partly due to the need to prepare himself for a career as a university teacher, Heidegger considered the study of *Doctor Subtilis* to be a suitable subject for a *Lebensarbeit*, presenting medieval and modern philosophy as being not in contrast, but rather as steps on the road of thought towards the explanation of being. Opening up to the study of medieval philosophy, wrote the young Heidegger, “entailed first of all not so much an analysis of the historic relationships between the various thinkers, as the interpretative understanding of the theoretical content of their philosophy by means of the instruments of modern philosophy. This is how my analysis of the doctrine of the categories and the meaning of Duns Scotus was born. It also led me to think of the project for a complete description of medieval logic and

¹ Heidegger M. (1916). This book is dedicated to the study of logic and categories in Scotus, based on *Grammatica Speculativa*. Martin Grabmann demonstrated that this latter work is not by Scotus but by Thomas of Erfurt: see Grabmann M. (1922). Also of this opinion is Ephrem Longpré (1924), p. 15. A different position is taken by Onorio Pontoglio, who argues that Heidegger’s study is based on works whose attribution to Scotus is certain: see Pontoglio O. (1968). However, Heidegger himself did not take a firm stand on the attribution to Scotus of this work, which is analysed in *Die Kategorien* in a modern key.

² For many protestant thinkers, the Middle Ages is only about theology and that may explain the reason why it is neglected or dealt with hurriedly by Husserl. Among the author’s papers conserved in the *Husserl-Archief* in Leuven, I found just one *Exzerpte* (transcribed manuscript F I 30/43a) in which he makes explicit reference to Duns Scotus. The following is the full text: “Der <Randbemerkung Leibniz> zentrale Geist für alle diese Entwicklungen ist Leibniz (1646–1716). 14 Jahre nach Spinoza und Locke geboren, 38 nach Descartes. Anfangend als Rationalist, aber von vornherein bei seiner außerordentlichen historischen Bildung und Anregbarkeit vielfältig motiviert, hat er nicht nur von der neuen Naturwissenschaft und vom Cartesianismus her Bestimmungen erfahren, sondern aus antiken und mittelalterlichen Philosophien, von den Italienischen Naturphilosophen und von den englischen Platonikern und sonstigen Philosophen der Renaissance. Charakteristisch ist die absolute Hochschätzung mit der er immer wieder von Platon und Aristoteles, selbst von den Neu-Platonikern spricht, der Ernst mit dem er die Scholastik gegen die modischen Einwürfe verteidigt, wie er dann von Thomas und auch von Duns Scotus erheblich beeinflusst war. Die teleologische Weltanschauung hat in seinem Gemüt feste Wurzeln gefasst. Von konfessionellen Schranken, von kirchlichem Dogma ist er, der Mann eifriger Versöhnungsversuche aller christlichen Kirchen, frei”.

psychology in the light of modern phenomenology, taking account of the historic position of individual medieval thinkers".³ We are not concerned here with the subtle interpretative questions arising from the author's modern reading of medieval speculation; we seek only to indicate the initial perspective of Heidegger's enquiry and how the subsequent abandonment of his work on medieval logic coincided with his moving away from Freiburg, after failing to obtain the university chair that he had been hoping for.⁴

Indeed, his above-mentioned project was not to be fulfilled because his studies changed direction with the publication of *Sein und Zeit*,⁵ in which the first signs of a shift away from Husserl's phenomenology could be seen.

Like Heidegger, Edith Stein broadened the horizons of her research to include medieval speculation, but unlike him, she remained firmly anchored to the phenomenological method, particularly as described in the second volume of Husserl's *Logical Investigations*.⁶ In this way she succeeded in establishing the essential path to *Christian philosophy*, harmonising the results of philosophy and theology, as seen in *Finite and Eternal Being*.

2.1.2 The Approach to Scotist Concepts in the Phenomenological Analyses of Edith Stein

Here we look at the key stages in the author's intellectual development, in order to identify her first contact with scholastic philosophy and the speculations of *Doctor Subtilis*. A two-pronged approach is followed: one is based on her correspondence and the other seeks to determine possible Scotist influences on her phenomenological analyses.

2.1.2.1 1922: E. Stein and H. Conrad-Martius Begin to Acquire Knowledge of Scotus

The only explicit reference in the author's correspondence in which a research interest in the doctrine of Duns Scotus can clearly be discerned is to be found in a letter she wrote to her fellow student and Polish friend Roman Ingarden. Written

³Ott H. (1988), p. 86: "vorerst weniger in einem Herausstellen der historischen Beziehungen unter den einzelnen Denkern, als in einem deutenden Verstehen des theoretischen Gehaltes ihrer Philosophie mit den Mitteln der modernen Philosophie. So entstand meine Untersuchung über die Kategorien und Bedeutungslehre des Duns Scotus" (our translation).

⁴See Kölmel W. (1995).

⁵Heidegger M. (1927) (the work also appeared in volume VIII of the *Jahrbuch* of 1927).

⁶Husserl E. (1984). So strong was the influence of this work in determining the path of Stein's philosophical development that after having read it, she decided to personally follow the lessons that Husserl was teaching in 1913 in Göttingen; see Stein E. (2002), p. 170.

shortly after she joined the Carmelite order in Cologne in October 1933, the letter reads: “Over the last few weeks I have even been able to dedicate some time to Duns Scotus, which I have never had until now, despite being aware for some time of the treasures that can be found in his writings”.⁷ Previously, in a letter of May 19th 1931 addressed to Edith Stein, Franz Pelster thanked her for having sent him the German translation of the *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, and invited her to translate, “with the same method other works by Aquinas and not just him – since it is a fundamental mistake to expect all the riches of scholastic philosophy to be found in Aquinas alone, neglecting others such as Henry of Ghent, Scotus, Aureolus, William of Ockham [...]”.⁸

Did 1933 really mark the point when Stein began her study of Duns Scotus? How should we interpret the last passage of the letter to Ingarden in which she herself claims to have been “aware for some time of the treasures that can be found in his writings”? To answer these questions we need to go back to the years of her conversion to Catholicism (1921–1922), which obviously had a significant impact on the orientation of her intellectual research. Stein refers to this period in the preface to her work *Finite and Eternal Being*, where she informs the reader that “The writings of Hedwig Conrad-Martius, with whom the author was closely associated during an earlier period of her life, which was decisive for both of them, have influenced her own thinking in several ways, and the reader will find repeated evidence of this influence”.⁹ Only a careful analysis of the lives of the two scholars, in the period that saw them working together, can clarify an aspect that has so far received little consideration, that of their intellectual development with respect to medieval scholastic philosophy.

The two phenomenologists met in August 1920, when Stein was preparing the *Gesammelte Schriften*, a collection of writings in memory of Adolf Reinach, a disciple of Husserl who died at the front during the First World War. In Pauline Reinach’s home Stein met Hedwig Conrad-Martius. “We got on perfectly and I will go to Bergzabern¹⁰ during the next holidays”, Edith wrote of their first meeting in a letter of 1920 to R. Ingarden.¹¹

In May 1921, Stein travelled from Göttingen to Bergzabern to help Conrad-Martius on her estate, but also to dedicate herself to scientific research.¹² She was to

⁷ Stein E. (2001), pp. 234–235 (Letter of 27.XI.1933) (our translation).

⁸ Stein E. (2000), pp. 171–172 (our translation).

⁹ Stein E. (2006a), p. 7. English translation, pp. xxxi–xxxii.

¹⁰ The Conrads’ house in Bergzabern was to become a place where many of Husserl’s disciples would meet to continue their phenomenological enquiries. In this regard I refer the reader to the interesting study by Joachim Feldes which gives a detailed description of the links between Edith Stein, Mr and Mrs Conrad, Hering, Koyré and others. These links were not casual but the result of a profound intellectual unity which affected their entire persona. In this sense, the phenomenological circle was exemplary of how to conduct research in a spirit of collaboration, friendship and sharing of the results achieved. See Feldes J. (2010).

¹¹ Stein E. (2001), pp. 130–131 (Letter of 09.IX.1920) (our translation).

¹² Ibid.

remain a guest in the Conrads' home until the beginning of August that year.¹³ Like Stein, Hedwig Conrad-Martius was experiencing a period of crisis, as she wrote in her memoirs of 1958: "When Edith was staying with us the last time for many months we both found ourselves going through a religious crisis".¹⁴ This is the period when Edith finished reading the *Vita di Teresa d'Avila* – which had been given to her by Anne and Pauline Reinach – in her friend's home.¹⁵ What the two phenomenologists have in common is their religious conversion, which happened at the same time, although it took them in different directions: while Stein converted to Catholicism, Conrad-Martius became an evangelical.

Stein's stay in Bergzabern was also intended to be about scientific research. In this context¹⁶ she and Conrad-Martius began the German translation of Alexandre Koyré's book¹⁷ *Essai sur l'idée de Dieu et les preuves de son existence chez Descartes*¹⁸ from the French original. For the two phenomenologists, the joint

¹³Ibid. pp. 139–141 (Letter of 30.VIII.1921).

¹⁴Conrad-Martius H. (1958). Conrad-Martius, *Meine Freundin Edith Stein*, 1958. This text, from 9 March 1958, is from a lecture given by the author at the headquarters of the Society for Jewish-Christian Cooperation, published in *Hochland* 51 (1958), pp. 38–48. The manuscript (A XXI) 2 is conserved in the section dedicated to the author in the *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek* in Munich; see Avé-Lallemant E. (Ed.) (1975), Tomus X, Pars I, p. 224. See also Herbstrith W. (1983), p. 84.

¹⁵Sacra Congregatio Pro Causis Sanctorum (1983), p. 437. In August 1965 Sister Pauline Reinach was called to testify before the Rogatory Commission of Namur, where she made the following declaration: "Au cours de l'été 1921, alors que la Servante de Dieu allant nous quitter, ma belle-soeur et moi-même l'avons invitée à choisir un ouvrage dans notre bibliothèque. Son choix se porta sur une biographie de Ste Thérèse d'Avila, écrite par elle-même. De ce détail, je suis absolument certaine. J'ai lu dans des biographies de la Servante de Dieu que celle-ci s'était aussi procurée une vie de Ste Thérèse chez Mme Conrad-Martius. Personnellement, je n'ai jamais eu connaissance de ce dernier fait, de science directe. J'ai lu que c'est dans la vie de Ste Thérèse que la Servante de Dieu aurait [trouvé la vérité]". This deposition is not consistent with the account given in Edith Stein's first biography written by Sister. T.R. de Spiritu Sancto (Posselt) after the Second World War. This work has run through several editions and has been translated into numerous languages: The biographer states that: "It happened, however, that during one of these vacation-time visits both husband and wife had to go away. Before their departure Frau Conrad-Martius took her friend over to the book case and told her to take her pick. They were all at her disposal. Edith herself tells us: I picked at random and took out a large volume. It bore the title The Life of St. Teresa of Avila, written by herself. I began to read, was at once captivated, and did not stop till I reached the end. As I closed the book, I said, "That is the truth"" (Posselt T.R. 1948, p. 28. English translation, p. 63). It is highly probable that Stein carried with her the book given to her by the Reinachs and finished reading it when she was a guest of the Conrads.

¹⁶See Stein E. (2001), pp. 150–151 (Letter of 30.IX.1922).

¹⁷Alexandre Koyré (1892–1964) had come to Göttingen in 1908/09 to study mathematics and philosophy under Hilbert and Husserl. Reading *Philosophie der Arithmetik* and *Logische Untersuchungen* prompted Koyré to present in 1912 three brief papers on the philosophy of mathematics, but Husserl did not accept them as work for his doctorate. See Zambelli P. (1999). Koyré moved to Paris and in 1929 began teaching at the University of Montpellier, but did not break off contact with the first circle of phenomenologists.

¹⁸Koyré A. (1922). A German edition was subsequently republished in Bonn in 1923 as *Descartes und die Scholastik*. The names of the translators do not appear in the work however. In 1971 it was republished as a photostatic reproduction in Darmstadt by Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft. The work was included in the *ESGA* series, see: Stein E. & Conrad-Martius H. (Eds.) (2005).

translation of this text provided their first contact, albeit indirect, with a work used by Koyré in his monograph which for a long time had been attributed to *Doctor Subtilis: Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio*. The specific *quaestiones* used by the author in the monograph were *quaestio* IV No. 18¹⁹ and *quaestio* 11 No. 15.²⁰ Koyré did not distinguish authentic Scotist works – such as *Tractatus de primo rerum omnium principio* – from those of more doubtful attribution, such as the *Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio*.²¹

Subsequently Stein would also translate a few passages from the *Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio*, as is clear from her papers conserved in the Stein Archive in Cologne.²² She was to make explicit reference to these passages in the course of the lessons she gave in Münster in 1933 (*Was ist der Mensch? Theologische Anthropologie*),²³ and in her last work *Finite and Eternal Being*.²⁴ Another point worthy of consideration is that *quaestio* IV: *Utrum Deus de necessitate producat res?* constitutes the link between Koyré’s study of Descartes and the two works by Stein referred to above. This *quaestio* will be reconstructed when we analyse the structure of the *Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio* in detail.

It is crucial not to underestimate the impact on Stein of her study of Koyré’s monograph: it is only in this way that we can better understand why, during one of his visits to the Carmelite convent in Cologne in 1935, she showed him the drafts of the first few chapters of *Finite and Eternal Being* so that he could read through them, especially the passages on medieval scholastic philosophy.²⁵

This should be borne in mind when looking at the period of Stein’s conversion to Catholicism and the new orientation of her research, starting with the study of the

¹⁹ Stein E. & Conrad-Martius H. (Eds.) (2005), p. 79 & pp. 192–193: “Voluntas Dei est causa rerum, et nullum habet motivum in causando” (from volume IV, p. 310a of the Vivès edition of Scotus’ works; see note 21 below).

²⁰ Ibid. p. 71 & pp. 183–184: “Substantia animae est idem, quod sua potentia realiter, ita quod anima dicitur forma per comparationem ad corpus quod perficit, cui dat esse substantiale: sortitur vero nomen et rationem potentiae, solo respectu et comparatione ad varia objecta et operationes, ita quod anima et actum suum eliciat, et actum subjective suscipiat, ut patet in actu intelligendi: per suam substantiam est principium eliciens actum et efficienter, et etiam subjective, non per aliquam potentiam re absoluta differentem ab ea” (from volume IV, p. 468b–469a of the Vivès edition; see note 21 below).

²¹ Scotus’ *Opera omnia*, published for the first time in 1639 in Lyon by Luke Wadding, were reprinted in Paris in 1891–1895 by Vivès. Both editions contain the authentic and non-authentic or spurious writings of Scotus. In his monograph, Koyré uses the Vivès edition. See Duns Scotus J. (1910).

²² *Exzerpte* section (unbound sheets). For a better understanding of the *quaestio* as a literary genre, see Bazàn B., Fransen G., Jacquart D. et al. (Eds.) (1985), pp. 31–40.

²³ Stein E. (2005), p. 61. In an *excursus* on the doctrine of liberty in St Augustine, the author uses *quaestio* IV of *De rerum principio* in an attempt to compare the position of Scotus with that of St Augustine and St Thomas Aquinas.

²⁴ The author used *quaestiones* VII, VIII and IV: see Stein E. (2006a), pp. 346–348, 355. English translation, pp. 408–411, 419–420.

²⁵ Stein E. (2006b), pp. 158–159 (Letter of 17.XI.1935 addressed to Hedwig Conrad-Martius). The texts of the letters sent by Stein to Conrad-Martius are also published in Conrad-Martius H. (Ed.) (1960).

Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio in 1922, which pre-dates her interest in a more systematic study of St. Thomas Aquinas by a large margin. In 1929 Stein published a tentative comparison of Husserl's phenomenology and Aquinas' philosophy in *Husserls Phänomenologie und die Philosophie des hl. Thomas von Aquino*.²⁶ Her interest in Aquinas helped her to further broaden her horizons towards Christian metaphysics, without causing her to abandon the phenomenology of her teacher Husserl.

2.1.2.2 The “Scotist” Sources in *Finite and Eternal Being*

In *Finite and Eternal Being*, Stein continued on her chosen path, which brought her closer to the doctrine of Duns Scotus, to whom she refers implicitly concerning the question of universals²⁷ and the medieval doctrine of ideas. Making reference to some of the authoritative interpretations of the time, she quotes directly from a work by the Dominican Gallus Manser²⁸ to emphasise the contrast between the voluntarism of Scotus²⁹ and the intellectualism of Aquinas.

We shall discuss three explicit references in *Finite and Eternal Being* in which she uses “Scotist” sources. This preliminary analysis is a pre-condition for understanding not just the direct and indirect sources she used but also, and more importantly, how she came to assimilate the doctrine of *Doctor Subtilis*.

At the end of the third chapter: *Essential and Eternal Being*, Stein refers to the doctrine of the Regality of Christ in Duns Scotus, making use of an essay by Ephrem Longpré: *Duns Scotus, der Theologe des fleischgewordenen Wortes*.³⁰ This was a paper presented in 1933 in Cologne to the members of the Catholic Academic Association. Stein mentioned this essay, but had no intention of studying in detail purely theological questions that lay outside the scope of her work.³¹

In the eighth chapter: *The Meaning and Foundation of Individual Being*, Stein systematically tackles the problem of the individual being and its foundations. She enquires into the nature of this individual essence. Setting out a clear stance with regard to a fundamental theme in medieval thought, she argues that the foundation of individuality should be sought not in *materia signata quantitate* as understood by St. Thomas Aquinas, but rather in the concretion of the empty form and its qualitative filling. Stein sees her own position as being close to that of Duns Scotus, in that “He sees the *principium individuationis* as something that has the marks of a positive

²⁶ Stein E. (1929).

²⁷ See Stein E. (2006a), pp. 92–97. English translation, pp. 97–102.

²⁸ Manser G. (1935²).

²⁹ Stein E. (2006a), p. 265. English translation, p. 307: “Whereas for Duns Scotus – according to G. Manser – the combination of simple essences to form composite ideas (which must be regarded as the archetypes of things) rests on God's free choice [...]”.

³⁰ See Longpré E. (1933).

³¹ See Stein E. (2006a), p. 112. English translation, p. 119.

des rein Geistigen etwas gefunden, was in 828.
 einem gewissen Sinn als „Stoff“ in Anspruch ^{1.) Die}
 genommen werden kann, nicht in ^{folgen-}
 Sinn der Raum füllenden, aber in Sinn ^{den über-}
 der bestimmteren Unbestimmtheit, ^{führungs-}
~~das, was als „Kraft“ bezeichnet werden.~~ ^{prinzipi-}
 Hier mit der Lehre des Thomas Scotus ver- ^{al auf}
 bindet sich, wird hier daran denken, dass ^{die über-}
 der Doctor Subtilis für die Logik, wie für ^{Prinzipien}
 alles endliche Seiende überhaupt, die ^{herange-}
 Zusammenfassung aus Form und Stoff ^{geben von}
^{Komplex} Ausgangspunkt und mit dem ihm eigenen be- ^{Formen-}
 zunderswerten Scharfsinn begründet und ^{des Ser-}
 verteidigt hat. ^{cia O.F.H.} Es fällt ihm nicht ein, ^{resson-}
 die Körperlichkeit der reinen Geister zu be- ^{1910-9/18.}
 stehen. Die „materia primo prima“ die ^{Die total-}
 ihnen mit allem endlichen Seienden ^{heit der}
Sam ist, ist kein raum füllender Stoff, ^{Schrift}
 sondern etwas, was sich in der Körper- ^{umwelt-}
 welt und in der Geisteswelt ^{aus} repräsentiert ^{von P.}
 den verschiedenen Formen ^{besonders}. ^{Der} Ephe-
 Stoff der Geisteswelt ist also ^{komplex} von dem ^{als} hier
 der Körperwelt gattungsmäßig ^{verschie-}
 den. ^{den} Die „materia primo prima“ ^{ausgesprochen} ist ^{(Vgl. Hand-}
 nach Thomas Scotus die niederste ^{den Scotus-}
Stufe ^{1933 in}

Fig. 2.1 Endliches und ewiges Sein manuscript (fol. 828)

existent, as something that sets the individual form of the essence apart from the universal form of the essence”.³² The textual reference that she uses is an article by Reinhold Meßner entitled *Das Individuationsprinzip in skotistischer Schau*.³³

It is only in the seventh chapter: *The Image of the Trinity in the Created World*, while discussing the question of whether the angels are composed of form and matter, that Stein makes reference to the *Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio*. On the basis of an article by Marianus Müller,³⁴ Stein believed that Ephrem Longpré considered the authenticity of this work a certainty (*sicher angesehen*) (Figs. 2.1 and 2.2).

Below is a comparison of the two texts:

E. Stein, <i>Endliches und ewiges Sein</i> , p. 346, note 74 [English translation, p. 602, note 74]	M. Müller [and E. Longpré], <i>Stand der Skotus-Forschung 1933</i> , p. 67
The following exposition is based on the <i>Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio</i>	
[...] The authenticity of this work is regarded as certain by Ephrem Longpré (see <i>Stand der Skotusforschung 1933</i> ..., p. 67)	The authorship of the text entitled <i>De primo omnium rerum principio</i> is certain

Analysing the passage in question, Longpré and Müller are referring to the authenticity of the *Tractatus: De primo omnium rerum principio*, and not that of the *Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio*. Another reason for arguing that Stein had confused the two texts is that when preparing the annotated edition of the *Tractatus de primo principio*,³⁵ and specifically when discussing in the *prolegomena* the question of the work’s authorship, Marianus Müller relied on Longpré’s study.³⁶ In addition, Stein did not seem to notice that Meßner’s article contained an explicit reference to the dubious authenticity of the [*Quaestiones disputatae*] *de rerum principio*.³⁷

2.2 *Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio*: Historical and Literary Issues

Unlike the authentic *Tractatus de primo rerum omnium principio*, since the seventeenth century the *Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio* had been attributed to Duns Scotus on the basis of a single manuscript: Is.³⁸ Medievalists cast doubt on the

³²Ibid. pp. 408–409. English translation, p. 610.

³³See Meßner R. (1934).

³⁴See Müller M. (1934).

³⁵Duns Scotus J. (1941).

³⁶Ibid. p. ix (editor’s notes by Müller M.).

³⁷See Meßner R. (1934), p. 11 (note 10): “Specifically, the observation that the three works *De perfectione statuum*, *De rerum principio* and *Theoremata* are not original obliges us to review the description of the Scotist system [...]” (our translation).

³⁸Pits J. (1619), p. 392. For the abbreviations used to denote the codices, see Chap. 1 note 5.

des Seienden. Sie ist von Gott geschaffen ⁸²⁹
 als ein Seiendes ~~mit~~ eigenem Sein, als von der ff.
 der Form unterschieden, aber nicht ge- ^{Wissen-}
 haupt von der Form, sondern in dem ^{Schaf-}
 Gange, das aus Form und Stoff aufge- ^{und}
 baut ist. Sie ist gleichbedeutend mit ^{Wes-}
 der potentia passiva: d. i. in se ^{heit"}
^{11 1934,}
^{S. 67)}
 Trägheit des Nichtseins und darum
 der Vernichtungwendens, die allem Schafte-
 nen als solchem eigen ist; andererseits
 die Aufnahmebereitschaft und Formungs-
 fähigkeit.

Es ist nicht ~~strebend~~, die
 skotistische Theorie der Materie hier bis
 in alle Einzelheiten zu verfolgen und
 durch zu sprechen. Es soll nur versucht
 werden, das, was wir als „Kraft“ oder
 „Lebensfülle“ der Engel in Anspruch
 nehmen, mit der Materie in Beziehung
 zu bringen, die Duns Scotus dem Engel
 zuschreibt. Was wir im Auge haben,
 das gehört nach unserer Auffass-
 ung zum Geist als solchem, also auch
 zum göttlichen Geist. Darum kann es
 nicht mit passiver Potenz, mit der

Fig. 2.2 Endliches und ewiges Sein manuscript (fol. 829)

authenticity of the *quaestiones* when they pointed out that its strong Augustinian influence contradicted the Aristotelian orientation of *Doctor Subtilis* seen in his earlier works. Innumerable commentators on the thought of Scotus were then led astray by the hypothesis put forward by scholars such as Landry³⁹ and Harris,⁴⁰ who, in an attempt to justify the doctrinal discrepancies in the work, posited an evolution of Scotus' thought that was held to have led from the Augustinianism of *De rerum principio* to the Aristotelianism of *Opus Oxoniense*. The discovery of the T and V manuscripts enabled historians to definitively establish the author of the *quaestiones* and to demonstrate that some of them were written before Scotus and his teaching.

2.2.1 *Philological Analysis of the Manuscripts*

We shall now present the detailed description of the three codices (T, Is, V), with the relative history of the owners, adding detailed information about the position within the manuscripts of the *Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio*.

2.2.1.1 Todi, Biblioteca Comunale, cod. 95

T – Todi, Bibl. Comun., cod. 95⁴¹: codex membranaceus; fourteenth century; mm. 280×120; fols. 110. Text presented in two columns; writing performed by various people. The codex contains widely differing materials that are logically grouped: fols. 1–6 contain a pamphlet on the questions and notes concerning problems of physics, written in italic Gothic characters of the fifteenth century and probably added to the codex when it was bound, following the creation of the index. Fol. 7, written in Gothic characters of the thirteenth century school, lists the following rubrics: *quid sit justum bellum*; *quid possit bellum movere*; *quomodo componere debeat habens justum bellum cum adversario suo*; etc. From fol. 8r to the end, the codex is written in the same hand. On fols. 105r-107v there is an elaborate and detailed alphabetic *tabula* which, however, confuses some of the questions, is often inaccurate and contains omissions. On fols. 108r-110v there is another *tabula*. The reverse side of fol. 110 bears the words *Conventus Saxiferrati*, apparently

³⁹Landry B. (1922). The author argues that at the beginning of his career Scotus was influenced by the Augustinian doctrine in that he had not yet completely detached himself from the ideas of his first teachers, who were Augustinians (see *ibid.* 336–338). However, Landry's argument can be refuted in that Scotus' earliest writings, including the *Tractatus de primo rerum omnium principio*, contain no trace of these Augustinian influences.

⁴⁰Harris C. (1927), p. 371: "Such a discrepancy of doctrines needs a considerable amount of explanation, but it is not unintelligible if we assume a development of Scotus' thought from the traditional Augustinianism which was current at Oxford in his early days to the purer Aristotelianism which was fashionable at Paris".

⁴¹For a detailed description of the codex, see Leònij L. (1878), p. 95; Delorme F. (1926).

indicating that the codex was originally held in Sassoferrato in the Marches in Italy.⁴² It may have been moved from there to the monastery of San Fortunato in Todi, before being transferred to the municipal library of the town.

INC. (fol. 1r): “Utrum tempus sit in anima...”.

EXPL. (fol. 110v): “Expliciunt problemata 91 questionum in isto libro contentarum”.

Concerning the position of the *Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio* within the manuscript, the alphabetic *Tabula* (fol. 107v) groups 18 *quaestiones* below a common subheading: *Memorabilia questionum J <ohannis> de Persona*. This subheading was probably once written at the top of fol. 8r but was accidentally cut off by the binder. These 18 *quaestiones* occupy 7 columns of the codex (fols. 8r-9v). The column of fol. 9vd is left blank. On fols. 10ra-13vb there is a series of 11 *quaestiones*, attributed in the *Tabula* to Vitalis de Furno: *Memorabilia questionum fratris Vitalis de F <urno>*. On fols. 12vb-18ra there are 18 *quaestiones* of *Quodlibet I* by Vitalis de Furno, preceded by an *incipit*: *Incipit primum Quodlibet Vitalis*. On fols. 18ra-22ra there are 7 more brief *quaestiones*, referred to in the *Tabula* (fol. 108ra) as *Alie questiones Vitalis*, which correspond exactly, except the fifth, to *quaestiones* I–VI of *De rerum principio*. Immediately following this are 4 more *quaestiones*, referred to in the *Tabula* (fol. 108ra) as *Memorabilia quarumdam questionum*. Fols. 24rb to 51rb contain 7 *quaestiones disputatae de anima*: except for the first (fols. 24rb-27va), they are a literal reproduction of *quaestiones* VII–XII of *De rerum principio*. In the margin of fol. 51rb is a reference marking the beginning of the *Secundum Quodlibet, in quo sunt XIII questiones*, which ends on fol. 58rb. Fols. 58rb-89ra contain another 8 *quaestiones disputatae de cognitione*, of which the first, second and fourth correspond *ad litteram* to *quaestiones* XII, XIV and XV of *De rerum principio*. Fols. 89rb-104vb contain the 15 *quaestiones* of the *Tertium Quodlibet*, the author of which is Vitalis de Furno (Table 2.1).

2.2.1.2 Rome, Collegio S. Isidoro, cod. 1/15

Is – Rome, Colleg. S. Isidoro, cod. 1/15⁴³: codex membranaceus; fourteenth century approx.; mm. 220×165; fols. 103. The numbering of the folios was carried out in modern times, with the exception of the last two folios, on which no number appears (fols. 102–103). Fols. 16, 45, 52, 55 and 84 are damaged in numerous places. Fol. 101v is blank. The text is presented in two columns. The codex is composed of 4 quinions and 8 quaternions, the last of which is damaged;

⁴² See Appendix I (XXX *Marchiae Anconitanae, V Aesina*) in *Bullarium Franciscanum Romanorum Pontificum*, V, p. 599.

⁴³ For a description of the codex see Vitalis de Furno (1947), pp. x–xii. Once kept in the Archive of the General Curia of the Order of Friars Minor in Rome the codex is currently conserved in the Wadding Library of the Collegio S. Isidoro in Rome. I thank Father Mícheál Mac Craith O.F.M., superior of the Collegio S. Isidoro, for having kindly made the Is. codex available to me.

Table 2.1 *Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio* (comparison of three codices)

		Codices		V	
		T	Is		
<i>Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio</i>					
<i>De rerum principio</i>	q1.	<i>Utrum sit dare unum primum rerum omnium simpliciter et absolute?</i>	ff. 18ra-19va	ff. 1ra-3rb	–
	q2.	<i>Utrum a primo principio pluralitas, scilicet multitudo creaturarum, per se et immediate procedat?</i>	ff. 18va-19ra	ff. 3rb-6ra	–
	q3.	<i>Utrum primum principium absque sui mutatione possit novum effectum producere?</i>	ff. 19ra-19va	ff. 6ra-8vb	–
	q4.	<i>Utrum Deus de necessitate producat res?</i>	ff. 19va-20va	ff. 9ra-13vb	–
	q5.	<i>Utrum Deus possit aliquid educere de nihilo?</i>	ff. 21ra-21va	ff. 13vb-15va	–
	q6.	<i>Utrum creatura possit aliquid crea-re?</i>	ff. 21va-22ra	ff. 15va-18ra	–
	q7.	<i>Utrum substantia spiritualis per se subsistens, vel apta nata subsistere, imitatur fundamentum materiae?</i>	ff. 27va-30vb	ff. 24va-28va	–
<i>De anima et eius potentis</i>	q8.	<i>Utrum, supposito quod in omnibus substantis, tam spiritualibus quam corporalibus, sit materia, an sit in omnibus eadem secundum eandem rationem univocam?</i>	ff. 30vb-35ra	ff. 18ra-24va	–
	q9.	<i>Supposito quod anima rationalis sit composita ex materia et forma, utrum vere et essentialiter faciat unum cum corpore?</i>	ff. 35ra-42va	ff. 28va-38ra	–
	q10.	<i>Utrum sensitiva hominis sit a generante vel a create?</i>	ff. 42va-42vb	ff. 38ra-42ra	–
	q11.	<i>Utrum anima sit sua potentia?</i>	ff. 45vb-49vb	ff. 42ra-46va	–
	q12.	<i>Utrum sensitiva hominis sit in qualibet parte corporis?</i>	ff. 49vb-51rb	ff. 46va-48rb	–
<i>De cognitione</i>	q13.	<i>Supposito quod anima intellectiva in quantum intellectiva sit forma corporis, quaeritur utrum intellectus coniunctus intelligat singulare?</i>	ff. 58rb-63ra	ff. 48rb-53vb	–
	q14.	<i>Supposito quod intellectus coniunctus directe intelligat singulare, utrum talis intellectus intelligat universale vel particulare per speciem aliquam in intellectu impressam?</i>	ff. 63ra-67rb	ff. 53vb-59ra	–
	q15.	<i>Utrum intellectus cognoscat se et habitus suos per essentiam, vel per actus, vel per speciem, ET HOC EST QUAERERE: utrum essentia animae et suorum habituum sit et ratio cognoscendi sicut actus, vel requiratur species aliqua genita cognoscendis sui intellectus, quae sit ratio et medium cognoscendi eam?</i>	ff. 70vb-74rb	ff. 59ra-63rb	–

(continued)

Table 2.1 (continued)

		Codices		
		T	Is	V
<i>Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio</i>				
<i>De numeris, tempore et instanti</i>	q16.	<i>Utrum numerus differat re absoluta a rebus numeratis, ut ternarius quo numeramus tres lapides ab ipsis tribus lapidibus.</i>	ff. 63va-69va	ff. 93ra-98vb
	q17.	<i>Utrum unum accidens numero possit esse in diversis subiectis?</i>	ff. 69va-74vb	ff. 99ra-104rb
	q18.	<i>Utrum tempus et motus sint idem re, vel utrum tempus sit aliquid extra animam?</i>	ff. 74vb-80ra	ff. 104ra-109vb
	q19.	<i>Utrum sint solum duae mensurae durationis creaturarum?</i>	ff. 80ra-84va	ff. 109va-117rb
	q20.	<i>Utrum tempus sit idem numero</i>	ff. 84va-88rb	
	q21.	<i>Utrum sit dare tempus discretum</i>	ff. 88rb-94vb	ff. 117ra-123rb
	q22.	<i>Utrum sit idem instans aevi, temporis et aeternitatis?</i>	ff. 94vb-98rb	ff. 123ra-125vb
	q23.	<i>Quid sit instans, quomodo ad tempus comparetur?</i>	ff. 98rb-100rb	ff. 125va-128rb
	q24.	<i>Utrum instans possit dividi secundum rationem mensurae, et per diversos respectus possit opposita mensurare?</i>	ff. 100rb-101rb	ff. 128ra-129rb
	q25.	<i>Utrum Christus sit unum, vel plura?</i>	ff. 102ra-103ra	ff. 130ra-131rb
	q26.	<i>Utrum creatura rationalis sit capax gratiae vel alicuius accidentis, antequam sit in effectum</i>	ff. 103ra-103vb	ff. 131ra-132rb

the binding is modern. The codex was written in just one hand, with the exception of a final *colophon* (fol. 103vb), added subsequently by another writer no earlier than the mid fifteenth century: *Iste Quaestiones fuerunt disputatae Oxoniae per Magistrum Joannem Scotum de Ordine Fratrum Minorum; et sunt Quaestiones generales super Philosophiam*.⁴⁴ On fol. 101r, at the bottom of the space between the columns, is an annotation by the copyist. On the last page, at the top of the right-hand margin, is another note indicating the owner: *Iste quaestiones sunt ad usum mei (?) Fernandi de Ylliescas*.⁴⁵ The codex belonged to Fernandi de Ylliescas and was donated to Luke Wadding. It contains the *quaestiones* attributed to Duns Scotus.

INC. (fol. 1ra): “Quaeritur utrum sit dare unum primum principium omnium simpliciter et absolute. Circa istam quaestionem...”

EXPL. (fol. 103vb): “...in qua esse eius cognitum formaliter continetur ab aeterno et eius esse reale”.

Concerning the position of the *Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio* within the manuscript, the codex contains 26 *quaestiones*⁴⁶: [6] *De rerum principio* (fols. 1ra-18ra); [6] *De anima et eius potentiis* (fols. 24va-48rb); [3] *De cognitione* (fols. 48rb-63rb); [9] *De numeris, tempore et instanti* (fols. 63va-101rb); and [2] *quaestiones finales* (fols. 102ra-103vb).

In his edition of the works of Scotus of 1639, for which this was the only codex available to him, Wadding argued that the 26 *quaestiones* formed a whole with reference to *De rerum principio* – although only the first six were directly concerned with it – and on the basis of the final *colophon* he attributed them all to *Doctor Subtilis*.⁴⁷

2.2.1.3 Vatican City, Vatican Library, cod. lat. Borghesiano 192

V – Vatican City, Vatican Library, cod. lat. Borghes. 192⁴⁸: codex membranaeus; fourteenth century approx.; mm. 250 × 175; fols. I+ 145 (+124 bis). The codex contains widely differing materials. The text is presented in two columns; it was written by more than one person. Fols. Ir-v, 40v-44v, 84v, 129v, 146r-v are blank, although fols. 41v and 42v-44v have traces of writing in graphite pencil.

⁴⁴ See Fig. 2.3.

⁴⁵ See Fig. 2.3.

⁴⁶ The figure in square brackets gives the total number of *quaestiones* for each group.

⁴⁷ For a more detailed treatment of Wadding’s approach to the authenticity of *De rerum principio*, the reader is referred to Scaramuzzi D. (1930), pp. 392–393.

⁴⁸ For a description of this codex see Bierbaum M. (1920); Lottin O. (1937); Vitalis de Furno (1947), pp. xii–xiii; Maier A. (1952), pp. 245–248.

Accē utō sū i nob aut me ne ut dō
 ma est to exēplā rē offē acn atre
 ut bī id pōat n for qmūatō n
 i cō cōue nec exēne mli effō pōat
 n cōit pōnet pōales ē for exēplā
 q cōit rē abalēno pō d q p urij
 dām vāli exēplāta h sōli est for ex
 qua nate pō ē cōit q ad ē cōuale
 rōnle accidētō ut aho qm nō
 sū ut enō n cōit n an q fierent
 cū bā cōit pōatmāt nō hī n nec
 sūfīer dice q sūit exō dād esse
 exō hī ē cōitō sū alid pō ē cōit
 rē tale q nō pō alid rē q p mchil
 oīo collit quid q reale pōnet ad
 pōm rē vū aut pōnet ex hā
 iaret vābūto sē pōit opōnōis quō
 cōit an pōit acn nō hī vāle rēla
 tōm ad dīv ut rē pōit q cōnōnā
 nō ē cōit dīstīem vāli q rē sē h p
 rēferrī vāli n rēlātō exīstī rē
 q nō cōit nō exīstī sūmāt rē
 q dīcām q sūmāt pōit sū rē cōit
 nō rēlātō nō cōit nō rēlātō cōit
 nō rēferrī acn ut rē rēferrī acn
 acn rē cū dīa acn rē hī hīat
 cōit cōit dīcām mī rē rē rē
 ab exō pōat dīa cōit rē - p
 dīcām qle cōit hī an q sūmāt
 q sūmāt q nō dī hī mē q dī ē esse
 cōit q dīmūmī qd ē rē vū
 exīstī cōgnōscām rē nō q dīstīngē
 rē rēlātō quōm qōm rē rē hī
 cōit dīmūmī ad rē rēlātō rēlātō
 qū rē nō rē ex hī q rēlātō
 ab rēlātō dīcām sū rē p cōit hī
 ut vābūto nullām pōit dīcām rē
 fīlā hīlōpōm ad sūat cōit ex cōit
 vū dīcām rē mī qōd ad cōit cōit
 rē dīcām sū cōit rē rēlātō cōit
 reale rēlātō dīcām nō pō cōit
 cōit rēlātō vū rē hī rē i pō

Hec quod dicitur ad dicitur
 fernadi de yllustas

In actu quod dicitur in se esse
 hī ē aut cogit nō dīcām ad cōit
 nō tale hī dīstīngē sō hī ad dīcām
 nō ē rēferrī i pō sū hī rēlātō
 hī q dīcām vābūto rēlātō q
 hīerit alid ē esse ad ab esse
 q nō hī i pō hī hī cōit rēlātō
 exēplā rē cōit qōd sūmāt
 mēntī ab exō rē cōit rēle

Hic questiones fuerunt de dicitur
 cōit p magistru pōhannem
 sūmāt de cōit dīcām mī rē rē
 quōstīōnē rēlātō sūmāt pōhannem

Fig. 2.3 Codex Is: colophon (fol. 103vb)

INC. (fol. 1r): “Christiane religionis propositum in hoc precipue dicitur consistere ut a terrenis homines prouocet...”.

EXPL. (fol. 145v): “...cum predictis laboribus et expensis annexis et quod illis pensatis ad r(aci)onale precium et cetera”.

Concerning the position of the *Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio* within the manuscript, the codex contains opinions on the relationship between the clerical and religious states (fols. 1r-84r), including those of St Thomas Aquinas (fols. 1ra-40rb); William of Saint-Amour (fols. 45ra-60vb) and Nicholas of Lisieux (fols. 61ra-84rb). The rest of the codex (fols. 85ra-145vb) contains anonymous *quaestiones*: [6] *De Deo et productione rerum, de essentia et existentia* (fols. 85ra-92vb), all written by the same hand; [9] *De numeris, tempore et instanti* (fols. 93ra-129rb), written by someone else, which correspond word-for-word to codex Is fols. 63va-101rb. Lastly the codex ends with 28 *quaestiones* (fols. 130ra-145vb), the first two of which (130ra-132rb) correspond to the two *quaestiones finales* (fols. 102ra-103vb) of codex Is.

2.2.2 *Authenticity and Dating of the Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio*

The study of codices T and V, examined in all their parts, has enabled medievalists to definitively identify the author of the pseudo-epigraph attributed by Wadding to *Doctor Subtilis*, entitled *Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio*, and to establish, by means of a careful examination of the content of each *quaestio*, its *terminus a quo* and *terminus ad quem*. What I propose to do here is to address the *status quaestionis* of the 26 *quaestiones disputatae*. This analysis is performed in sections, given that the *quaestiones* can be easily grouped by topic.

2.2.2.1 *De rerum principio*: Quaestiones I–VI

Delorme’s analysis of codex T enabled him to establish that the seven *quaestiones* (fols. 18ra-22ra) referred to in the *Tabula* (fol. 108ra) as *Alie questiones Vitalis*⁴⁹ correspond, except for the fifth, to the first six of *De rerum principio*, published for

⁴⁹See Delorme F. (1926), pp. 428–429. The seven *quaestiones* in codex T are preceded by *Quodlibet I* by Vitalis de Furno (fols. 12vb-18ra), which in turn is preceded by *Memorabilia quaestionum fratris Vitalis de F <urno>*, fols. 10ra-13vb. Codex T conserves the *quaestiones disputatae* and *Quodlibet* by Vitalis de Furno in their chronological order.

the first time by Wadding in 1639 under the name of Duns Scotus. After him, other editors, such as Vivès and Fernandez García,⁵⁰ republished this work with the title of *De rerum principio* and held that its literary paternity should be attributed to *Doctor Subtilis* on the basis of codex Is, the only source that was available to Wadding. Delorme however resolves the question of the literary paternity of the first six *quaestiones* of *De rerum principio*, attributing them to Vitalis de Furno. This brought an end to the arguments about the identity of the text’s author, which had drawn the attention of medievalists such as Minges,⁵¹ Longpré⁵² and subsequently Carreras y Artau.⁵³ Their analysis of the content of *De rerum principio* highlighted the doctrinal incompatibility of this work with Scotus’ other writings, such as *Opus Oxoniense*, whose authorship was never in doubt. In many ways, *De rerum principio* is diametrically opposed to the thought of Scotus, to the point that it required some artifice by commentators to make it fit logically into the general scheme of Scotus’ works. It would not be possible to analyse the impact of Scotist influences on Stein’s own enquiries without fully taking account of the real author of this work.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ See Duns Scotus J. (1910), XCVI-624. In our study we shall refer to this edition since it was used by Stein for her works.

⁵¹ As early as 1905, Parthenius Minges, in the preface to his doctoral thesis at the University of Munich: *Ist Duns Scotus Indeterminist?*, argued that some of the works contained in Wadding’s edition – such as *De rerum principio* – could not be attributed to Scotus due to the numerous internal discrepancies. See Minges P. (1905), X-138; Minges P. (1917), p. 185: “Gewiß ist der Traktat *De rerum principio*, in welchem die Franziskanerlehre ausdrücklich und ausführlich bewiesen wird, zweifelhaft”. See also Spettmann H. (1923), p. 100. Other elements that should not be overlooked are the personal notes by Hedwig Conrad-Martius on Minges’ doctoral thesis (B III 7; 4 fols.), conserved in the *Exzerpte zur Philosophie Seit 1930* section of the Munich State Library, and a paper by Hubert Klug, *Die Lehre des Johannes Duns Scotus über Materie und Form* (B III 8; 3 fols.): see Avé-Lallemant E. (Ed.) (1975), p. 231. The notes by Conrad-Martius in the *Exzerpte* indicate that she shared Stein’s keen interest in certain themes that were intensely debated in the medieval context, such as the doctrine of matter.

⁵² Initially, Longpré noted that *De rerum principio* was clearly out of step with the authentic writings of *Doctor Subtilis* and indeed with the entire Franciscan tradition, but he did not go so far as to declare it inauthentic; see Longpré E. (1922). Towards the end of 1922, the author concluded that the work in question was not authentic; see Longpré E. (1924). For more information about the author, the reader is referred to Parent E. (1966).

⁵³ See Carreras y Artau J. (1923). The author’s analysis of the doctrines focuses on a few key points, such as the distinction between essence and existence and the principle of individuation. At the end of the work, in a long appendix, *Sobre la autenticidad del tratado De rerum principio* (pp. 74–84), the author reaches the same conclusion as Longpré: *Opus Oxoniense* and *De rerum principio* are by two different authors.

⁵⁴ In his research, Massimo Epis appears not to realise that on the basis of the new critical edition of Scotus’ works, *De rerum principio* is not considered to be authentic, since the real author is not Duns Scotus but Vitalis de Furno; see Epis M. (2003), p. 148.

Below we list the first seven *quaestiones* contained in codex T and compare them with the first six contained in *De rerum principio*:

Codex T	<i>De rerum principio</i> (García edition) – Codex Is
1. <i>Queritur utrum sit tantum unum principium primum omnium rerum: et arguitur quod sic...</i> (fols. 18ra-19va)	I. <i>Utrum sit dare unum primum principium rerum omnium simpliciter et absolute</i> (fols. 1ra-3rb)
2. <i>Queritur utrum ab uno principio possunt plura procedere immediate: arguitur quod sic...</i> (fols. 18va-19ra)	II. <i>Utrum a primo principio pluralitas, scilicet multitudo creaturarum, per se et immediate procedat, respondeo: circa istam quaestionem sic potest procedi...</i> (fols. 3rb-6ra)
3. <i>Queritur utrum a primo principio, quod est Deus, potest produci effectus novus sine aliqua permutatione in eo facta: et arguitur quod sic...</i> (fols. 19ra-19va)	III. <i>Utrum primum principium absque sui mutatione possit novum effectum producere. Cum queritur...</i> (fols. 6ra-8vb)
4. <i>Queritur utrum a primo principio procedant res per modum libertatis uel necessitatis: et arguitur quod...</i> (fols. 19va-20va)	IV. <i>Utrum Deus de necessitate producat res. Circa istam questionem sic est procedendum...</i> (fols. 9ra-13vb)
5. <i>Cum queritur utrum mundus quoad omnia que in eo sunt, subdatur divine providentiae, dicendum...</i> (fols. 20va-21ra)	
6. <i>Queritur utrum Deus possit aliquid de nichilo educere...</i> (fols. 21ra-21va)	V. <i>Utrum Deus possit aliquid educere de nichilo. Circa hanc questionem est sic...</i> (fols. 13vb-15va)
7. <i>Queritur utrum creatura possit aliquid de nichilo educere: et arguitur quod non...</i> (fols. 21va-22ra)	VI. <i>Utrum creatura possit aliquid creare? Circa istam questionem tria sunt ostendenda...</i> (fols. 15va-18ra)

The above comparison shows that there are similarities in the two codices in terms of both form and content. In addition, in both codices the *quaestiones* acquire a certain cohesiveness from the use of textual references linking one *quaestio* to the other: *secundum quod ostensum est in praecedenti quaestione* (q. II, art. 2, No. 52); *ut ostensum fuit in praecedenti quaestione* (q. II, art. 2, No. 57); *ostendi autem in praecedenti quaestione* (q. III, art. 2, No. 82); *ut ostensum fuit in alia quaestione* (q. V, art. 2, No. 155); *sicut visum est in quaestione de unitate principii* (q. V, art. 2, No. 160); *ut in praecedenti patuit quaestione* (q. VI, art. 1, No. 164); *ut ostensum fuerat supra in quadam quaestione de primitate* (q. VI, art. 1, No. 171).

Delorme notes that the first four *quaestiones* in codex T begin by following the typical pattern of scholastic disputes, with arguments for and against. All these arguments are completely omitted in codex Is. For the rest, in many parts of the two codices the structure of the *quaestiones* is identical and *quaestiones* 6 and 7 in codex T match perfectly with the corresponding *quaestiones* V and VI of *De rerum principio*. On the basis of these elements, Delorme identifies two parallel versions, one short (codex T), the other long (codex Is): the *quaestiones* contained in codex T are subsequent to (and shorter than) the six *quaestiones* contained in codex Is, of which they represent a faithful summary.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ See Delorme F. (1942).

Can the first six *quaestiones* of *De rerum principio* be said to contain a truly personal and original work by Vitalis de Furno? Another study by Dumont⁵⁶ demonstrates that Vitalis owes most of the material presented in *quaestiones* I, II, V and VI of his *De rerum principio* to the *Quaestiones disputatae de esse et essentia* by Aegidius Romanus (Giles of Rome, 1243–1316), as is clear from the topics and the content:

<i>De rerum principio</i> (García edition) – Codex. Is	Aegidius Romanus, <i>Quaestiones disputatae de esse et essentia</i> ⁵⁷
I. <i>Utrum sit dare unum primum principium rerum omnium simpliciter et absolute</i>	1. <i>Utrum sit dare plura principia simpliciter prima?</i>
II. <i>Utrum a primo principio pluralitas, scilicet multitudo creaturarum, per se et inmediate procedat</i>	2. <i>Utrum ab uno principio simplici possint procedere plura inmediate?</i>
III. <i>Utrum primum principium absque sui mutatione possit novum effectum producere</i>	
IV. <i>Utrum Deus de necessitate producat res</i>	
V. <i>Utrum Deus possit aliquid educere de nichilo</i>	3. <i>Utrum a primo principio, quod Deus est, possit aliquid produci ex nichilo?</i>
VI. <i>Utrum creatura possit aliquid creare?</i>	
<i>Circa istam questionem tria sunt ostendenda: primo, quod creatura creare non potest;</i>	
<i>secundo, quod nec communicari ei potest hoc;</i>	5. <i>Utrum creatura aliqua possit esse causa alicuius effectus ut sit ens et ut habet esse?</i>
<i>tertio, quod nec cooperari Deo potest</i>	Quodlibet V, I. ⁵⁸ : <i>Utrum [Deus] potuerit creature communicare potentiam creandi?</i>

Quaestiones I, II and V of *De rerum principio* correspond to *quaestiones* 1, 2 and 3 in *De esse et essentia* by Giles of Rome. Subdividing *quaestio* VI of *De rerum principio*, Dumont notes that in the first article Vitalis borrows extensively from *quaestio* 5 of *De esse et essentia*, while for the second article he makes reference to Giles’ *Quodlibet V, I*.⁵⁹ The latter detail enables us to determine the *terminus a quo* of the first six *quaestiones* in the work by Vitalis: Giles’ *Quodlibet V* is dated 1290, and Vitalis’ first six *quaestiones* cannot precede that date.⁶⁰

Not only are there considerable differences in this first group of *quaestiones* between the teachings of *De rerum principio* and *Opus Oxoniense*, but some of the doctrines contained it are entirely refuted by Scotus. The most important of these are: the claim that there is no univocal notion of being, valid for both God and His creatures, the real distinction between essence and existence and the

⁵⁶ See Dumont S. (1984).

⁵⁷ Aegidius Romanus (1503), fols. 2r-35v.

⁵⁸ Aegidius Romanus (1481).

⁵⁹ See Dumont S. (1984), p. 85.

⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 108.

Thomist theory that the principle of individuation in corporeal things is grounded in quantified matter.⁶¹

In his arguments Vitalis restates the positions of Giles of Rome that *Doctor Subtilis* explicitly refutes. It is precisely these doctrinal divergences that prompted the editor García,⁶² in an attempt to reconcile *De rerum principio* with Scotus' teaching, to assimilate the latter's thought to that of Giles of Rome.

As well as the ideas of Giles, the author of *De rerum principio* turns his attention to the doctrines of Arab philosophers, particularly Avicenna (actually a Persian), in order to refute them. This orientation is interesting, because it reveals that when Vitalis drew up his text, he had before his eyes Etienne Tempier's list of Condemnations, issued in 1277, which is largely directed against the speculations of Arab and Muslim thinkers.⁶³ This document is representative of the position of European intellectuals at that time, and Vitalis intended to demonstrate the validity of the Condemnations in his *quaestiones*.⁶⁴ The whole of *quaestio* IV: *Utrum Deus de necessitate producat res?* is directed against the doctrine of Avicenna, who argued that the creation was a necessary effect of divine activity. Vitalis found himself dealing with difficult problems arising from the relationship between human liberty and the certainty of divine prescience. *Quaestio* IV, *Articulus* II: *Ponitur et confirmatur opinio doctorum Catholicorum* is composed of six objections: *primo, quod Deus vult bonitatem suam et de necessitate, non necessitate coactionis quae tollit libertatem, sed necessitate immutabilitatis quae eam non excludit; secundo, quod vult alia a se et haec volendo se; tertio, quod voluntas Dei est causa rerum et nullum habet motivum in causando; quarto, quod Deus agendo res per voluntatem, nullo genere necessitatis eas agit, sed potuit non producere quidquid produxit, et ante vel post; quinto, oportet ostendere qualiter contingentia possit simul stare cum immutabilitate voluntatis et infallibilitate scientiae Dei de rebus; sexto, quomodo est certitudo in Scripturis et Prophetis et divinis promissis*. Of these, the third objection is used by Koyré in his monograph on Descartes.⁶⁵ In contrast Stein made reference to all six objections when she tackled the analysis of divine will in St Augustine and Scotus,⁶⁶ and the sixth objection was also to feature in her last work *Finite and Eternal Being*.⁶⁷

2.2.2.2 *De anima et eius potentiis*: Quaestiones VII–XII

After analysing the provenance of the first six *quaestiones* of *De rerum principio*, Delorme notes that in fols. 27va-51rb of codex T there is another group of

⁶¹ For a more detailed study of these doctrinal divergences the reader is referred to Longpré E. (1924), pp. 22–29; Longpré E. (1926).

⁶² See Duns Scotus J. (1910), p. 8, note 1.

⁶³ See Théry G. (1924).

⁶⁴ Duns Scotus J. (1910), q. 4, a. 2, No. 108, p. 62: “Sequitur secundo, videre quae sit positio Catholicorum, et eam confirmare”.

⁶⁵ See Stein E. & Conrad-Martius H. (Eds.) (2005), p. 193.

⁶⁶ See Stein E. (2005), p. 61.

⁶⁷ See Stein E. (2006a), p. 355. English translation, pp. 419–420.

quaestiones on the soul and its faculties which are, “from the first to the last word, the literal reproduction of *quaestiones* VII–XII of *De rerum principio*”.⁶⁸ The comparison of the two codices will limit itself to the *incipit* and *explicit* of each *quaestio*:

Codex T	<i>De rerum principio</i> (García edition) – Codex Is
1. <i>Questio est, utrum substantia spiritualis per se subsistens uel apta nata subsistere innatur fundamento materie. Ad evidentiam huius questionis...I sic nec sua compositio est terminata. Ad alia patet solutio ex dictis</i> (fols. 27va-30vb)	VII. <i>Utrum substantia spiritualis per se subsistens vel apta nata subsistere, innatur fundamento materiae. Ad evidentiam huius quaestionis...I sic nec sua compositio est terminata. Ad alia patet solutio ex dictis</i> (fols. 24va-28va)
2. <i>Questio est, supposito quod in omnibus tam spiritualibus quam materialibus sit materia, utrum in omnibus sit eadem secundum eandem rationem uniuocam quemadmodum in omni ligno ratio ligni est uniuoce. Respon-deo: circa istam questio-nem...I sed ut sunt sub hoc situ uel illo. Per hoc patet responsio ad omnia</i> (fols. 30vb-35ra)	VIII. <i>Utrum, supposito quod in omnibus substantiis, tam spiritualibus quam corporalibus, sit materia, an sit in omnibus eadem secundum eandem ratio-nem uniuocam. Respondeo: circa istam quaestionem...I sed ut sunt sub hoc situ vel illo. Per hoc patet ratio ad omnia</i> (fols. 18ra-24va)
3. <i>Questio est, supposito quod anima rationalis sit composita ex materia et forma, utrum uere et essentialiter faciat unum cum corpore. Respondeo: quedam hic de unitate...I hoc autem quantum ad omne genus operationis totaliter complebitur in statu glorie</i> (fols. 35ra-42va)	IX. <i>Supposito quod anima rationalis sit composita ex materia et forma, utrum uere et essentialiter faciat unum cum corpore. Respondeo: quedam hic de unitate...I hoc autem quantum ad omne genus operationis totaliter completur in statu glorie. Deo gratias, qui nos ad illum statum perducat</i> (fols. 28va-38ra)
4. <i>Queritur utrum sensitiua hominis sit a generante uel a creante: et arguitur quod sit a generante sic...I et in isto consistit finis nature. Ex hiis patet solutio ad argumenta in oppositum satis de se</i> (fols. 42va-42vb)	X. <i>Utrum sensitiva hominis sit a generante vel a creante. Arguitur quod sit a generante sic...I et in isto consistit finis naturae. Ex his satis patet solutio ad argumenta in oppositum</i> (fols. 38ra-42ra)
5. <i>Questio disputata fuit utrum anima sit sua potentia. Circa istam questionem oportet uidere primo...I et oportet, ut dictum est, quod illi respectus secundum rationes obiectorum determinen-tur organice et non organice modo supra dicto</i> (fols. 45b-49b)	XI. <i>Utrum anima sit sua potentia. Circa istam quaestionem primo oportet uidere...I et oportet, ut dictum est, quod illi respectus secundum relationes obiectorum determinentur, et sint organicae et non organicae, modo supra dicto</i> (fols. 42ra-46va)
6. <i>Questio nostra fuit utrum sensitiua hominis sit in qualibet parte corporis. Respondeo: tria sunt hic uidenda circa aspectum quem habet anima...I teneatis quod vultis; primus modus uide-retur michi ad presens esse probabilior</i> (fols. 49vb-51rb)	XII. <i>Utrum sensitiva hominis sit in qualibet parte corporis. Respondeo: quatuor sunt hic uidenda circa aspectum quem habet anima...I Teneatis quod vultis; primus modus videtur michi ad presens probabilior</i> (fols. 46va-48rb)

⁶⁸Delorme F. (1926), p. 434: “du premier au dernier mot la reproduction littérale des questions VII–XII du même *De rerum principio*” (our translation).

It is clear that the two groups of *quaestiones* in this comparison are by the same author, as are the *quaestiones* examined in Sect. 2.2.1, since their literary genre and the textual references linking one *quaestio* to the other show their common origin.⁶⁹

A careful analysis of *quaestiones* 3 and 5 of codex T (corresponding to *quaestiones* IX and XI of *De rerum principio*) enabled Delorme to establish beyond doubt that this work could not be by Scotus. The author of *De rerum principio* shows himself to be particularly interested in the theological debates that raged over the doctrines of Peter John Olivi (1248–1298): *quaestiones* 3 and 5 contain an attack by Vitalis on “Olivi’s theory concerning the union of the intellectual part of the human soul with the body, against which Olivi felt obliged to respond, point for point, in an *Appendix* to his *Quaestio* LI <in his *Quaestiones II libri Sententiarum*>”.⁷⁰ The textual reference to Olivi’s *quaestio* LI allows us to establish that the *terminus ad quem* of *quaestiones* I–XII of *De rerum principio* cannot be later than 1298.

In *Quaestio* VIII of *De rerum principio* Vitalis de Furno sets out the triple distinction – or rather grading – of matter into *materia primo prima*, *secundo prima e tertio prima*. Ironically, this distinction had originally been formulated by Arab thinkers, although Vitalis presents the idea as his own.

To clarify the different degrees of “matter”, we must assume as a starting point a fully constituted “body”, as it appears to us in reality, and attempt to pass through it – by means of our perception – moving from the outside inwards in such a way as to recover from the “complex” – i.e., the highest degree of matter – the “simple” or “common element” of the first degree of matter, below which there is the void.

⁶⁹Duns Scotus J. (1910), pp. 119–323: sicut ostensum fuit in primo articulo praecedentis quaestionis [...] Nec tamen ut ibi complete ostensum fuit [...] ut ibi dixi [...] ut ostendi [...] ut ibi patet (q. VIII, a. 1, No. 230); Et quia, ut dictum est in praecedenti quaestione (q. VIII, a. 1, No. 233); Item, ostensum fuit in praecedenti quaestione (q. VIII, a. 2, No. 241); ostensum est enim in praecedenti quaestione (q. VIII, a. 2, No. 243); ut patuit in praecedenti quaestione (q. VIII, a. 2, No. 245); ut ostensum est in praecedenti quaestione (q. VIII, a. 6, No. 281); quia satis declaratum est in praecedentibus quaestionibus, in distinctis articulis (q. IX, a. 1, No. 287); ut visum est in praecedenti quaestione (q. IX, a. 1, No. 288); Huius positionis falsitas quoad hoc quod dicit sensitivum ab extra fieri, supra patuit in praecedenti quaestione valde clare (q. XI, a. 2, No. 397); ut patuit supra in quaestione de unione animae (q. XI, a. 2, No. 401); Item, omnis forma communicat actum suae materiae, vel saltem composito, ut patuit in quaestione de unione animae (q. XI, a. 2, No. 402); ut ostensum fuit in quaestione de compositione animae (q. XI, a. 3, No. 409); Ostensum est autem supra, quod sensitiva et intellectiva vere habent rationem formae respectu corporis humani (q. XII, a. 1, No. 426); ut dictum est in praecedenti quaestione de potentiis animae (q. XII, a. 3, No. 433).

⁷⁰Delorme F. (1926), p. 449: “attaqua la théorie de Pierre Olivi sur le mode d’union de la partie intellectuelle de l’âme humaine avec le corps et contre lequel Pierre Olivi se crut en devoir de répondre point par point dans *Appendix* à sa *Quaestio* LI <in his *Quaestiones II libri Sententiarum*>” (our translation).

We must thus start from the *materia tertio prima*, which designates the body used by a cause in order to produce a new being: it is concrete, insofar as it constitutes a clearly determined body.⁷¹ For example, let us take the case in which an artist, such as Michelangelo, carves the figure of David from a block of marble. What is manifested in the eyes of the artist and what is now “in front of him”, is a fully constituted body that can be perceived by sight and touch. Thus the marble is the matter of the statue since the marble has enabled the idea of the artist to be fulfilled. It is clear that something has “cooperated”, something without which that fulfilment would have been unthinkable: an “agent cause”, without which the statue of David would not be present and could not be something “concrete”, has availed itself of the matter of the marble. The matter of the marble therefore constitutes the starting point of the “concrete complex” that has enabled the coming into reality of a concrete “*tode ti*”.

At a lower level of matter, once we have moved past the clearly determined body of the *materia tertio prima*, we find the *materia secundo prima*: this represents the passive principle of “corporeal” substances and is none other than the fulfilment of our abstract idea of a body. Not belonging to the real and concrete, it no longer designates matter in the common sense, such as the marble used to make the statue of David, but only what belongs to the essence of all material bodies. Indeed, in all material bodies, for example Michelangelo’s David, there is a “something” that cannot be identified with the mere marble. This second degree of matter includes a formal element that functions as a key component in the constitution of the material *concretum*. The *materia secundo prima* thus represents the substrate for substantial change, generation and corruption: it is not simple, but is composed of a matter and a form that determine it. In addition, it is quantitatively determined and is common to all corporeal things. However, it is not *pure* matter since it is already committed to a kind of substantial form⁷² and has a “certain” quantity. Obviously the “quantity” ascribable to the *materia secundo prima* should not be understood as fully accomplished, but as an indeterminate quantity with undefined edges, which requires an “action” by natural agents that are then able to make it determinate by impressing a specific form on it, as in the case of Michelangelo’s David.

⁷¹ See Duns Scotus J. (1910), q. VIII, a. 3, No. 254: “Dicitur autem materia tertio prima materia cuiuslibet artis, et materia cuiuslibet agentis naturalis particularis; quia omne tale agit veluti de aliquo semine, quod quamvis materia prima sit respectu omnium quae per artem producuntur, supponit tamen materiam quae est subiectum generationis, et ulterius aliquam formam per naturam productam [...]”.

⁷² See *ibid.* *quaestio* VIII, a. 3, No. 253: “Dicitur autem materia secundo prima quae est subiectum generationis et corruptionis, quam mutant et transmutant agentia creata, seu Angeli, seu agentia corruptibilia; quae, ut dixi, addit ad materiam primo primam; quia esse subiectum generationis non potest sine aliqua forma substantiali, aut sine quantitate, quae sunt extra rationem materiae primo primae”.

At a deeper level is the *materia primo prima*, common to all created beings whether corporeal or spiritual, which is the same in angels, human beings and physical bodies both corruptible and incorruptible. Its main characteristic is passivity, the power to become anything at all.⁷³

This brief description of the theory of matter contained in *De rerum principio* proves that it cannot be by Scotus, whose authentic works do not recognise the tripartite division of matter, but only one matter, the *materia primo prima*.⁷⁴

2.2.2.3 *De cognitione*: Quaestiones XIII–XV

On fols. 58rb-89ra, codex T contains a group of eight *quaestiones disputatae* on knowledge, of which the first, second and fourth correspond to *quaestiones* XIII–XV of *De rerum principio*.⁷⁵

Codex T	<i>De rerum principio</i> (García edition) – Codex Is
1. <i>Supposito quod anima intellectiva in quantum intellectiva sit forma corporis, est questio nostra utrum intellectus coniunctus intelligat singulare. Respondeo: circa istam questionem tria ostendo... prior est notitia singularis et a sensu et ab intellectu quam notitia universalis</i> (fols. 58rb-63ra)	XIII. <i>Supposito quod anima intellectiva in quantum intellectiva sit forma corporis, quaeritur utrum intellectus coniunctus intelligat singulare. Respondeo: circa hanc quaestionem tria ostendo... prior est notitia singularis, et a sensu et ab intellectu, quam notitia universalis</i> (fols. 48rb-53vb)
2. <i>Questio nostra est, supposito quod intellectus conjunctus directe intelligat singulare secundum modum in precedenti questione expositum, utrum talis intellectus intelligat uniuersale uel particulare per speciem aliquam in intellectu impressam</i>	XIV. <i>Supposito quod intellectus coniunctus directe intelligat singulare, utrum talis intellectus intelligat uniuersale vel particulare per speciem aliquam in intellectu impressam?</i>

(continued)

⁷³Ibid. *quaestio* VIII, a. 2, No. 235: “Materia enim de ratione sua nominat substantiam quamdam actu in composito existentem cuius actualitas est imperfecta, et actualitati omnis formae opposita. Unde nominat illam substantiam modo absoluto, absque respectu positivo ad aliud. Potentia vero passiva materiae nominat ipsam eandem substantiam sub respectu ad formam, sub indifferentia tamen ad omnes, et hoc in quantum nec est in motu, nec in quantum est in transmutatione ad aliquam istarum; [...] nec ad unam potius quam ad aliam; et sic potentia passiva nominat materiam sub respectu ad formas. Unde aliud quam respectus fundatus in materia: [...] Et hoc est potentia pure passiva, ad quam habet reduci omnis ratio potentiae passivae”.

⁷⁴See Duns Scotus J. (1993), *Lectura II*, dist. 12, No. 1–81, pp. 69–101. The term “lectura” (literary form) refers to the text of the teaching of a *magister* on a specific theme, based on notes by his students over the course of a number of lessons. Usually it is a simple *reportatio*, unlike the course programme drawn up by the *magister* himself, which is called an *expositio* or *apparatus*; see Weijers O. (1987), pp. 299–301; Teeuwen M. (2003), pp. 292–297.

⁷⁵See Delorme F. (1926), pp. 440–442.

Codex T	<i>De rerum principio</i> (García edition) – Codex Is
<i>Circa istam questionem tria sunt declaranda... a specie que est in sensu sicut a specie que est in imaginatiua (fols. 63ra-67rb)</i>	<i>Circa istam quaestionem tria sunt declaranda... a specie quae est in sensu, sicut a specie quae est in imaginativa (fols. 53vb-59ra)</i>
3. <i>Questio nostra fuit, supposito quod intellectus humanus conjunctus intelligat per speciem informantem, utrum illam speciem recipiat ab obiecto uel formatam de seipso. Circa istam questionem sic procedo... et sic semper ut mouet se est in actu, ut est motum, est in potentia (fols. 67rb-70vb)</i>	
4. <i>Questio nostra fuit utrum intellectus cognoscat se et habitus suos per essentiam suam uel per actus uel per speciem, et hoc est querere utrum essentia anime et quorum habituum sit ei ratio cognoscendi se <et> eos uel ratio cognoscendi sit actu uel requiratur species aliqua genita in actu cognoscentis seu intellectus, que est ratio et medium cognoscendi ea. Ad huius questionis euentiam est sciendum... per speciem expressam in actu cogitantis se et intelligentis (fols. 70vb-74rb)</i>	XV. <i>Utrum intellectus cognoscat se et habitus suos per essentiam, uel per actus, uel per speciem, et hoc est querere: utrum essentia animae et quorum habituum sit ei ratio cognoscendi sicut actus, uel requiratur species aliqua cognoscendi sui intellectus, quae sit ratio et medium cognoscendi eam. Ad huius quaestionis euentiam est sciendum... dum abstracta est ab imaginatione rerum corporalium arguitivam (fols. 59ra-63rb)</i>
5. <i>Questio nostra est utrum intellectus conjunctus cognoscat substantiam rei materialis per propriam speciem substantie uel solum per accidentia. Circa hanc questionem uarii sunt modi... propter certitudinem quorum actuum. Ad argumenta (fols. 74rb-77vb)</i>	
6. <i>Questio nostra est utrum intellectus conjunctus, ad hoc quod intelligat rem, indigeat actuali existentia rei. Circa quod est sciendum quod non est hic intentio... Ex hiis satis patet solutio ad argumenta (fols. 77vb-81vb)</i>	
7. <i>Questio nostra est utrum intellectus conjunctus lumine naturali cognoscat futura. Respon-deo: Ut modus notitiae et cognitionis humane... fuit satis tactum. Per hoc patet solutio ad argumenta in oppositum (fols. 81vb-84va)</i>	
8. <i>Questio nostra est utrum intellectus conjunctus ad certitudinem ueritatis indigeat irradiatione luminis increati uel lumen naturale sibi sufficiat ut saltem de rebus inferioribus ueritatem apprehendat. Ad huiusmodi questionis euentiam... objective cognoscitur in uia (fols. 84vb-89ra)</i>	

Codex Is reproduces only *quaestiones* 1, 2 and 4, and omits or ignores the remaining five. The eight *quaestiones* contained in codex T constitute a homogeneous and coherent group, the parts of which are closely interrelated, as shown by the continuous textual references linking one *quaestio* to another.⁷⁶

From the title of the first *quaestio*: *Supposito quod anima intellectiva in quantum intellectiva sit forma corporis* (codex T, fol. 58rb), it may be assumed that the eight *quaestiones* listed above follow on from the previously analysed group on the nature of the soul, i.e., *quaestiones* VII–XII: *De anima et eius potentiis*.⁷⁷ In addition, the phrase on fol. 84ra (*Sicut declaravi in quadam questione quam disputavi, utrum scilicet Deus de necessitate producat*) constitutes an explicit reference to *quaestio* IV: *Utrum Deus de necessitate producat res?*, of *De rerum principio*, which is therefore assumed to be by the same author. For Delorme there can be no doubt: Vitalis de Furno is the undisputed author of the first 15 *quaestiones* of *De rerum principio*.

2.2.2.4 *De numeris, tempore et instanti*: *Quaestiones XVI–XXIV*

Only codex V (fols. 93ra-129rb) contains the text of *quaestiones* XVI–XXIV of *De rerum principio*.⁷⁸ The following comparison of the two texts is limited to the transcription of the *incipit* and the *explicit* of each *quaestio*:

Codex V	<i>De rerum principio</i> (García edition) – Codex Is
1. <i>Questio nostra fuit utrum numerus differat re absoluta a rebus numeratis, ut ternarius quo numerantur tres lapides, ab ipsis tribus lapidibus. Respondeo. Tria sunt hic intelligenda...inconueniens quod prius. Et ideo dicitur aliter</i> (fols. 93ra-98vb)	XVI. <i>Utrum numerus differat re absoluta a rebus numeratis, ut ternarius quo numeramus tres lapides ab ipsis tribus lapidibus. Respondeo: tria sunt hic tractanda...inconueniens quod prius. Et ideo dicitur aliter</i> (fols. 63va-69va)
2. <i>Queritur utrum unum accidens numero possit esse in diuersis substantiis. Respondeo. Duo sunt hic dicenda...non interruptitur</i> (fols. 99ra-104rb)	XVII. <i>Utrum unum accidens numero possit esse in diuersis subiectis. Respondeo: duo sunt hic videnda...non interruptum</i> (fols. 69va-74vb)

(continued)

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ The reader is referred to a study by Delorme in which the author highlights the strong textual links between these eight *quaestiones* and the previous *quaestiones disputatae* on the soul and its faculties, particularly *quaestiones* VII and XII of *De rerum principio*. A further reason for arguing that the author is Vitalis de Furno is also to be found in the continuous explicit references in the *quaestiones* to his *Quodlibeta* I (fols. 12vb-18ra) and II (fols. 51rb-58rb): see Delorme F. (1927). For a basic bibliography on the doctrine contained in the *quaestiones*: *De cognitione*, see: Intervint L., von (1955); Bonafede G. (1961), pp. 232–237; Putallaz F.X. (1991).

⁷⁸ See Glorieux P. (1938).

Codex V	<i>De rerum principio</i> (García edition) – Codex Is
3. <i>Queritur utrum tempus et motus sint idem re uel utrum tempus sit aliquid extra animam. Respondeo. Cum tempus sit accidens quoddam... causa corruptionis. Ad aliud patet solutio</i> (fols. 104ra-109vb)	XVIII. <i>Utrum tempus et motus sint idem re, vel utrum tempus sit aliquid extra animam. Respon-deo: Cum tempus sit accidens quoddam... causa corruptionis. Ad aliud patet solutio</i> (fols. 74vb-80ra)
4. <i>Queritur utrum sint solum due mesure duracionis creaturarum. Respondeo quod innata est nobis uia... magis quam in alio motu locali</i> (fols. 109va-117rb)	XIX–XX. <i>Utrum sint solum duae mensurae durationis creaturarum. Respondeo, quod innata est nobis via... magis quam in alio motu locali</i> (fols. 80ra-84va; 84va-88rb) ⁷⁹
5. <i>Queritur utrum sit dare tempus discretum. Respondeo. Cum di-scretum ex unitatibus indiuisi-bilibus componatur... actiones angeli, potest responderi et cetera</i> (fols. 117ra-123rb)	XXI. <i>Utrum sit dare tempus discretum. Respondeo: Cum di-scretum ex unitatibus indivisi-bilibus componatur... mensurans actiones Angeli, potest respon-deri etc.</i> (fols. 88rb-94vb)
6. <i>Queritur utrum sit idem instans eui, temporis et eterni-tatis. In questione ista duo sunt uidenda... tacta est in primo articulo et cetera</i> (fols. 123ra-125vb)	XXII. <i>Utrum sit idem instans aevi, temporis et aeternitatis. In quaestione ista duo sunt viden-da... tacta est in primo articulo</i> (fols. 94vb-98rb)
7. <i>Queritur utrum sit idem instans in toto tempore secundum rem, diuerssum tamen secundum esse. Respondeo. Sicut dicit Commentator... nec est pars temporis</i> (fols. 125va-128rb)	XXIII. <i>Quid sit instans, quomodo ad tempus comparetur: Respon-deo: sicut dicit Commentator... et non continuatum ad ipsum, omnino est non ens</i> (fols. 98rb-100rb)
8. <i>Queritur utrum instans quod secundum se est indiuisibile possit diuidi secundum rationem mesure per diuerssos respectus possit opposita mensurare sic et quodam modo naturam plurium signorum habere. Respondeo. Ad huius questionis euidenciam... Quamuis non faciant plus quam unum instans //</i> (fols. 128ra-129rb) ⁸⁰	XXIV. <i>Utrum instans possit diuidi secundum rationem mensu-rae, et per diuersos respectus possit opposita mensurare. Res-pondeo: ad huius quaestionis euidenciam... quamvis non faciant plus quam unum instans //</i> (fols. 100rb-101rb)

Quaestiones XVI–XXIV form a fairly homogeneous group in terms of thematic unity. They tackle questions of number, numerical unity, time, duration and the instant. From a comparison of the two codices (Is+V), Glorieux points out that “exactly the same imperfections and gaps contained in *De rerum <principio>* are found in the Roman manuscript”.⁸¹ This suggests that either codex Is was copied from codex V or that they were both copied from some other source.

⁷⁹In Codex V, *Quaestiones XIX–XX: Utrum sint solum duae mensurae durationis creaturarum?* and *Utrum tempus sit idem numero* have been grouped into a single *quaestio* entitled *Queritur utrum sint solum due mesure duracionis creaturarum* (fols. 109va-117rb).

⁸⁰In codex V the *quaestio* is interrupted – halfway through the first column of fol. 129ra – at the same point as in codex Is: *quamvis non faciant plus quam unum instans //*.

⁸¹Glorieux P. (1938), p. 229: “les incorrections et les lacunes que présente le *De rerum <principio>*, se trouvent trait pour dans le Ms. romain” (our translation).

For Delorme, Vitalis de Furno was also the author of this group of *quaestiones*, although there are only two indications that this is the case, and these are both found in *quaestio* XVII: *Utrum unum accidens numero possit esse in diversis subiectis?*⁸² The first is its resemblance to *quaestio* V of *Quodlibet* VI by Godfrey of Fontaines⁸³: *Utrum aliquod accidens unum numero possit esse in duobus subiectis* (the parallels with Godfrey's *Quodlibet* are even more evident in *quaestiones* XXV–XXVI, which will be analysed shortly). The second is the striking similarity between *quaestio* XVII and *quaestio* VIII, incontrovertibly attributed to Vitalis, concerning the doctrine of *materia prima*.⁸⁴ The observation that Vitalis used Godfrey's *Quodlibet* VI enabled Glorieux to establish the *terminus a quo* of *quaestiones* XVI–XXIV in *De rerum principio* at some time around 1289, the year when Godfrey presented his dispute. Chronologically, Glorieux also dates *quaestiones* I–XV of *De rerum principio* to about 1289, since in *quaestiones* I and XXI Vitalis makes use of *Quodlibet* XIII by Henry of Ghent, written in the same year as *Quodlibet* VI by Godfrey of Fontaines.⁸⁵ However, this dating by Glorieux cannot be considered reliable, since Vitalis' use of Giles of Rome's *Quodlibet* V in *quaestiones* I–VI, dated to 1290, proves that the first set of *quaestiones* I–XV cannot have been written before 1290. It follows that the *terminus a quo* of *quaestiones* XVI–XXIV cannot be extended to *quaestiones* I–XV of *De rerum principio*. It may thus be fairly assumed that the two groups of *quaestiones* were drawn up in different periods, which is also indicated by the difference in the doctrines that are discussed in them. Further evidence for this hypothesis is the fact that only codex Is contains the two blocks of *quaestiones* (I–XV, XVI–XXIV) together, while codex T contains only *quaestiones* I–XV and codex V the remainder (*quaestiones* XVI–XXIV).

2.2.2.5 *Quaestiones selectae*: *Quaestiones* XXV–XXVI

In fols. 130r-145v, codex V contains 28 *quaestiones*, of which the first two correspond to *quaestiones* XXV–XXVI, which conclude *De rerum principio* (codex Is fols. 102ra-103vb).

Codex V	<i>De rerum principio</i> (García edition) – Codex Is
1. <i>Queritur utrum christus sit unum uel plura. Respondeo. Primo declarandum quod est unum secundum subpositum et plura secundum naturam. Unde Damascenus, tertio libro, capitulo XV: unus quidem est christus... Sed sibi hoc competit per unionis gratiam et cetera</i> (fols. 130ra-131rb)	XXV. <i>Utrum Christus sit unum, vel plura. Respondeo: primo declarando, quod est unum secundum suppositum, et plura secundum naturam. Unde Damascenus, III. lib. Orthod. fidei, ca. 15: Unus idemque est Christus... Sed sibi hoc competit per unionis gratiam, etc.</i> (fols. 102ra-103ra)

(continued)

⁸² See Delorme F. (1925).

⁸³ See Hoffmans J. & Pelzer A. (Eds.) (1937), pp. 122–132.

⁸⁴ See Glorieux P. (1938), p. 230.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* p. 231.

Codex V	<i>De rerum principio</i> (García edition) – Codex Is
2. <i>Queritur utrum creatura rationalis sit capax gratie uel alicuius accidentis an(te)quam sit in effectu. Respondeo. Primo est tacendo (sic) quedam opinio que potest (sic) esse existencie (?) ab eterno et cetera. Sed hoc uidetur inconueniens... non diferat natura potentia et cetera (fols. 131ra-132rb)</i>	XXVI. <i>Utrum creatura rationalis sit capax gratiae uel alicuius accidentis, antequam sit in effectu. Respondeo: primo est ponenda quaedam opinio, quae ponit esse essentias ab aeterno, etc.... et eius esse reale //</i> (fols. 103ra-103vb) ⁸⁶

In a study of *quaestiones* XXV–XXVI, Delorme points out that “the author of *De rerum principio* has used three *Quaestiones* of Godfrey of Fontaines, the first of his *Quodlibet VI*, and the first and third of his *Quodlibet VIII*, incorporating them into his own work sometimes as fragments and sometimes whole. On reflection, he has committed outright plagiarism”.⁸⁷ This last group of *quaestiones*, which are really nothing more than simple extracts from Godfrey’s *Quodlibet VI* and *VIII*, was drawn up between 1291 and 1295.⁸⁸

From my own study of codex Is, it appears that *quaestiones* XXV–XXVI were added subsequently and that their presence in the collection should not be taken into consideration: Fol. 101r bears the signature of the copyist, and *quaestiones* XXV–XXVI are preceded by the *verso* side of fol. 101, which is left blank. It may thus be assumed that *quaestiones* XXV–XXVI do not belong to the *quaestiones disputatae* by Vitalis de Furno. On the basis of the analysis conducted, Delorme argues that *quaestiones* XXV–XXVI have the same characteristics as *quaestio* XVII: the content, the continuous correspondences with *quaestio* 5 of Godfrey’s *Quodlibet VI*⁸⁹ and the style adopted are typical of Vitalis de Furno.

2.3 Vitalis de Furno: Scriptor, Compiler, Commentator, Auctor?⁹⁰

The Franciscan Vitalis de Furno (1260 ca. – 1327), the undisputed author of *Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio*, has drawn the attention of historians due to the elaborate way in which he wrote and presented his *quaestiones*. Here we

⁸⁶Quaestio XXVI in codex Is is damaged and immediately following it a scribe has placed the final colophon: *Iste Quaestiones fuerunt disputatae Oxoniae per Magistrum Joannem Scotum de Ordine Fratrum Minorum; et sunt Quaestiones generales super Philosophiam*; see *supra* (Fig. 2.3).

⁸⁷Delorme F. (1925), p. 293 (our translation).

⁸⁸Ibid. p. 295.

⁸⁹Ibid. pp. 288–292.

⁹⁰Bonaventurae Sancti. (1882), 14a-15a: “Ad intelligentiam dictorum notandum, quod quadruplex est modus faciendi librum. Aliquis enim scribit aliena, nihil addendo vel mutando; et iste mere dicitur *scriptor*. Aliquis scribit aliena, addendo, sed non de suo; et iste *compiler* dicitur. Aliquis scribit et aliena et sua, sed aliena tamquam principalia, et sua tamquam annexa ad evidentiam; et iste dicitur *commentator*, non auctor. Aliquis scribit et sua et aliena, sed sua tamquam principalia, aliena tamquam annexa ad confirmationem; et talis debet dici *auctor*”.

present a short bibliographical and biographical profile followed by some concluding remarks on the work examined. An overall verdict on his work is not offered, since although Vitalis managed to develop his own original thought, for many researchers he is merely a compiler who made use of the writings of his immediate predecessors.

2.3.1 *Biographical and Bibliographical Profile of the Author*

Vitalis de Furno⁹¹ was born in Basaz, a small town in the province of Auch, in Aquitaine, about 60 km south-east of Bordeaux. His date of birth is unknown, but most scholars believe it was around 1260.⁹² He entered the Franciscan Order in the province of Aquitaine at a very young age⁹³ and was sent in 1285 to the *Studium generale* in Paris where he studied under the guidance of *magister* Jacobus de Carceto.⁹⁴ There, between 1291 and 1292, he also wrote about Pietro Lombardo's *Liber Sententiarum*. It seems he was a co-disciple of Scotus, who was in Paris in the same period (1292). It is highly probable, according to Callebaut, that Scotus was at the University of Paris from 1293 to 1296.⁹⁵

Opinions differ on Vitalis' *curriculum vitae* concerning the period when he was a *magister* in Paris. Based on the study by Glorieux,⁹⁶ we believe that Vitalis was *magister regens* in Paris in 1292–1294, before being appointed *lector* at the

⁹¹Vitalis mentions his surname “du Four” in his *Quodlibet II, quaestio 3*: Quarebantur tertio de Deo ut unitor naturae humanae duo, et primo: Utrum corpus Christi possit esse simul in diversis locis? In Vitalis de Furno (1947), p. 63: “Item, ponatur quod idem corpus sit Romae et Parisius, Parisius in furno, Romae in Tiberi; ergo simul erit calidum et frigidum, et sic calidum et non calidum, et per consequens contradictio. [...] et in uno loco occiditur et in alio nutritur, et sic vivit et non vivit”. The name derives from the name of the place, or from a baker's oven built in the past for his family.

⁹²For a basic bibliography on the life of Vitalis de Furno, see, in chronological order: Geremia da Bologna (1890); Langlois C.V. (1927); Vitalis de Furno (1947), pp. v–ix; Godefroy de Paris (1950); Untervintl L., von (1955), pp. 53–57; Lynch J. (1972); d’Onofrio G. (Ed.) (1996), pp. 53–55.

⁹³Godefroy de Paris (1950), pp. 3111–3112; Vitalis de Furno (1947), p. vi: “Matris nostrae religionis sanctissimae quae ab infantia suo lacte dulcissimo nos nutrit et tenere educavit”. Letter of May eighth by Vitalis, by then a cardinal, on the occasion of the general chapter of his Order which had gathered in Barcelona.

⁹⁴The name of his magister is confirmed by an inscription of the fifteenth century (codex Vat. lat. 1095) found at the beginning of a comment on the fourth *Liber Sententiarum*: Langlois C.V. (1927), p. 295: “Iste quartus Sententiarum fuit recollectus Parisius per magistrum fratrem Vitalem de Furno, quia postea fuit cardinalis, sub magistro fratre Jacobo de Carceto. Et postea per eundem fratrem Vitalem fuit lectus in Montepessulano tempore quo frater Jacobus de Fabr. ibi erat studens”.

⁹⁵See Callebaut A. (1924).

⁹⁶See Glorieux P. (1933). One of a series of Franciscans who taught in Paris, Vitalis was *magister regens* in the period 1292–1294, succeeding Jacobus de Carceto (1291–1292) and preceding Simone de Lens (1294–1295).

Studium generale in Montpellier in 1295–1296. During his stay in this city, Vitalis republished the *lectura* that he had drawn up in Paris based on the lessons of his *magister* Jacobus de Carceto and resumed his commentary on the *IVum Librum Sententiarum*.⁹⁷

In 1297 he moved to the University of Toulouse, where he taught for 10 years⁹⁸ and took an active part in the refutation of Peter John Olivi’s theory on the manner in which the rational part of the soul is united to the body, referred to in *quaestiones* IX and XI of *De rerum principio*. As a consequence, on Olivi’s death (1298), Vitalis participated in the theological debates and coercive measures that formed the prelude to the definitive proscription of Olivi’s ideas. In the final years of his teaching post in Toulouse, before being appointed Provincial Minister of Aquitaine (1307), he published *Speculum morale totius Sacrae Scripturae* (1305).

In 1309 Pope Clement V asked him to examine Peter John Olivi’s suspect doctrinal orthodoxy and to respond to the four questions facing the Franciscan Order regarding the controversy between the “Spiritual Franciscans”, headed by Olivi, and the rest of the Community over how to interpret the vow of poverty: *abdicatio domini* or *usus pauper*. Subsequently the same Pope invited him to take part in the Council of Vienna (16 October 1311) and then made him cardinal-priest of San Martino *in montibus* (23 September 1312). As a cardinal, Vitalis continued to concern himself with issues within the Franciscan Order. After the death of Clement V (†20 April 1314), he supported the candidacy of the future Pope John XXII, who was elected on August 7th 1316, subsequently granting Vitalis many privileges.

However, his harmonious relationship with the Pope was soon to break down on the occasion of a consistory (1323) held to address the controversy over how to interpret the rule of the Friars Minor regarding poverty. When John XXII asked whether it was heretical to argue that Jesus Christ and his apostles had never possessed anything, either as individuals or as group,⁹⁹ Vitalis declared himself to be emphatically in favour of the Franciscan position of absolute poverty, placing himself in opposition to the line followed by the Pope. Four years later, cardinal Vitalis de Furno died in Avignon on August 16th 1327, and was buried in the local church of the Friars Minor.

Vitalis’ literary activity was highly varied: he wrote works of philosophy, theology, exegetics and homilies. Most of them have been published in volumes edited by Delorme.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ A second lesson on the *IV^{um} Librum Sententiarum* is conserved in codex Vat. lat. 1095 (fols. 11ra-67vb), in the form of a Reportatio: see Delorme F. (1926), pp. 449–450.

⁹⁸ See Vitalis de Furno (1947), p. vi.

⁹⁹ Pope John XXII put the question in his bull entitled *Quia nonnumquam* (26 March 1323): *Suspendit prohibitiones et poenas a Nicolao III latas et comminatas in eos, qui super regula fratrum Min. glossas facere audent* (1322 martirii 26, Avinione), in *Bullarium Franciscanum Romanorum Pontificum* V, No. 434, p. 224: “Utrum asserere Christum et apostolos non habuisse aliquid in comuni sit haereticum?”.

¹⁰⁰ The works of Vitalis de Furno are listed in: Langlois C.V. (1927), pp. 300–305; Vitalis de Furno (1947), pp. ix–xvii; Godefroy de Paris (1950), pp. 3105–3113; Untervintl L., von (1955), pp. 55–57.

2.3.2 *Concluding Remarks on the Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio*

Vitalis' fame is due to *De rerum principio*, which for a long time had been attributed to *Doctor Subtilis*. Historians of medieval philosophy hold highly disparate views of the *Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio*.

Étienne Gilson argues that “When drawing up his quaestiones, Vitalis seems to have borrowed what he needed from the writings of his immediate predecessors (Matteo di Acquasparta, John Peckam, Roger Marston, Henry of Ghent and Giles of Rome) [...]. His work cannot be seen as developing an original thought”.¹⁰¹ The influence of these other thinkers was thus overwhelming, given that he imitated them to the point of copying their ideas. In contrast to the position of De Wulf,¹⁰² who argued that Vitalis based his ideas heavily on Matteo d’Acquasparta, Delorme argues that only the *Quaestiones de cognitione*, presented in Toulouse in the years 1297–1300, contain a truly personal analysis by Vitalis. Delorme argues further that these are superior to the ten *Quaestiones disputatae selectae de fide et cognitione* (1278–1279) by Matteo d’Acquasparta,¹⁰³ except for quaestiones XVII, XXV and XXVI which are nothing but a poorly executed summary of the two *Quodlibeta* by Godfrey of Fontaines. Dumont’s analysis of the first six *quaestiones* of *De rerum principio* revealed that Vitalis was indebted to *De esse et essentia* by Giles of Rome not only for much of the content of the *quaestiones* but also their structure and organisation: “Thus these first questions of *De rerum principio* are the work of Vital du Four in the sense that he compiled them, but the author of their doctrine and arguments is Giles of Rome”.¹⁰⁴

Subdividing the work into groups of *quaestiones*, it may be argued that Vitalis de Furno was by turns *compiler*, *commentator* and *auctor* of the *Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio*.

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¹⁰¹ Gilson É. (1947³), p. 456 (our translation).

¹⁰² See De Wulf M. (1936⁶), pp. 230–231.

¹⁰³ Matthaei ab Acquasparta (1957²), pp. 20–484.

¹⁰⁴ Dumont S. (1984), p. 109.

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Chapter 3

The Question of the *Principium Individuationis* in the Writings of Duns Scotus. *Ordinatio/Lectura: Quaestiones super Libros Metaphysicorum*

A detailed analysis of the *principium individuationis* entails a systematic examination of Scotus' *Ordinatio* and *Quaestiones super Libros Metaphysicorum* (*quaestio* 13). In parallel with these two texts, and where necessary, we will compare the *Ordinatio* with the *Lectura*, taking account of the context in which Duns Scotus himself sought to compare his own work with that of other thinkers or schools of thought, in order to grasp the originality of the position he adopted.

3.1 The *Principium Individuationis*: A Medieval Controversy

Analysis of the individual and all his or her constituent parts was a subject of great philosophical interest in the thirteenth century, and led scholars to a wide range of disparate solutions. Before analysing the Scotist position on the *principium individuationis*, it shall be necessary therefore to describe the context and the various factors that affected the approach to the problem. In Scotus' works it is even possible to identify not one but two different solutions, arising from the diverse terminology employed by the author, which underlines the need for continuous hermeneutic reconsideration of the question.

3.1.1 *The Factors That Contributed to the Systematic Development of the Dispute*

The problem that we now begin to tackle, i.e., the investigation of the constitutive and foundational elements of individual reality in both its material and spiritual substance, is a metaphysical question that was debated incessantly by medieval philosophers in the thirteenth century. Grasping the solution to the dense

concatenation of arguments that characterises this scholastic controversy requires the adoption of a carefully chosen approach.¹ Indeed, medieval scholars proposed a number of solutions,² partly due to the difficulty of defining the intimate nature of the principle of individuation itself, which affected a wide range of disciplines. First and foremost these included metaphysics, which concerns itself with the nature of being, and also noetics, since the way we conceive of the individual reality of a *res* depends on our way of knowing it. In practice, the solution to this principle is indissolubly bound to Aristotelian metaphysics, which is fundamental for collocating the interpretative positions adopted by the individual scholars regarding the Aristotelian doctrines implied in their studies.

To describe the background to the context in which this medieval dispute took place is a task that lies outside the scope of our inquiry and would require a dedicated study in itself. Our objective here is to identify first of all the factors that make it necessary to carry out a systematic study of the real-concrete individual. The issue arises from the relationship between generality and specificity, and the task of the philosopher is to identify the principle by which the general becomes concrete in the real. The object of our research is to trace the passage from the general to the individual.

First and foremost, from the way of conceiving the apparently antithetical relationship between the universal and the singular we can retrace three different approaches, which constitute the hermeneutic context in which to collocate the various solutions to the problem in question.

Following an approach based on the Platonic interpretation, two separate “kingdoms” were held to exist. One was composed of the original universal images (ideas), accessible only by means of reason, while the other was the world of appearances, containing the individual copies of the images. Consequently, the “kingdoms” are incommunicable and the general being never becomes individual. What constitutes reality is the kingdom of the universals while the individuals are a mere illusion. The universal is to be found above and beyond the individual and is both its principle and origin.

Another radical position was that the singular enjoyed primacy in reality, and thus the universal occupies a space only in abstract thought (nominalism). This explains why in the late thirteenth century some believed that it was not necessary to seek the *principium individuationis*, since every being is individual in itself and by its very nature.

The intermediate position, extensively developed by *Doctor Subtilis*, saw the universal and the singular not as opposites but as correlates. This is encapsulated by L. Mackey as follows: “The universal achieves full reality – concreteness – only in the singular; and the singular is only fully individuated – fully determinate – insofar

¹For a reasonably complete view of the medieval debates on individuation, see the introduction in Gracia J. (Ed.) (1994), pp. 1–20; Hüllen J. (1976).

²See Tonna I. (1968).

as it is replete with universal”.³ The universal and the singular are equally original and determine the reality of the world in the same way. Only a correlation between them leads to the ontological dimension of individuality: each concrete individual, while distinct from the universal being, finds its ultimate foundation in the singular-universal correlation. The universal and the singular, the latter perfectly constituted in itself as an individual unit, act together to determine the real object of a common experience.

Another problem linked to the solution of individuation is closely associated with the essential characteristics of individuality and the various ways in which this is understood: the two most common interpretations entailed the consideration of individuality either as something indivisible or as the distinction between beings. Clearly, these two different interpretative conceptions of the individual do not assume the same *principium individuationis*. The notion that the *principium individuationis* consists of everything that makes individual beings distinct from one another derives from the possibility of multiplication of individuals within a species. Such a possibility is not considered by the conception of individuality as indivisibility, which rather seeks the unitary and intrinsic principle of the individual *as such*, in their fully determined and foundational uniqueness, which implies the impossibility of being divided into subjective parts.

A final factor linked to individuality concerns its ontological characteristics: the individuality of the accidents and of the other characteristics of substances. The idea that the foundation of individuation was “essential” and “intrinsic” became a recognised fact, but opinions differed on the question of whether it was essential characteristics, such as matter or form, or the substance of matter and form (the problem of hylomorphism),⁴ that gave rise to the individuation of beings. On the ontological vision of individuality depends the analysis of the type of distinction between individuality and common nature. Since common nature is closely linked to the theory of universals, in the course of our enquiry we must also define and explain how the two aspects of reality can subsist together in an individual being.

With the essential parameters within which to collocate the dispute over the *principium individuationis* established, we can specify the *terminus a quo* of the enquiry as March 7th 1277, when Étienne Tempier, bishop of Paris, condemned 219 theses by scholars in the faculty of arts.⁵ Articles 81, 96 and 191 explicitly censured the theological implications of the doctrine of the individuation of forms according to which matter and/or matter with quantity were responsible for individuation. If there is no matter, as in the case of the substance of angels, then there can be no individuation and furthermore the multiplication of forms can take place only if there exists *sufficient* matter – a precondition for the plurality of individuals of a

³Mackey L. (1979), p. 130. On the problem of universals from 1240 to 1300, the reader is referred to Barth T. (1957), pp. 106–119.

⁴On this issue see the study by Stella P. (1968).

⁵See Denifle H. (1889), pp. 543–558. On the history of Tempier’s condemnation of the university of 1277 see De Libera A. (1993), pp. 388–390 in the Italian edition.

species.⁶ The censors were worried that matter could be considered the exclusive individuating principle of the multiplication of forms.

The condemnation influenced the debates on individuation to the point that it became necessary to include the problem of the individuation of material substances in angelology. This is not to imply that individuation *depends* on angelology, although the search for the causes of the divergent hermeneutic positions concerning the individuation of material substances did provide a better understanding of the personality of the angels and their individuating factor. Towards the end of the thirteenth century there was thus deemed to be a need for a systematic analysis of the question in order to emerge from the “*infinita silva opinionum*”⁷ regarding the possible *principium individuationis*.

3.1.2 *Terminological Stratification in the Works of Doctor Subtilis*

In order to assess the Scotist solution to the problem of individuation,⁸ we must analyse the two versions (*Lectura*⁹ and *Ordinatio*)¹⁰ of Scotus’ *Distinctio tertia: De principio individuationis*, in addition to *Quaestio 13: Utrum natura lapidis de se sit haec vel per aliquid extrinsecum*, which is a comment by Scotus on book VII of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*.¹¹ Lastly, we have Scotus’ dispute with the Dominican theologian Guillelmus Petri de Godino: *Utrum materia sit principium individuationis*, which took place in the years 1305/6,¹² in which Scotus adduces objections against the Thomist theory of individuation, which we will not analyse here because it lies outside the scope of our research and would require a study of its own.¹³ I have decided not take account in my analysis of the

⁶ Denifle H. (1889), art. 81, p. 548: “Quod, quia intelligentie non habent materiam, Deus non posset facere plures ejusdem speciei”; art. 96, p. 549: “Quod Deus non potest multiplicare individua sub una specie sine materia”; art. 191, p. 554: “Quod forme non recipiunt divisionem, nisi per materiam. Error, nisi intelligatur de formis eductis de potentia materie”.

⁷ Joannis Olivi (1922), q. 12 p. 213.

⁸ In chronological order see: Barth T. (1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957); Clatterbaugh K. (1972); Rudavsky T. (1977, 1980); Squitieri A. (1987); Park (1988, 1989, 1990); Donà M. (1990); Manno A. (1994), pp. 43–59; King P. (1992); Dumont S. (1995); Noone T. (1995); Conti A. (2001); Noone T. (2003); Iammarrone L. (2003²), pp. 223–225; King P. (2005); Pini G. (2005a, b); Shibuya K. (2008).

⁹ Duns Scotus J. (1982). *Lectura* II, dist. 3, p. 1, qq. 1–7, Nos. 1–229, pp. 229–301.

¹⁰ Duns Scotus J. (1973). *Ordinatio* II, dist. 3, p. 1, qq. 1–7, No. 1–254, pp. 391–516.

¹¹ Duns Scotus J. (1997). *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Liber VII*, q. 13, Nos. 1–181, pp. 215–280.

¹² This dispute is cited in Pelster F. (1923), pp. 15–16. The text of this dispute is analysed in Stroick C. (1974).

¹³ For a more detailed look at the dispute see Noone T. (1995).

Reportata Parisiensia – transcriptions of lessons given by Scotus in Paris and dated to the early years of the fourteenth century – since the annotated edition is no longer available.

The *Lectura* constitutes the *reportatio* of the lessons that Scotus gave in Oxford in about 1290, while the *Ordinatio* is the version revised by the author towards the end of his life (1301). Like the rest of the *Quaestiones super Libros Metaphysicorum* (*QM VII*), *Quaestio* 13 is difficult to date accurately.¹⁴ Since there does not appear to be sufficient terminological convergence between the *Ordinatio* and *Quaestio* 13 regarding the *principium individuationis*, our enquiry shall seek to identify the last possible stage of the theoretical stratification of Scotus' solution to the *principium individuationis*.

The *Ordinatio* and *Quaestio* 13 (I will take account of the *Lectura* only in order to highlight a few small linguistic nuances with respect to the *Ordinatio*)¹⁵ build towards some common solutions: the individuating principle is something positive present in the substantial order, but it is contained neither in the form nor in the accidental forms, nor in the act of existence nor in matter. The question at hand concerns rather the terminological variations, reflecting doctrinal evolution, used to indicate the *principium individuationis*: in the *Ordinatio* it is defined as *entitas*, *realitas*, *ultima realitas formae*, *ultima realitas entis*,¹⁶ while in *Quaestio* 13 we find

¹⁴The Scotist Commission in Rome follows the traditional position, according to which Scotus first composed the *Quaestiones super Libros Metaphysicorum* – when the author was still young – and subsequently the *Lectura*. On this issue I refer the reader to Duns Scotus J. (1950). 155* note 1 (*De ordinatione Ioannis Duns Scoti disquisitio historico-critica*); Modrić L. (1987). Recently the editors of the annotated edition of the philosophical works of Scotus at *The Franciscan Institute* have questioned this position, considering that the *Quaestiones super Libros Metaphysicorum*, particularly *Quaestio* 13, represent a more advanced stage of Scotus' thought on the principle of individuation than the *Lectura/Ordinatio*. It follows that the *Quaestiones* cannot simply be considered a youthful tract by Scotus, but rather as a work that went through several phases over time, making it impossible to assign a single dating to the work as a whole. For a more detailed discussion of the issue I refer the reader to the introduction to the new annotated edition of the *Quaestiones super Libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis* – Duns Scotus J. (1997), p. xliii.

¹⁵While preparing the second book of his *Ordinatio*, Duns Scotus referred mainly to the *Lectura*, as pointed out by Hechich B. (1974), p. 128.

¹⁶See Duns Scotus J. (1973), *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 6, No. 180, p. 479: “Quoad hoc ista realitas individui est similis realitati specificae, quia est quasi actus, determinans illam realitatem speciei quasi possibilem et potentialem, – sed quoad hoc dissimilis, quia ista numquam sumitur a forma addita, sed praecise ab ultima realitate formae”; q. 6, No. 188, p. 483: “Non est igitur ‘ista entitas’ materiae vel forma vel compositum, in quantum quodlibet istorum est ‘natura’, – sed est ultima realitas entis quod est materia vel quod est forma vel quod est compositum [...]”. q. 6, No. 190, p. 485: “Quaecumque natura non est de se haec, sed determinabilis ad essendum haec (sive ut determinetur per aliam rem, quod est impossibile in quocumque, – sive ut determinetur per aliam realitatem), non est simpliciter simplex”. q. 6, No. 197, pp. 498–499: “Et quia illa entitas quam addit super speciem [...]”. For other references to the terms *entitas/realitas* I refer the reader to the following passages: q. 6, No. 147, p. 465; No. 169, p. 475; No. 170, p. 475; No. 176, p. 478; No. 177, p. 478; No. 181, p. 480; No. 182, p. 481; No. 183, p. 481; No. 186, p. 483; No. 187, p. 483; No. 189, pp. 484–485; No. 192, p. 486; No. 201, p. 490; No. 206, p. 492; No. 207, p. 493.

forma individualis, gradus individualis, continentia unitiva and *haecceitas*.¹⁷ Initially we shall analyse quaestiones 1–6 in the *Ordinatio*, taking account of the *Lectura*, and then we shall compare the results with *Quaestio* 13 in order to grasp the doctrinal divergences underlying the above-mentioned terminological variations, as well as their similarities.

3.1.3 *Literary Genre of the Quaestiones*

The question that Scotus wishes to study in depth is formulated at the beginning, and the solution is indicated only after an analysis of the main arguments for and against, the function of which is to spell out the meaning of the question at hand.

Scotus' *opinio propria* regarding each question is always preceded by one or more theses opposed to his own (*opiniones aliorum*) and by a critique of these (*opinionis improbatio*). Very often, the *aliqui* whose doctrines Scotus seeks to refute are not explicitly mentioned. It may be assumed that the refutation was aimed at the doctrinal aspects of the *opiniones aliorum* and was not meant to indicate their literary paternity.

3.2 The “*ultima realitas entis*”: Achieving Ontological Perfection

The problem, whose essence is the individuation of the *substantia materialis*, arises from the analysis of the common nature (species) and touches on the substantial order. It was within the latter that Scotus defined the intrinsic and positive *principium individuationis* that is able to “contract” the common nature to singularity. We shall start by analysing the various solutions proposed over time by Franciscan scholars, which will help us to grasp the originality of Scotus' proposal.

¹⁷ See Duns Scotus J. (1997), *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Liber VII*, q. 13, No. 84, p. 246: “Natura est haec per substantiam aliquam quae est forma; et prior hic lapis, et per formam individualementem distinguitur ab alio individuo”; q. 13, No. 109, p. 55: “Sed natura, quam ego pono, determinatur ad unitatem numeralem per formam individualementem [...]”. For other references to the phrase *forma individualis* I refer the reader to the following passages: No. 86, p. 247; No. 87, p. 247; No. 96, p. 250; No. 97, p. 251; No. 101, p. 253; No. 112, p. 256; No. 113, p. 256). For the phrase *continentia unitiva* I refer the reader to the following passages: No. 131, p. 263; No. 132, p. 264; No. 135, p. 265; No. 137, p. 265; No. 138, p. 265; No. 144, p. 267; No. 147, p. 268; No. 179, p. 279. For the phrase *gradus individualis* see: No. 131, p. 263; No. 133, p. 264; No. 135, p. 265; No. 136, p. 265; No. 138, p. 265; No. 146, p. 268; No. 147, p. 268; No. 177, p. 278. The term *haecceitas* occurs only twice: No. 61, pp. 239–240: “Probatio minoris: quia si nulla unitas realis naturae est minor haecitate (!)”; No. 176, p. 278: “Si in quantum ad actum cognoscendi, sic in sensu, quia haecitas (!) non sentitur”.

3.2.1 *The Need for Individuation of the Substantia Materialis*¹⁸

Quaestio 1 of the *Ordinatio* arises from the singularity of the *substantia materialis*. On the basis of the divergent conceptions regarding the cause of the individuation of material substances, some authors interpreted the personality of the angels differently.¹⁹ However, the problem of the *principium individuationis* of material substances must be tackled before resolving the question of angelology, which is examined by Scotus only in the seventh and final *quaestio*: *Utrum sit possibile plures angelos esse in eadem specie*.²⁰

Scotus begins his discussion by asking whether the *substantia materialis*, or the being (*esse*) of a being (*ens*), is individual *ex se*, i.e., by its own nature. The solution to the question, which is linked to the dispute over universals, is of fundamental importance in that if the *substantia materialis* is held to be singular or individual in and of itself, there is no longer any need to seek the ultimate reason for its individuality.

It should be remembered that the expression *substantia materialis* can be understood either as the “primary substance”, i.e., the individual of a certain species or nature, or as the “secondary substance”, i.e., the species to which the individual belongs.²¹ Only the “primary substance” is individual in and of itself, while, if *substantia materialis* is understood as the “secondary substance”, this cannot be individual in and of itself, since the species, common to more than one individual, cannot belong to any of them individually and must be individuated. In order to define the individual, which does not exist separately from the species, for Scotus it was necessary to start from the “secondary substance” since the species (or common nature) includes a number of different individuals. In creatures, individuality and nature do not correspond and since created nature is not in itself individual, it requires a specific “*causa singularitatis*”.²²

In the light of this premise we can now properly assess the position of the nominalists (*opinionis expositio*), who were described by Scotus in detail and whose representative is Godfrey of Fontaines (†1306 or 1309).²³ Nominalists argue that since material substances are individuated *ex se*, they do not require any further

¹⁸ See Duns Scotus J. (1973), *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1, Nos. 1–42, pp. 391–410; Duns Scotus J. (1982), *Lectura* II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1, Nos. 1–38, pp. 229–239.

¹⁹ See Duns Scotus J. (1982), *Lectura* II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1, No. 1, p. 229: “[...] Quia secundum quod diversimode dicitur de causa individuationis in substantiis materialibus, secundum hoc sentiunt diversimode diversi de personalitate angelorum, de personalitate eorum in una specie vel unitate”.

²⁰ See Duns Scotus J. (1973), *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 7, Nos. 213–254, pp. 495–516).

²¹ See Berti E. (2006), p. 68.

²² See Duns Scotus J. (1973), *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1, No. 42, p. 410: “Et posita communitate in ipsa natura secundum propriam entitatem et unitatem, necessario oportet quaerere causam singularitatis, quae superaddit aliquid illi naturae cuius est”.

²³ See Sileo L. & Zanatta F. (1996).

causa singularitatis beyond their own nature.²⁴ The “causes” that confer existence on a nature are also held to be responsible for its singularity: in Aristotle’s metaphysical scheme, these causes were identified with the four physical causes responsible for change (efficient, formal, material and final). A consequence of this is that the search for a *principium individuationis* for material substances is misleading, in that for the nominalists *everything* that exists in the real world is singular; thus, what should be sought is rather the cause by which a nature is universal²⁵; any being that exists outside the mind necessarily includes a singularity.

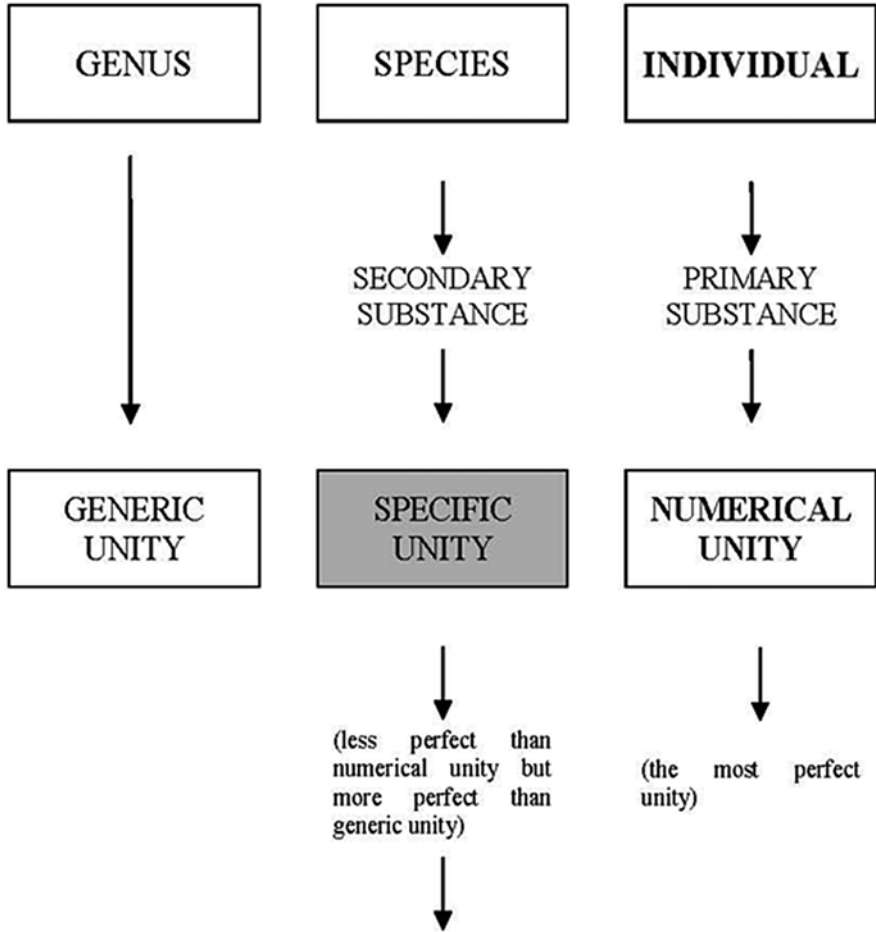
In the *improbatio opinionis*, Scotus states that if the real was individual by its own essence, then to know it only in terms of what is not individual but universal does not constitute true knowledge. Attributing singularity to a common nature, or worse, identifying the one with the other, would mean destroying the being of an *ens* by means of the intellect. Continuing to argue that in reality there exist only singular beings, every time that these singular beings are understood in the universal sense, inevitably leads to contradictory statements. In the case of the individual, we cannot argue that its *humanitas* (common nature) is by itself singular or individual, since this, in belonging to a plurality of individuals, requires an operation that enables it to pass from its common and universal characteristic to being individual in the objective sense. In every initial act of perception, the intellect always grasps the singular that is before it by means of an “immediate” experience that is also able to abstract from this singular object its universal character.

It is only by analysing the common nature that we arrive at a turning point in our understanding of *quaestio* I, in which Scotus states that “Praeterea, cuiuscumque unitas realis, illud non est de se unum unitate numerali (sive non est de se hoc); sed naturae existentis in isto lapide, est unitas propria, realis sive sufficiens, minor unitate numerali”.²⁶ This unity of the common nature, said to be *minor* with respect to the *unitas numeralis* of the individual (see Fig. 3.1) is not in itself individual and thus plays no part in determining the singularity of beings. A review of the realistic prerequisites for intellectual knowledge of the singular leads to the consideration that the unity of the individual (numerical unity) has primacy over the unity of the species (specific unity).

²⁴ See Duns Scotus J. (1973), *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1, Nos. 5–6, pp. 393–394.

²⁵ See Squitieri A. (1993). Paraphrasing a passage from the *Ordinatio* II (q. 1, No. 6), the author argues (p. 384) that individuality, as examined by Scotus, is a secondary issue: “We must seek the reason why substances appear to us to have a universal nature, but it is not necessary to seek the reason why nature is singular” (our translation). While the question of individuation of material substances is linked to the dispute over universals, we argue that it is in any case necessary to establish how the universal makes it itself visible in the singular. In the *Ordinatio* Scotus seeks the intrinsic and original principle that enables the contraction of the common nature (universal) to the individual, i.e., the singular. The universal (common nature) constitutes the beginning of the inquiry (q. 1) but it is Scotus’ shift towards a more realist position that interests us here; once the founding principle that makes it unique and unrepeatable has been discovered, he attributes a greater value to personality and the perfection of the individual. It follows that the problem of individuation must take account of the common nature, which in itself cannot contain the *causa singularitatis* (see *ibid.* note 22).

²⁶ See Duns Scotus J. (1973), *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1, No. 8, p. 395.



“Sicut etiam deducit secunda ratio, aliqua est unitas in re realis absque omni operatione intellectus, **minor unitate numerali** sive unitate propria singularis, quae ‘unitas’ est naturae secundum se, - et secundum istam ‘unitatem propriam’ naturae ut natura est, **natura est indifferens ad unitatem singularitatis** [...]”

Ord. d. 3, p. 1, q. 1, No. 30 (ed. Vat., p. 402)

Fig. 3.1 Genus, species, individual

For Scotus, singularity possesses a greater unity than specific or generic unity. This was perfectly consistent with Aristotle, who affirmed the primacy of the primary substance over the secondary substance (q. 2, No. 53). If the species has no unity of its own (or not enough), then it is impossible to understand how individuals of the same species are distinct or different. Scotus sought to demonstrate that in individuals of the same species there exists a unity that is not numerical, but real. Otherwise, if this were not the case, the most simple intellectual operations, on which all of our knowledge is based, would not be possible. To deny the validity of this argument is to admit that there is no real unity among beings (*res*) other than numerical unity (*individuum*).

Let us examine some of the arguments presented in favour of the *unitas realis* of common nature that are most relevant to Scotus' position.

One argument is based on the difference between "genus" and "species"²⁷: within a genus or a species there has to be a certain real unity, the elements of which can in some way be measured.²⁸ In the species, the individuals are not essentially ordered, i.e., they are equal to one another in perfection. The unity that characterises the individuals and which enables us to know them is not therefore the *unitas numeralis* but the specific unity of the common nature.

In addition, the real unity of individuals of the same species can also be found in the "resemblance"²⁹ between those individuals, which is not just a conceptual relationship but indeed requires a "real basis" in the object. This cannot be the *unitas numeralis*, since only the specific unity of the species can be similar or equal to itself. To argue that two *res* are similar to each other is tantamount to admitting a common *realitas* that underlies the *res* themselves. If we consider *humanitas* as an example, this would mean that every individual is similar to another within the same species because the common and relational foundation of individuals is their constitutive element.

To conclude, Scotus argues that if the *unitas numeralis* was the only *unitas realis*, all differences would be numerical³⁰: in this case, every *res* would be different in the same way from all the others and the intellect would not be able to abstract anything in common between Plato and Socrates or between Socrates and a pebble. It follows (*opinio propria*)³¹ that every "nature" is of itself indifferent to both singularity and universality, and thus does not contain within itself the cause of individuation or singularity.

²⁷ See *ibid.* Nos. 11–15, pp. 396–397.

²⁸ See Aristoteles Latinus (1976), lib. X c. 1, 105b 218 "[...] Maxime vero metrum esse primum cuiuslibet generis".

²⁹ See Duns Scotus J. (1973), *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1, No. 18, p. 398).

³⁰ See *ibid.* Nos. 23–27, pp. 399–401.

³¹ *Ibid.* No. 30, p. 402: "Sicut etiam deducit secunda ratio (cum suis probationibus omnibus), aliqua est unitas in re realis absque omni operatione intellectus, minor unitate numerali sive unitate propria singularis, quae 'unitas' est naturae secundum se, – et secundum istam 'unitatem propriam' naturae ut natura est, natura est indifferens ad unitatem singularitatis; non igitur est de se sic illa una, scilicet unitate singularitatis".

In this way Scotus refutes the theory of the nominalists, since to become singular every nature must be “contracted”, and to become universal, the intellect must confer this characteristic on it. Since common nature by definition has a less-than-numerical (*minor unitate numerali*) type of unity, it cannot contain in itself the *causa singularitatis*. As a consequence of its *minor unitate numerali*, common nature has its own being, different from the individual being, just as specific unity differs from numerical unity. In addition, nature is said to be common in that it has the property of being communicable in itself; it follows that it can be communicated by one individual to another, while individuality cannot. What can be communicated is not individuality, but the characteristics of the species to which each individual belongs.

Communicability is thus a *proprietas* that enables us to consider the species as an entity distinct from the individual, which is endowed with a more perfect unity than the specific unity of the species (common nature). Being “indifferent”, common nature coexists with singularity, but is not of itself limited to singularity, since it naturally precedes singularity.

3.2.2 The “*Intrinsic*” and “*Positive*” Foundation of the Principium Individuationis³²

Once it has been established that the *substantia materialis* is not individual in itself, we need to establish the *causam singularitatis* that contracts common nature, conferring singularity on it.

Scotus examined the doctrine of Henry of Ghent (c. 1217–1293),³³ according to which a *negatio duplex* is the ultimate cause of individuation: “*scilicet indivisio in se et divisio ab omni alio*”,³⁴ and sought to refute it by adducing a series of arguments. To this end he made reference to the arguments presented by Henry of Ghent in his *Quodlibet V* (q. 8), disputed in 1280/81.³⁵

The double negation, which does not imply any “positive ontological development”, has both an inward and an outward relevance: inwardly, it prevents individuality from multiplying itself and differentiating itself any further (*indivisio*);

³² See Duns Scotus J. (1973), *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 2, Nos. 43–58, pp. 410–417; see Duns Scotus J. (1982), *Lectura* II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 2, Nos. 39–53, pp. 240–244.

³³ See Sileo L. & Zanatta F. (1996).

³⁴ See Duns Scotus J. (1973), *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 2, No. 47, p. 412; Duns Scotus J. (1982), *Lectura* II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 2, No. 40, p. 240. See also the *Quodlibeta Magistri Henrici Goethals a Gandavo doctoris Solemnis*: Socii Borbonici: archidiaconi Tomaceñ. Cum duplici tabella, Vaenundantur ab Iodoco Badfo Ascensio, fub gratía & prívilegio ad finém explicandís, Paris 1518, *Quodlibet Quintum*, q. 8 (f. 166 M): “Quae quidem ‘negatio’ non est simplex, sed duplex, quia est removens ‘ab intra’ omnem plurificabilitatem et diversitatem, et ‘ab extra’ omnem identitatem”.

³⁵ For an overview of the quodlibetal debates of the thirteenth century, particularly regarding the *Quodlibeta* by Henry of Ghent, the reader is referred to an important study by Pickavé M. (2007), pp. 23–32.

outwardly, individuality has no possibility of identifying itself with another individuality (*incommunicabilitas*). According to this theory, material substances are not individuated by a positive and intrinsic principle and the negation refers to the “privation” of the *ens* in itself and to the privation of its identity with anything else. The inward negation deprives individuality of any possibility of multiplying itself and differentiating itself any further. In the same way but outwardly, individuality loses any possibility of identifying itself with another individuality.

Scotus refutes this doctrine as being insufficient to demonstrate the origin of individuation. In the first place, he argues that the “primary substance” cannot be individuated by an extrinsic principle, in that this does not explain the origin of the interior impossibility of subdividing the being any further. The ultimate reason for the indivisibility of substance must lie in something that is positive in nature, i.e., in the substance itself.³⁶ A simple negation is not sufficient to individuate the singular moment of a concrete individual; individuality must be founded on a positive being: “cum ille ponat naturam ‘ex se esse unam et individuum’, numquam tamen per aliquam negationem ‘positam in natura’ repugnabit sibi formaliter dividi, et ita numquam erit aliquod *ens positivum* in rebus quod erit complete individuum”.³⁷ The negations proposed by Henry of Ghent simply describe certain aspects of the individuality of the individual, but shed no light on what makes individuals have those characteristics. The indivisibility of a substance into subjective parts represents a form of perfection, and perfection is obviously something positive.

In the final analysis, negation does not participate positively in the entity and cannot be considered a perfection of the being. For this reason, it cannot make the primary substance more perfect than the secondary substances, and it cannot be considered a principle of individuation of the primary substance.³⁸ Negations must be understood as positive ontological principles since the numerical unity that they must indicate is itself a positive characteristic of the individual.

The point that Scotus takes issue with is that Henry of Ghent does not explain what puts double negation in a position to differentiate one individual from another: that one individual is not identical to another cannot be the reason for the individuality of a being. Indeed, double negation does not contain the individuating moment, but is equal in all individuals, who, in order to be such, must possess a greater unity (numerical unity) than the species (specific unity). This leaves us having to explain the origin of double negation.

³⁶ See Duns Scotus J. (1973), *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 2, No. 49, p. 413: “Primo, quia nihil simpliciter repugnat alicui enti per solum privationem in eo, sed per aliquid positivum in eo [...]”.

³⁷ *Ibid.* No. 51, pp. 414–415.

³⁸ See *ibid.* No. 53, p. 415: “Item, negatione non constituitur aliquid formaliter in entitate perfectiore quam sit illa entitas praesupposita negationi (alioquin negatio esset formaliter entitas quaedam positiva); sed prima substantia est maxime substantia, et etiam est magis substantia quam secunda substantia; igitur non formaliter constituitur in entitate primae substantiae per negationem, in quantum distinguitur a secunda”.

Once he had refuted the doctrine of Henry of Ghent, Scotus formulated, in his *solutio propria*,³⁹ the need for something positive and intrinsic (*positivum intrinsecum*) – i.e., inherent in the substantial being of the *ens* – to be the foundation of the *negatio duplex*. What makes one object distinct from other individual objects must be something positive and intrinsic to the *ens* in itself, which prevents its division into subjective parts. Only as a function of a positive and intrinsic principle can the individual acquire the necessary differences by means of which it can be extrinsically distinguished from other similar individuals. The novelty is that in being individual this positive entity raises the value of the uniqueness of the individual above that of the species purely because its own perfection avoids division and confers on it a complete oneness.

Without wishing to anticipate the results of our research, we will merely mention here that in q. 6 (Nos. 187–188), after analysing the possible solutions of the principle of individuation, Scotus defines the nature of this positive principle.

At this point some observations are in order: the *positivum intrinsecum* must have within itself the ability to contract the common nature, preventing any further division into subjective parts (*indivisibilitas*).⁴⁰ As Rudavsky argues, this entails overturning the traditional position of certain philosophers, who argued that the *principium individuationis* should only explain the numerical difference (or distinction) between members of the same species.⁴¹ It is in this context that Mackey’s analyses of Scotus’ theory should be viewed. Mackey frames the question of individuation in terms of “indivision”, which is the ontological priority of the individual as a unitary being.⁴²

Once Scotus had established this principle of *indivisibilitatis*, he compared the various positions adopted over time – which we shall analyse in the following

³⁹ See *ibid.* No. 57, pp. 416–417: “[...] Quod necesse est per aliquid *positivum intrinsecum* huic lapidi, tamquam per rationem propriam, *repugnare sibi dividi in partes subiectivas*; et illud positivum erit illud quod dicitur esse per se causa individuationis, quia per individuationem intelligo illam *indivisibilitatem sive repugnantiam ad divisibilitatem*”.

⁴⁰ On the question of whether by “indivision” Scotus meant *indivisibilitas* into subjective parts, I refer the reader to certain passages that make his position clear in Duns Scotus J. (1982), *Lectura II*, d. 3, p. 1: “[...] Intelligitur an substantia materialis habeat *indivisibilitatem* ita quod repugnat sibi [...]” (q. 2, No. 42, p. 241); “Ergo individuum in genere substantiae non habebit esse indivisibile a quantitate primo” (q. 4, No. 81, p. 254); “Igitur ista responsio est magis impossibilis quam prior, quae ponit substantiam habere aliquod esse, scilicet indivisibile a quantitate” (q. 4, No. 85, p. 256); “[...] Et ideo natura specifica substantiae materialis non potest dividi nisi per quantitatem” (q. 4, No. 102, p. 261); “[...] Nam substantia non habet de se quod sit divisibilis, sed quantum est de se est indivisibilis, et tamen per quantitatem dividitur. [...] Unde si substantia materialis esset de se indivisibilis [...]” (q. 6, No. 162, pp. 279–280); “Igitur unitas singularitatis, cui repugnat dividi, habebit entitatem sibi proportionalem” (q. 6, No. 166, p. 280); “Quae [differentia specifica] non potest dividi in plures naturas specificas” (q. 6, No. 170, p. 282).

⁴¹ Rudavsky T. (1977), p. 320: “Philosophers generally view the problem of individuation as the problem of how to account for the numerical difference of any two members of the same species”.

⁴² See Mackey L. (1979), p. 150: “When Scotus raises the question of individuation, he is not asking primarily about the possibility of the multiplication of individuals within a species. He is concerned in the first place with the unity of the individual as such; that is, with its indivision”.

quaestiones – concerning the possible factor claimed to be the individuating principle of a being. For Scotus, any solution to the principle of individuation had to meet the criterion of indivisibility, that is, the unwillingness of a being to be subdivided into subjective parts.

3.2.3 *Ontological Priority of the “esse essentiae” Over the “esse existentiae”*⁴³

Once the need for an intrinsic and positive foundation of the individual being had been clarified, Scotus analysed the “moments” and ways of being (*esse existentiae* and *esse essentiae*) in which to seek the cause of individuation.

Aristotle argued that since the “being of existence” was the ultimate act received by individuals, existence is the ultimate determination of individuals.⁴⁴ The ultimate determination must follow the ultimate act, i.e., existence, which is able to determine and distinguish. Insofar as existence involves something positive, it might also be the formal reason why common nature is contracted to the individual being.

This position was adopted in the *Quodlibet II* (q. 8) of 1277⁴⁵ by Henry of Ghent, for whom individuality is a mode of existence, and only this could explain the individuality of a real being.

For Scotus however, existence cannot individuate the *substantia materialis*, not only because it is common to all existing beings, but because the distinction between two *res* derives from a difference between their essences and not from a difference in the sense of existing. Since existence is in itself undifferentiated, it can belong to any existing thing; an existing thing is what it is⁴⁶ not by virtue of its existence, but by virtue of its nature. According to Scotus, in order to assert the existence of an individual, the latter must first be fully determined in terms of its unique essence.

The mere fact of existing is not what individuates the individual in itself: rather, the foundation of the distinction between existing individuals must lie in their essence. Two individuals are not distinguished by their existence since, if both of them exist, they have the fact that they exist in common. Thus, existence is no closer to the principle of individuation than the common nature: I would argue that both are equally incapable of accounting for the determination of a being. Since existence is not in itself a “this” (*haec*), it cannot confer individuality on material substances.

⁴³ See Duns Scotus J. (1973) *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 3, Nos. 59–65, pp. 418–421; Duns Scotus J. (1982), *Lectura* II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 3, Nos. 54–60, pp. 244–246.

⁴⁴ See Aristoteles Latinus (1976), lib. VII c. 13, 1039a 3–8 “Impossibile autem substantiam ex substantiis esse que insunt sicut perfectiones; duo namque sic perfectione numquam sunt unum perfectione, sed si potestate duo sunt, erunt unum (ut duplum ex duobus dimidiis potestate; nam entelechia separat)”.

⁴⁵ See Sileo L. & Zanatta F. (1996), pp. 71–74.

⁴⁶ See Duns Scotus J. (1973) *Ordinatio* II, d. 3., p. 1, q. 3, No. 61, pp. 418–419: “Quia quod non est ex se distinctum nec determinatum, non potest esse primum distinguens vel determinans aliud; sed esse existentiae, eo modo quo distinguitur ab esse essentiae, non est ex se distinctum nec determinatum [...]”.

Each individual, in its uniqueness, must have its own *principium individuationis*, not identical, but fundamentally different and distinct from that of any other individual. Of course the object of our enquiry is the existing individual, but existence is of a different order from the individuating principle. Indeed, it is the individuating principle that determines existence, and not the other way round.⁴⁷

The *entitas individualis* belongs to the *actus essentialis* (of which it constitutes the foundation) and not to the *actus existentialis* which generates the existence of a being. As the ultimate reality of existence, the *actus existentialis* does not belong to the essence of the being, but is added to it and is thus secondary⁴⁸ within the essential order.

In this way Scotus sought to preserve the ontological priority of essence and to find a basis for individuation in an entity that is individual in itself.

3.2.4 *The Inability of “Quantity” to Individuate the Substantia Materialis*⁴⁹

Once it has been established that, as a positive principle, individuality must be sought in the *esse essentiae*, in q. IV Scotus refutes the positions of those who argue that the *principium individuationis* should be explained in accidental rather than substantial terms – that it should be sought in the “quantity”, which they argue is responsible for the identification of the *substantia materialis*. Considering the large number of medieval scholars who held such positions – frequently citing Aristotle – Scotus devotes much attention to this *quaestio*.

Basing themselves on the Aristotelian definition of “quantity”, i.e., “that which is divisible into constituent parts, each or every one of which is by nature some one individual thing”,⁵⁰ Godfrey of Fontaines⁵¹ and Thomas Aquinas⁵²

⁴⁷Inverting Heidegger’s attempt to provide an ontology in his *Sein und Zeit*, we note here that the metaphysical challenge of such a project must be founded from within its essential order (*Sein*) and not its existence (*Da-sein*).

⁴⁸See Duns Scotus J. (1973) *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 3, No. 65, p. 420 “[...] Existentia autem actualis est ultimus actus, sed posterior tota coordinatione predicamentali”. Regarding individuation, the actual existence is subordinate to the essence and adds nothing essential to the individuated essence.

⁴⁹Ibid. q. 4, Nos. 67–128, pp. 421–457; Duns Scotus J. (1982), *Lectura* II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 4, Nos. 61–124, pp. 246–268.

⁵⁰Aristoteles Latinus (1976), lib. V c. 13, 1020a 7–9, 101: “Quantum dicitur quod est divisibile in eis que insunt, quorum utrumque aut singulum unum quid et hoc aptum natum esse”. English translation, Vol. I, p. 257.

⁵¹Gaufridus De Fontibus, *Quodlibet* VII, q. 5 (reference indicated in the sources in Duns Scotus J. (1973) *Ordinatio* II, No. 71, p. 423).

⁵²Thomas De Aquino, *Summa contra gentiles* II, c. 49 arg. 3: “Principium diversitatis individuorum eiusdem speciei est divisio materiae secundum quantitatem: forma enim huius ignis a forma illius ignis non differt nisi per hoc quod est in diversis partibus in quas materia dividitur, – nec aliter quam divisione quantitatis, sine qua substantia est indivisibilis; quod autem recipitur in corpore, recipitur in eo secundum quantitatis divisionem; ergo forma non recipitur in corpore nisi ut individuata” (reference indicated in the sources in Duns Scotus J. (1973) *Ordinatio* II, No. 73, p. 425).

stated that since individuals of the same species are primarily divided by means of quantity, it follows that the latter is a determining factor for the individuality of the *substantia materialis*. In that case, quantity is responsible not only for the division of the same species into parts, each of which represents an individual *haec*, but is also the feature that distinguishes individuals one from the other. Quantity thus has the function of dividing things into parts of the same type. In addition, since individuals have their species in common (common nature), they are distinguished and differentiated by an accidental property that each of them possesses. If we suppose that the *locus* is the individuating factor in determining the essence of a being, different places would determine numerically different essences. The absurdity of this reasoning lies in its seeking to attribute the capacity of individuating what comes first (the substance) to something that comes afterwards (the accident).

For Scotus it was thus necessary to establish whether the accidental property can by itself account for the individuality of beings (i.e., the exact opposite of the principle that an individual is indivisible into subjective parts) and, in the final analysis, to refute this position. We must however consider that in posing the question of individuation, Scotus does not ask about the possibility of multiplying individuals within a species, but seeks the core of “individual *unity*” as such: “[...] individuum impossibile est dividi in partes subiectivas”.⁵³

The *substantia materialis* cannot transform itself from “this here”, with its determined singularity, into “that there”, unless it undergoes a substantial mutation. If it is quantity that individuates the substance by making it “this here” and “that there”, then the same singular substance would be two different substances, which is contradictory.⁵⁴ The argument that individuation depends on quantitative accidents would mean that a change in the accidents would lead to a change in its individuality. This cannot happen since in a substance the accidents can change, but without affecting the essence and the individuality of the being. It follows that individuation cannot derive from the accidental property of some external factor, but is found in the profundity of the substantial being – otherwise for every accidental modification, individuality would also have to be modified. The individuality that belongs uniquely to each individual is inscribed in the substantial being and this is visibly manifested in its accidental determinations. But what is manifest derives from a deeper layer of the substantial being that is intrinsic to its very nature: and with this we can argue with Gilson that “individuation is inscribed in the heart of the being, in the very substance that makes it what it is”.⁵⁵

⁵³Duns Scotus J. (1973) *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 4, No. 76, p. 427.

⁵⁴Ibid. No. 79, p. 428: “Sed contradictio est eandem substantiam manentem esse duas substantias, sine mutatione substantiali, et hoc tam successive quam simul, – quod tamen sequitur si per aliquod accidens esset formaliter ‘haec substantia’: tunc enim succedente accidente accidenti, eadem substantia non mutata esset successive duae substantiae”.

⁵⁵Gilson É. (1952) (our translation from p. 476 of the Italian edition).

Basing himself on the opinion of Aristotle,⁵⁶ who affirmed the ontological priority of substance over accidents,⁵⁷ Scotus eliminates any possibility of supposing that accidents are the individuating factors. The primary substance is an *ens prius* that can exist by itself because it is individual; it has ontological priority over secondary (or generic) substances and even more so over accidents, which are *entia posteriora* – “*substantia est prior naturaliter omni accidente*”.⁵⁸ Substance is previous to accident by a priority of nature. Although a being’s qualitative individuality is manifested in its accidental properties, these cannot determine a numerical unity in its substance since individuality belongs to substance. On this basis, Scotus affirmed that “*substantiae primae, ex ratione sua, quod sit ‘haec’ prius naturaliter quam determinetur aliquo accidente*”.⁵⁹ Essence is previous to accidents, which can only be individuated by means of the substances to which they belong. Everything that is substantial by nature precedes what a thing is, and thus, as an accident, quantity cannot be responsible for the division of a species into individuals.⁶⁰ An accident can make the substance manifest but cannot individuate it because it is not yet itself individual.

In addition, since quantity is divisible into subjective parts, it is not an inherent feature of a species.⁶¹ Quantity cannot be considered responsible for the division of the species into subjective parts because no integral part can ever be the entire quantity, but a “subjective part” is always a whole or an entire nature. From a quantitative subdivision it does not follow that the “part” is the expression of the “whole”; the divided “part” always remains a “part” of the “whole”. If it were ever possible to subdivide an individual, the parts that would be derived from this would never be an expression of the “whole”, but only of a “part” of it. Hence the principle that we seek must be able to subdivide the species into “subjective (individual) parts”, each of which is the expression of the “whole”. The subdivision of the species into “subjective parts” makes each individual part a “a perfect unit in itself” and numerically “one”. The subdivision of the species into “subjective parts” must by nature be substantial and thus must be part of the same hierarchy as the other divisions of substance. Following this argument it is easy to see that this function cannot be attributed to the quantity of a being. The quantitative parts and the subjective parts are of a completely different nature: the former are indeterminate whereas the latter

⁵⁶ See Aristoteles Latinus (1976), lib. VII c. 1, 1028a 37 – 1028b 2, 124: “Et scire tunc singula maxime putamus, quando quid est homo cognoscimus aut ignis, magis quam aut quale aut quantum aut ubi, quoniam et horum eorundem tunc singula scimus, quando quid est ipsum quale aut quantum scimus”. English translation, Vol. I, p. 313.

⁵⁷ Duns Scotus J. (1973) *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 4, No. 87, p. 432: “[...] Eo modo substantia est prior naturaliter omni accidente, quo est subiectum omni accidenti”.

⁵⁸ Ibid. No. 82, p. 429. Aristotle argues that accidents do not exist in and of themselves but can only be derived from the individual substance: Aristoteles Latinus (1976), lib. V c. 9, 1018a 1, 96. English translation, vol. I p. 241.

⁵⁹ Duns Scotus J. (1973) *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 4 No. 82, p. 431.

⁶⁰ Ibid. No. 83.

⁶¹ Ibid. No. 105, p. 443: “[...] Sed quantitas non inest formaliter speciei in quantum est divisibilis in partes subiectivas; igitur ipsa non est ‘ratio formalis’ divisibilitatis talis totius in partes tales”.

are by nature determinate and complete in themselves. And since quantity is indeterminate, it cannot in turn determine or individuate anything.

Since quantity has its own “quiddity”, it is indifferent to individuals and cannot function as the principle of individuation, in that “impossibile est per aliquod accidens substantiam esse individuum”.⁶² Individuality is a more *original* thing, to the point that it cannot be derived from an accident like quantity.

3.2.5 *The Inability of “Matter” to Individuate the Compound Substance*⁶³

Tracing the *principium individuationis* to the depths of the substantial being could lead us to suppose that individuality depends on matter, which is one of the constitutive principles of the *substantia*.

Scotus observes that from a passage in Aristotle’s *Metaphysica*, according to which “some things are one numerically [...] those whose matter is one”,⁶⁴ many writers have erroneously interpreted the philosopher as saying that the *substantia materialis* is individuated by means of matter.⁶⁵ Scotus sought to refute this interpretation and to demonstrate that the notion of individuation by matter alone cannot be derived from Aristotelian texts.⁶⁶

If the foundations of the *unity* that Aristotle speaks of are to be found in “matter”, we must first of all clarify what is meant by the term. Matter can be understood either as “indistinct and indeterminate” or “distinct and determinate”: in the former case it cannot constitute a determining principle because it is not individual – it is not actually a “*haec*”⁶⁷; in the latter case, *materia signata*

⁶²Ibid. No. 111, p. 446.

⁶³Ibid. q. 5, Nos. 129–141, pp. 458–463; Duns Scotus J. (1982), *Lectura II*, d. 3, p. 1, q. 5, Nos. 125–138, pp. 268–273.

⁶⁴Aristoteles Latinus (1976), lib. V c. 6, 1016b 32–33 (A1 25, 2). English translation, vol. I p. 235. This passage is from the chapter in which Aristotle discusses the reasons why things can be defined as “ONE”. Aristotle is therefore affirming that things are “one” in number if their matter is one. This passage cannot be interpreted as a statement by Aristotle that individuation is accomplished by matter alone, since he is not speaking of individuation but of the “unity” of a continuous individual whole.

⁶⁵Scotus also refers to other passages from *Metaphysica* in which Aristotle could be interpreted as arguing that the principle of individuation is matter: Aristoteles Latinus (1976), lib. VII c. 8, 1035b 27–31, 141; lib. XII c. 8 1074a 31–34, 218. Giles of Rome was one of those who believed that individuation was caused by matter or by quantity: see Pickavé M. (2007), pp. 35–43.

⁶⁶See Charlton W. (1972). The author expresses reservations concerning those who understand the principle of individuation in Aristotle to consist of matter alone.

⁶⁷Scotus categorically excludes matter as the cause of individuation since “[sed] quod non est *in se* distinctum nec diversum, non potest esse prima ratio diversitatis vel distinctionis alterius”: Duns Scotus J. (1973) *Ordinatio II*, d. 3, p. 1, q. 5, No. 131, p. 458.

*quantitate*⁶⁸ cannot be the ultimate cause of individuation for the same reasons that we applied to quantitative accidents. If the ultimate foundation is in matter and if this foundation is completely indeterminate, it follows not only that matter cannot be the cause of diversity, but that it cannot be the cause of individuation either.

Callias and Socrates⁶⁹ are ontological compounds of matter and form. The latter is the same in both, which means that Callias and Socrates cannot be individuated by form, but only by its opposite, which is determinate, corporeal matter. By means of form, each individual has the *eidōs* of a human being, and by means of determinate matter the specific human being is multiplied. What Aristotle means is that this man is different from that man because his flesh and blood are different. We might suppose that “this” quantity of flesh and blood is different from “that” quantity because it makes up this man and not that one. However, determinate matter alone does not have the ability to constitute individuals as such. As a common principle matter is the same in every individual and is determined by form. Thus it cannot determine the compound by itself. Indeed, in arguing that “the causes of things which are in the same species are different, not in species, but because the causes of individuals are different: your matter and form and moving cause being different from mine, although in their universal formula they are the same”,⁷⁰ Aristotle considers the differentiation of both form and matter, as well as their unity, on the same plane.⁷¹

It would not be possible for the matter of a compound substance to be both a constitutive part of it and the thing that individuates the compound as a whole, since a part cannot individuate something of which it is a part. Both form and matter constitute the species of compound beings, but neither of them can be considered for individuation. Despite being an essential constituent of the *substantia materialis*, the compound cannot be a “haec” by itself, and nor can matter, since it cannot be the cause of different things.⁷² Being common to more than one individual, it does not satisfy the criterion of being non-replicable and unique that would make the individual a complete “haec” in itself. At this point of the *Ordinatio* we would expect Scotus to speak of “form”, but he doesn’t, and this constitutes one of the main differences with respect to *Quaestio* 13 of the *Quaestiones super Libros Metaphysicorum*.

⁶⁸On the question of matter in Aristotle’s writings the reader is referred to Seidl H. (1993). Analysing the difference between determinate and indeterminate matter, Seidl confirms the consistent position of Thomas Aquinas, who “always held that *materia signata* was the principle of individuation” of material things (p. 33; our translation). By the same author see also Seidl H. (2006), pp. 46–47 in the Italian edition.

⁶⁹Aristoteles Latinus (1976), lib. VII c. 8, 1034a 5–8 (A1 25, 2). English translation, Vol. I, p. 349.

⁷⁰Ibid. lib. XII c. 5, 1071a 27–29. English translation, Vol. II, p. 139.

⁷¹Duns Scotus J. (1973) *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 5, No. 138, p. 462.

⁷²See *ibid.* Nos. 136–139, pp. 461–462.

Matter will be made individual only if the single compound of which it is an inherent part has been contracted to individuality by a different “original” principle, which serves to contract the common nature to singularity.

3.2.6 *The “ultima realitas entis” and the “distinctio formalis ex parte rei”*

In *Quaestio* 6 Scotus ponders whether the *substantia materialis* is individuated by means of a positive entity, which serves to contract the common nature (species), making it singular and incommunicable (individual)⁷³: the unity of this positive entity must be combined with the specific unity of the common nature, and from their combination the concrete individual would be constituted,⁷⁴ intrinsically “one” and perfect in itself. The perfection of individual uniqueness causes this entity to assume a positive connotation in the substantial order, in that the rejection of divisibility is a perfection of individual uniqueness.

Previously we established that neither the *negatio duplex* (q. 2), nor the *existentia* (q. 3), nor the *quantitas* (q. 4), nor even *matter* (q. 5) can function as individuating factors. This is because individuality cannot reside in the common nature or in the accidental properties of a being, which by their nature are not able to justify the impossibility of dividing an individual into subjective parts or to explain what makes an individual distinct from all the others. For this reason, Scotus argues that the common nature must be made individual by a positive entity and in such a way that the result of the contraction is a unique and unrepeatable individual *ens* in itself.⁷⁵

The next task is to define the intimate nature of this “positive entity” which is able to elevate the individual above the species and thus contribute to its full and complete realisation in the order of created things. In reality, Scotus never explicitly defines the metaphysical statute of this entity: in other words, he does not confer a specific denomination on it within the substantial order, but rather seeks to define the relationship between this individuating principle and the common nature. To be clear, in order to give rise to the real unity of the individual, the individuating principle is not “added” to the common nature in the form of something external, but must invest the whole being “from within”.

⁷³Ibid. q. 6, Nos. 142–211, pp. 463–494; Duns Scotus J. (1982), *Lectura* II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 6, Nos. 139–195, pp. 273–293.

⁷⁴See Duns Scotus J. (1973) *Ordinatio* II, No. 169, pp. 474–475: “Sicut unitas in communi per se consequitur entitatem in communi, ita quaecumque unitas per se consequitur aliquam entitatem; ergo unitas simpliciter (qualis est ‘unitas individui’ frequenter prius descripta, scilicet cui repugnat divisio in plures partes subiectivas et cui repugnat ‘non esse hoc, signatum’), si est in entibus (sicut omnis opinio supponit), consequitur per se aliquam per se entitatem; non autem consequitur per se entitatem naturae, quia illius est aliqua unitas propria et per se, realis, sicut probatum est in solutione primae quaestionis; igitur consequitur aliquam entitatem aliam, determinantem istam, et illa facit unum per se cum entitate naturae, quia ‘totum’ cuius est haec unitas, perfectum est de se”.

⁷⁵See ibid. No. 170, p. 475: “Igitur erunt entitates positivae, per se determinantes naturam”.

The only step in which Scotus makes his solution explicit and clarifies what he means by “positive entity” is the following:

Et si quaeras a me quae est ista ‘entitas individualis’ a qua sumitur differentia individualis, estne materia vel forma vel compositum, – respondeo: Omnis entitas quidditativa – sive partialis sive totalis – alicuius generis, est de se indifferens ‘ut entitas quidditativa’ ad hanc entitatem et illam, ita quod ‘ut entitas quidditativa’ est naturaliter prior ista entitate ut haec est, – et ut prior est naturaliter, sicut non convenit sibi esse hanc, ita non repugnat sibi ex ratione sua suum oppositum; et sicut compositum non includit suam entitatem (qua formaliter est ‘hoc’) in quantum natura, ita nec materia ‘in quantum natura’ includit suam entitatem (qua est ‘haec materia’), nec forma ‘in quantum natura’ includit suam.

Non est igitur ‘ista entitas’ materia vel forma vel compositum, in quantum quodlibet istorum est ‘natura’, – sed est **ultima realitas entis** quod est materia vel quod est forma vel quod est compositum.⁷⁶

The *entitas individualis* is deducible from neither matter, nor form, nor the compound of matter and form. In reality, it originates from the “ultima realitas entis”. Individuation thus finds its ontological foundation in the ultimate reality of the *ens*, since the individual being cannot be traced back to the generic being that is derived from matter, form or the compound of the two. This means that the *entitas individualis* is formally distinct in its essential structure from the specific nature of the species, regardless of whether we are dealing with a part (either matter or form) or a concrete combination of matter and form. The individual thus becomes the result of the combination of the common nature (species) and the *entitas individualis*. Unlike the latter, which is indivisible, the common nature is divisible into quantitative parts. The common nature and the *entitas individualis* are formally distinct from each other⁷⁷ by means of a *distinctio formalis ex parte rei*, so that the singularity and the common nature of the individual are indissolubly linked to each other and ontologically inseparable.

This *distinctio formalis* ought not to be confused with the real distinction between two “things” (*res et res*). The relationship between individual difference and common nature is not that of one *res* to another, but more like that of an actual to a potential in the same being. This is why Scotus stresses that individual difference cannot be in addition to the specific nature, in which case it would still be common, and he defines the *principium individuationis* as the “ultima (in the sense of fundamental) realitas formae”,⁷⁸ and not as an “individual form”. Individuality cannot be “form” (since all forms can be shared), but it is the final reality of the form that makes the form itself perfect. Otherwise, to define the *principium individuationis* as an indi-

⁷⁶Ibid. Nos. 187–188, pp. 483–484.

⁷⁷Two entities are formally distinct from each other if they are constitutive elements of a single reality, but neither of the two can exist on their own, nor do they form part of the description of the other. On the formal distinction as expressed by Scotus see: Park W. (1989).

⁷⁸Duns Scotus J. (1973) *Ordinatio* II, No. 180, p. 479): “Quoad hoc ista realitas individui est similis realitati specificae, quia est quasi actus, determinans illam realitatem speciei quasi possibilem et potentialem,– sed quoad hoc dissimilis, quia ista numquam sumitur a forma addita, sed praecise ab *ultima realitate formae*”.

vidual form would be to consider the latter a *res* that would be added to another *res* (the specific nature). Common nature and individual difference must be conceived by means of a formal distinction not between *res*, but between different perfections of the same form – which are called by Scotus *realitates* or *formalitates*⁷⁹ – such as the composition of the actual and potential reality in the same thing: *ex realitate et realitate actuali et potentiali in eadem re*.⁸⁰ Recognising the intimate link between common nature and individual difference means not just reducing their differences; it also helps to restore the individual to being no longer subordinate to the common nature, but the ultimate and the highest perfection of the created being.

The originality of this solution lies in the fact that Scotus places individuation in the profundity of the substantial being, as the result of a “transcendental” vision, the ontological basis of which resides in the ultimate reality of the form. However, its foundations must be sought in the ultimate reality of the *ens*. In addition, to speak of *distinctio formalis ex parte rei* helps us to understand why it is misleading to continue to wonder what the *principium individuationis* is for Scotus. In reality, for Scotus, the principle of individuation is not a “thing” (*res*) that is added to the common nature from outside, thus rendering it individual, but is something (an *entitas*) internal, at the base of the being’s very nature. This was a new way of conceiving the being that went beyond Aristotelian categories as they had traditionally been understood. In reference to the originality of Scotus’ new solution to the principle of individuation, Timotheus Barth, who was the first to systematically analyse all Scotus’ works in terms of this issue, argues that “he goes beyond the still categorial determination (of formality) and seeks to define individuality as a positive entity via a transcendental-ontological route”.⁸¹

We can say here that Stein identifies this internal foundation with the “empty” part (“leerer” in Stein’s terms) of the being, which is predisposed to be “filled” with all the subjective determinations belonging to each individual, so as to render it unique in its being and non-replicable in relation to its peers. This is the only singularity that is able to make the foundation of individual reality intelligible.

3.3 Difficulties Arising from the “*Quaestiones super Libros Metaphysicorum*” (q. 13)

There are important similarities between the *Quaestiones super Libros Metaphysicorum* (q. 13)⁸² and the *Ordinatio*, for example regarding the central theme of the common nature, which despite possessing a real unity that is

⁷⁹Ibid. No. 188, p. 484: “Nec possunt istae duae realitates esse res et res, sicut possunt esse realitas unde accipitur genus et realitas unde accipitur differentia (ex quibus realitas specifica accipitur),— sed semper in eodem (sive in parte sive in toto) sunt *realitates eiusdem rei, formaliter distinctae*”.

⁸⁰Ibid. No. 189, p. 484.

⁸¹Barth T. (1956), p. 129: “Er schreitet über die noch Kategoriale Bestimmung (vor einer Formalität her) hinaus und sucht die Individualität transzendentalen-ontologisch als positive Entität zu bestimmen” (our translation).

⁸²For a more exhaustive presentation of *quaestio* 13 the reader is referred to Salamon W.G. (2009).

less-than-numerical, requires a *principium individuationis* (shown to be something positive) that combines with the specific nature to make it individual. The fact remains however that the terminology used in *quaestio* 13 to define the nature of this principle is not consistent with the solution that we find in the *Ordinatio*. Which of the two possible solutions, the *ultima realitas entis* (*Ordinatio*) or the *forma individualis* (*QM VII*), represents the ultimate stage of Scotus’ thought on the question remains to be established. To accomplish this, the doctrinal positions that result from the adoption of one position rather than the other must be taken into account.

3.3.1 The “*principium individuationis*”: Terminological Diversification

In the context of individuation, in q. 13 of *Quaestiones super Libros Metaphysicorum* (*QM VII*), Scotus affirms that the individual is determined by the combination of the common nature and the “*forma individualis*”. In addition, in q. 13 (Nos. 115–181), Scotus introduces a new terminology of the *principium individuationis*, this time not only referred to as *forma individualis* but also as “*gradus individualis*”, and establishes the relationship between the common nature and the individuating principle as “*continentia unitiva*”. This terminological proliferation also includes *haecceitas*, a term usually attributed to Scotus, but actually found only in q. 13 and completely absent from the *Ordinatio/Lectura* in reference to the context of individuation.

3.3.1.1 The “*forma individualis*”

In *quaestio* 13: *Utrum natura lapidis de se sit haec vel per aliquid extrinsecum*,⁸³ after a painstaking refutation of other doctrines of individuation adopted by his predecessors, Scotus states that the *principium individuationis* consists of “form”, which is the only factor able to determine the common nature, thereby making a “*haec*” individual. This may be deduced from the following passage in which Scotus argues:

[...] quod natura est haec per substantiam aliquam quae est **forma**; et prior hic lapis, et per **formam individuaem** distinguitur ab alio individuo. Intellige hanc conclusionem sicut postea exponitur.⁸⁴

The common nature is thus individuated within the substantial order by means of form. We know that the individual is the result of the combination of the specific

⁸³Duns Scotus J. (1997), *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Liber VII*, q. 13, Nos 1–181, pp. 215–280.

⁸⁴Ibid. No. 84, p. 246.

nature, which is by definition not individual, and the individual *entitas*. However, individuality is obtained here by means of a given form, which is its own *forma individualis*,⁸⁵ by means of which a concrete individual may be distinguished from its peers within the same species. This *forma individualis* is “added” to the common nature: in this sense, the addition of form makes an individual *this individual* rather than another. In determining the individual or the concrete *hoc aliquid*, the *forma individualis* is not the only factor responsible for this process, since the common nature also helps to determine it. Despite this, while the individual belongs to a common nature, it is not composed of that alone, but possesses something unique. Scotus identifies this unique property as the *forma individualis*, which is not contained in the common nature, but lies outside it. In order to have an individual, the common nature needs to be completed by the individual form. This is because no individual totally possesses the common nature – otherwise it would not be possible to have other individuals of the same species – and therefore individuals must possess an individual form so that they may be distinguished from each other. Ontologically, the individual uniqueness resulting from these two factors must be regarded as compound rather than simple.⁸⁶ Scotus thus explains the principle of individuation as deriving from the individual’s own *forma individualis*.

This solution is in contrast with what Scotus argues in the *Ordinatio/Lectura*: in these two versions of the *distinctio tertia*, the *principium individuationis* is never defined as a *forma individualis*, but as the *ultima realitas formae*.⁸⁷ Furthermore, to remove any doubt concerning terminological agreement with the *QM VII* (q. 13), in the *Ordinatio* individual difference cannot be seen as a form added to the specific nature, since individuation is not something added to common nature from outside in order to identify it. On the contrary, it is only within a being that we may find the ultimate stage that determines the singularity of an individual, thus going beyond any categorial determination.

⁸⁵Concerning the historical context of the expression “*forma individualis*” used by Scotus, the reader is referred to Dumont S. (1995), pp. 211–212: “Rather, it seems that Scotus appropriates the term from a somewhat older theory of individuation based on the same text of Averroes, reported and rejected by both Bonaventure and Robert Kilwardby. As reported by Bonaventure, this theory holds that individuation occurs through an individual form added to the ultimate specific form. As is clear from a comparison of passages, this position corresponds verbatim to Scotus’ own resolution in the *Metaphysics*”.

⁸⁶See Duns Scotus J. (1997) *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Liber VII*, q. 13, No. 113, p. 256: “Ad aliud: quod sicut nullum simplex potest esse species alicuius generis, sic nec aliquid omnino est particulare contentum sub specie, quia individuum habet compositionem speciei, et formam individuaalem ultra”.

⁸⁷Speaking of the *ultima realitas formae* and *forma individualis*, Alessandro Ghisalberti does not dwell on the distinction, and gives the impression that he considers these two expressions to be equivalent. See Ghisalberti A. (1978), p. 361.

3.3.1.2 From the “*forma individualis*” to the “*gradus individualis*”

In the codicil to *quaestio* 13 (Nos. 115–181), the first terminological shift is seen in the definition of the *principium individuationis*: no longer a *forma individualis* but a “*gradus individualis*”, a degree or intensity belonging to the individual.⁸⁸

However, as K. Shibuya demonstrates, Scotus “has already abandoned the *gradus*-theory as an insufficient one”⁸⁹ since the context in which this theory is found refers to accidental forms and not to the substantial order in which the individuating principle should be sought. By itself, this “degree” is not able to contract the common nature and thus make it a “haec”. Rather, it represents a progressive mode in which, although individuality is evident, it cannot perform the function of determining a singular *ens*. We are dealing here with a gradual process linked to the accidental level that makes a thing manifest, but the thing’s individuality must precede its manifestation. Thus the substantial order precedes its manifestation and requires an internal foundation, which cannot be individuated by the “degree” because this is subsequent to any determination. What is manifested, in our case individuality, is not sufficient to explain what the singularity of an *ens* derives from. This explains why in the *Ordinatio* Scotus stops using the terminology of the “*gradus individualis*” and opts for the “*ultima realitas entis*”, the only factor able to determine the ultimate substrate and foundation of individuation.

3.3.1.3 Haecceitas

The term *haecceitas*, which is never used by Scotus in the *Ordinatio/Lectura* and rarely in q. 13⁹⁰ and the *Reportata Parisiensis*, reflects the word used by Aristotle (τὸδε τι)⁹¹ to refer to the numerically singular individual, which was thus

⁸⁸ See Duns Scotus J. (1997) *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Liber VII*, q. 13, No. 131, pp. 263–264: “Et homini, secundum gradum suum proprium, naturaliter priorem gradu singularitatis, non repugnat in multis esse [...] numquam separatur ab illa perfectione unitive secum contenta, vel ab illo gradu in quo accipitur differentia individualis”.

⁸⁹ Shibuya K. (2008), p. 379. The author does not agree with Dumont, who argues that the difference between the *Ordinatio* and q. 13 (*Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Liber VII*) “can perhaps be dispelled by recognizing that in the *Ordinatio* individual grade refers only to the grades of intension and remission of accidental forms, while in the *Metaphysics* Scotus is countenancing some sort of individuating grade in the substantial order. (I think this is in fact the case)”: Dumont S. (1995), p. 217. Dumont’s position is shared by Giorgio Pini; see Pini G. (2005a).

⁹⁰ Duns Scotus J. (1997) *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Liber VII*. It should be stressed that the term “*haecceitas*” appears at various points, but not in reference to the individuating factor. Scotus uses it to refer to individuality and not primarily to indicate the principle or the cause of an individual’s individuality.

⁹¹ See Aristoteles Latinus (1976), lib. VII c. 1, 1028a 11–12, 123; c. 3–4, 1029a 28, 126 – 1030a 4–6, 128. Aristotle argues that substance is precisely what a “τὸδε τι” is, and does not need to be seen in relation to any other thing to be identified or individuated.

quantitatively definable as a “*hoc*”. To the concrete individual (*hoc*) its singularity is “added” and the result is *haecceitas* (“thisness”) which, in a unique and unrepeatably sense, makes one human being and not another “this”. This entails a number of interpretative difficulties, since it may induce one to think that “this” individual is produced by the common nature (humanity) by adding the *haecceitas* from outside.

The term also has the disadvantage of implying that what contracts the common nature, as well as being something external, is an abstract quality such as rationality. Moreover, difficulty arises when we look at the semantics of the word *haecceitas*: given that the suffix used to make the word a noun – *-tas* – means “a state of being”, *haecceitas* means “the state of being this” (or “thisness”), and this leads to a tautology. The term itself is a neologism that recalls *quidditas*, which is subsequent to the determination of the *ultima realitas entis*.

For this reason we will not use *haecceitas* since it is not yet certain that it was used by Scotus.⁹² It is highly probable that the term was coined by his disciples, who sought to establish a terminology that was not only able to define the “positive entity” (which could otherwise have been understood as an abstract concept), but could also be used to refute the position that individuation is realised only by certain concrete elements such as matter, quantity or existence.

3.3.2 *The “continentia unitiva”: A Combination of the Common Nature and the “principium individuationis”*

Once the presence of the common nature and the *principium individuationis* had been established, Scotus sought to explain how these two principles can subsist in the individual at the same time. To do this, he proposed the doctrine of unitive containment. Between the *principium individuationis* and the common nature there is no real separation,⁹³ although they are ontologically distinct. These cannot be separated, but comprise each other in a *continentia unitiva*⁹⁴: the individuating

⁹² See Gilson É. (1952), p. 483 (note 69) in the Italian edition: “[...] the use of *haecceitas*, rare in any case in Duns Scotus’ writings, was to become universal among his disciples. It is a useful term, whose only drawback is that it suggests a “thing”, rather than the extreme actuality that determines each real being in its singularity” (our translation).

⁹³ See Duns Scotus J. (1997) *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Liber VII*, q. 13, No. 131, p. 264: “Sicut tamen in aliis unitive contentis non est separatio realis, nec etiam possibilis, sic natura, cui intellectus tribuit intentionem speciei quae dicta est esse in re et communis – sicut commune est possibile in re –, numquam separatur ab illa perfectione unitive secum contenta vel ab illo gradu in quo accipitur differentia individualis”.

⁹⁴ See *ibid.* q. 13, Nos. 136–137, p. 265: “Naturae in se non repugnat forte separari ab omnibus gradibus individualibus, quia intelligendo naturam sine istis, non intelliguntur contradictoria. Quia tamen in esse repugnat sibi quod separaretur ab omnibus, non autem quod separaretur ab hac – hoc enim est possibile, ut in illa, et e converso; non ergo potest fieri nisi sub aliquo gradu individuali, quare et ‘ille’, ‘iste’ non potest differre re. In hoc conceditur secundum argumentum, et ita stat inseparabilitas propter *continentiam unitivam*”.

principle and the specific essence are both defined as unitively contained in the same individual. The containment implies both a container (the concrete individual) and its content (common nature and *principium individuationis*). Scotus does not affirm here that the common nature contains in itself the individuating principle, or that the latter contains the common nature. He means only to point out that the individual contains both concepts unitively and therefore that they cannot exist independently from each other: humanity (or common nature) does not include the individual difference described by Socrates, nor does “socraticity” (individuality) essentially include humanity. Socrates thus unitively contains both the common nature and “socraticity”, both essential elements for the constitution in a concrete individual.⁹⁵

The doctrine of unitive containment is not present in the *Ordinatio*, where the formally distinct entities (common nature and *principium individuationis*) are united by means of their “real identity”.⁹⁶

3.3.3 *Final Considerations*

Scotus gradually modified his way of referring to the *principium individuationis*. Initially, in his early philosophical writings (*Quaestiones super Libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis, VII*), he saw individuation as a *forma individualis*, which Bonaventure had rejected. Subsequently in the codicil to *quaestio* 13 he modified his terminology and called this principle *gradus individualis*. The internal difficulty arising from the change in the terms used by Scotus to define this principle generated a debate among his students, including William of Alnwick⁹⁷ and Francis of Meyronnes,⁹⁸ who continued to delineate a possible evolution that could justify this change. His initial thoughts led subsequently to a new attempt to grasp the problem by means of a more systematic reflection (*Ordinatio*), seeking the original nucleus of individuation in the *ultima realitas entis*.⁹⁹ From the crucial question of what the *principium individuationis* actually is, he shifted his attention to defining the ultimate substrate on which to build a new ontology of the individual. Looked at in this key, Scotus’ thought evolved to a final stage in which individuation is no

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ See See Duns Scotus J. (1973) *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 6, No. 189, p. 485: “Secundo modo est necessario compositum, quia illa realitas a qua accipitur differentia specifica, potentialis est respectu illius realitatis a qua accipitur differentia individualis, sicut si essent res et res; non enim realitas specifica ex se habet unde includat per *identitatem realitatem individuaalem*, sed tantum aliquod tertium includit ista ambo per *identitatem*”.

⁹⁷ See Dumont S. (1987).

⁹⁸ See Dumont S. (1988).

⁹⁹ The reader is referred to certain observations by Katsumi Shibuya in Shibuya K. (2008), p. 388: “Scotus has already abandoned the older theory of individuation through a *forma individualis* which he adopted in his *Metaphysics* and then developed the more refined explanation found in his mature *Ordinatio*”.

longer a principle to be sought, but a new approach to the analysis of the structure itself of a “being” in its ultimate stage.

This offers us a vantage point from which to better comprehend Scotus’ transcendental shift concerning the solution to individuation and to understand how the individual, as a person, belongs to himself/herself from their founding moment, which also represents the constitutive level of their individual nature. The “*ultima realitas entis*” thus becomes the original place that enables individuals to be no longer something general, but to have solidity in themselves and their own unique position in the created universe: they cease to be a particular realisation of a generic concept and become particular in themselves.

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Chapter 4

The Intangible Individuality of Human Beings. The Originality of Edith Stein's Perspective

Having previously clarified the recondite meaning of the *principium individuationis* of human beings in the writings of *Doctor Subtilis*, it is essential to stress the originality of Edith Stein's reading of this concept in a phenomenological key.

After a brief analysis of the *Ordinatio* (*quaestiones* 1–6), together with *quaestio* 13 of Scotus' treatise on book VII of Aristotle's *Metaphysica*, it is affirmed that the *Ordinatio* represents the final stage of Scotus' reflection on individuation. The *entitas individualis*, the intrinsic and positive principle of the “*esse essentiae*”, has the function of contracting common nature, thereby making it singular. It is deducible neither from matter nor from form, nor yet from some composite of matter and form. Rather, it originates from the “*ultima realitas entis*”.

Having clarified Scotus' solution to the question, we established that by means of a “continuous reading” of Stein's works – including *On the Problem of Empathy; Life in a Jewish Family 1891–1916; Potency and Act*; and *Finite and Eternal Being* – Stein's investigations of the individual being¹ can be compared with the position adopted by Duns Scotus in the *Ordinatio*. The reading in a phenomenological key of the medieval *quaestio* will allow us to compare the terms of the *entitas individualis* of Scotus with the singularity of the Steinian concretion of the “empty form” and its corresponding qualitative fullness, stressing the deep similarities between the two systems of thought. Lastly, spiritual perception by feeling (*das Fühlen*) enables human beings to immerse themselves in a “new region of being” in order to fully grasp, with their inner vision, their “being themselves” as intangible singularity.

¹Recognition is due to Angela Ales Bello for the semantic precision – in all her studies of Edith Stein's writings – with which she treats the term “individuality”, the philosophical usage of which is medieval in origin. This has entailed the introduction of a new term, “singularity”, in order to better highlight the typical characteristic of human beings as persons.

4.1 Edith Stein's Phenomenological Investigation of Individual Being

The question of the essence of the human person, in the framework of a wider enquiry designed to shed light on the constitutive element of its individuality, is one of the theoretical issues which Stein, like Hedwig Conrad-Martius,² re-examined and re-interpreted many times. This process began with her doctoral dissertation *On the Problem of Empathy*³ – written with a view to filling a gap in the Husserlian approach⁴ – and continued up to her last work, *Finite and Eternal Being*, in the conclusion to which she tackles the doctrine of the principle of individuation.

Our objective here is to delineate a possible re-reading in a phenomenological key of the constitutive and fundamental element of the individual being by following the various stages of Edith Stein's philosophical journey. To do this it is initially necessary to adopt an attitude of *epoché*, compared by Husserl to a "religious conversion"⁵ (*religiösen Umkehrung*). This "setting aside" of any previously acquired results is indispensable in order to grasp the problem in itself and thus study its essence.

4.1.1 Entropathetic Lived Experience: One's Own Selfness in Reference to the Other's Alterity

The starting point of our enquiry is Edith Stein's dissertation on the problem of *Einfühlung*. This term has traditionally been translated as "empathy". However, following Husserl's Italian translator Filippini, we prefer "entropathy", as this better emphasises its association with the lived experience of consciousness, as opposed to the "psychological" interpretation which implies its affinity with a sympathetic act.⁶

²Research conducted by the present author at the *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek* in Munich (in the *Handschriften* section of the works of Hedwig Conrad-Martius) showed that she too was interested in the question of individuation, as attested by Conrad-Martius H. (1946). See Avé-Lallemant E. (Ed.) (1975), p. 219. For information on Conrad-Martius' manuscripts edited by E. Avé-Lallemant, the reader is referred to Alfieri F. (2008a, b).

³Stein E. (2008).

⁴As is well known, Stein explicitly states that "In his course on nature and spirit, Husserl had said that an objective outer world could only be experienced intersubjectively [...]. To the experience, an application of the work of Theodor Lipps, Husserl gave the name *Einfühlung* [Empathy]. What it consists of, however, he nowhere detailed. Here was a lacuna to be filled; therefore, I wished to examine what empathy might be": See Stein E. (2002), pp. 218–219. English translation, p. 269.

⁵Husserl E. (1976²), p. 140.

⁶See Ales Bello A. (2003b), p. 141: "[Entropathy] may be distinguished from sympathy, which is an *additional, subsequent* experience that may or may not accompany entropathy; sympathy is identified almost negatively, via a series of distinctions performed by means of the evidentiality of other acts" (our translation, italics added). For further treatment of the historiographical issues associated with the term *Einfühlung*, see also the analyses conducted by Ales Bello in Ales Bello A. (2009), pp. 77–92.

In accordance with the position adopted by Angela Ales Bello, and excluding any interpretation by those who assimilate entropathy with the “unipathy” (*Einsföhlung*) of Theodor Lipps or the “co-feeling” (*Mitföhlen*) of Scheler, it may be argued that “in identifying the lived experience of entropathy [...] human beings maintain their individuality, which is also closely linked to their corporeality, though they are able to acknowledge and communicate with each other”⁷ This is because, by continuously experiencing the “other while remaining anchored to myself”, the entropathetic lived experience makes it possible to grasp the phenomenological origin of the individual in terms of their double-sided make-up: as a “body” (*Leib* as opposed to *Körper*) and as a personality. According to Stein, as an act, entropathy is not mere perception. Perception by itself is sufficient to grasp the purely physical and perceptive individuations: that is to say, it discriminates between the various “this-es” from the point of view of the body as *Körper*. However, in order to relate to the “living thing” (the *Leib*), what is required is an entirely new lived experience, which is able not just to perceive but also to “feel”.⁸

In analysing the constitution of the psycho-physical individual, in reference to the pure I, Stein raises the issue of what we mean by individuality when we assert that this I “is “itself” and no other”.⁹ To arrive at the constitution of the individual I as a unitary object we must consider its selfness (*Selbsttheit*) and its distinctive content in terms of lived experience (*Erlebnisgehalt*). Initially it may be assumed that the qualitative difference in our lived experiences, by means of which each of us arrives at their own distinctive vision of the world, is alone sufficient to explain the individual difference between an “I” and a “You”. However, this is not sufficient for Stein, since it is only when the selfness “is experienced and is the basis of all that is “mine” [...] and thus the “I” does not become individualized because another faces it [...] ‘that’] its individuality, or as we would rather say [...], its selfness is brought into relief in contrast with the otherness of the other”.¹⁰ The relationship in an entropathetic process enables each side to recognise themselves as individuals via the three degrees of implementation of entropathy. While on the one hand these allow us to “realise” the lived experience of others, on the other they enable us, via the perception of feelings (*Föhlen*), to “experience ourselves” in our intangible singularity.

In order to understand how we may grasp our individuality from the entropathetic act, we shall reproduce an example of Stein’s: “A friend tells me that he has lost his brother and I *become aware* of his pain”.¹¹ In the first stage, the lived experience of someone else’s pain “appears” before me but does not have the characteristics of the thing perceived in “flesh and blood”. In the second stage, I experience the pain experienced by the other, involving myself in the other’s state of mind, drawing nearer to the other and “experiencing” this pain as if it was my own. Lastly, the third stage entails objectivising the lived experience. The “realisation”, which is nothing

⁷Ales Bello A. (2003b), p. 141 (our translation).

⁸See Ales Bello A. (2010a), p. 179.

⁹Stein E. (2008), p. 54. English translation, p. 38.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid. p. 14. English translation, p. 6.

more than grasping the essence of the other's lived experience, reveals to me not only the *alterity* of the "You" that is in front of me, but also the originality (second stage) of my own singularity, which, in "experiencing" what the other is going through, fundamentally "feels itself" as the "I" in its totality: I succeed in grasping from the other my own "self". This happens because to the pure I corresponds an act of consciousness whose two dimensions concern firstly the precise consciousness of the self, experienced from within (the *ich-punkt*), and secondly the consciousness of the other, experienced from outside.

In addition, in the second stage of the entropathetic process, experiencing the lived experience of the other in this "present" gives rise subsequently to the first collective form of the "We", in which the "I" and the "You" conserve their singularity and for this reason are able to constitute themselves as the "We". The "goal orientation" of the "I" constitutes itself in its nature as an individual subject. Anna M. Pezzella argues that "it is not possible to speak of the individual human being without thinking of it as having grown and been formed within a community".¹² However, the "We", which is constituted from entropathetic lived experience, within which the singularity of each of us is a given, cannot lead us to argue, as Anna M. Pezzella does subsequently, that the individual "is born first as a collective being and then recognises itself as an individual, single subject".¹³ Only the full possession of the singularity of the individual, albeit objectivised in the entropathetic lived experience, can give rise to a community and not the other way round; I succeed in grasping from the other always and only myself and never the other as such.

It may be objected that those who do not succeed in experiencing the three stages of lived entropathetic experience do not possess their own individuality. Nevertheless, we all retain our individuality; the problem is how this may reach givenness via the lived experience of the *fühlen*, which enables my I to "experience" – in a specific and conscious way – its own selfness in reference to other selfnesses, which are not just "others" but are essentially "different" from me. Individuality as such is felt by every individual as something singular only inasmuch as he or she "feels" themselves as "they themselves are". In addition, one also feels the individuality of the other when one is "touched" by it inside. Furthermore, by means of this specific individuality, the individual is inserted in the *Lebenswelt*, in a reciprocal relationship with the others who are his or her peers, though they are "different".

4.1.2 *Qualitative Individuality and the Opening Up of "ultima solitudo" to Gemeinschaft*

It would be opportune at this point to reflect further on the question of singularity in a piece written by Stein which appeared for the first time in 1922 in the fifth volume of the *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung*, entitled

¹² Pezzella A.M. (2003), p. 116 (our translation).

¹³ Ibid. (our translation).

*Beiträge zur philosophischen Begründung der Psychologie und der Geisteswissenschaften*¹⁴ on the occasion of Edmund Husserl's sixtieth birthday.

On the basis of the results achieved so far, it may be argued that the spiritual sciences are the only discipline to consider the person in terms of his or her qualitative individuality – unlike psychology for example. Bearing this in mind, in the first part of this section we shall analyse the qualitative determinations of the “nucleus” of the personality and its requirements. In the second part, we shall identify the similarities between Stein's reflection on the “inalienable aloneness” of the individual in their singularity and the Scotist doctrine of “*ultima solitudo*”. This creates a new possibility for the individual to constitute itself in a *Gemeinschaft* – analogous to an individual personality.

4.1.2.1 The Qualitative Determinations of the “Nucleus” in the Psycho-physical Individual and Its Requirements

In the first section of the work (*Psychische Kausalität*),¹⁵ Stein notes the principle by which the individual possesses a “nucleus” (*Kern*) – immune to all physical and psychological conditioning – which individually determines each human being and “qualitatively” colours every one of their acts and lived experiences. Each psycho-physical individual thus finds in this nucleus their distinctly individual moment and the possibility of establishing their unique nature and singularity.

Delimiting the “territory” of the *Kern* is equivalent to considering the singularity of the individual as an authentic “quality” in itself that cannot be traced back to any numerically expressible quantitative individuation. Thus we may speak of a qualitative singularity that precedes and lays the foundations of each individual determination, with regard to which the quantitative parameters are secondary. This ontological priority of the qualitative moment can be justified by analysis of the two requisites which Stein attributes to the nucleus of the personality: the “invariable repertoire of its being [Seinsbestand]” and its “enduring property”.

Moving on from the study of the psychic process, Stein argues that the latter “is decided by the “*core personality*”, by that invariable repertoire of being that is not a result of development but, on the contrary, prescribes how the development proceeds”.¹⁶ It can be argued that the nucleus of the individual is its ontogenetic source, which generates itself, to the extent to which it performs a similar “internal” process, and acquires and gives consistency to the whole being in its continuous outward expression. This process cannot be conditioned by the development of the

¹⁴ See Stein E. (1922).

¹⁵ See *ibid.* pp. 2–116. English translation, pp. 2–128.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 84. English translation, pp. 92–93; Stein's English translator renders *Seinsbestand* with “repertoire of being”, but we feel that “persistence of being” better expresses the original meaning.

individual since it is only the reiterated turning inwards that motivates its “conscious movement outwards”. It is possible that each quantitative determination must therefore underlie the internal qualitative moment, and at times it is difficult to grasp it in its totality due to the simple fact that we cannot make reference to any spatio-temporal principle or quantitative element to define it. This step entailed a profound re-thinking of singularity, to the point that Stein realised that quantitative individuation is not sufficient to resolve the problem of the *principium individuationis*; she interpreted singularity not in the sense of quantity but as a unique qualitative moment, i.e. as the original essence which, as it unfolds, achieves a qualitative “filling”. A further element of the intangibility of the nucleus, from which everything else originates, is found when Stein stresses the fact that “the mental life of an individual is co-determined by the peculiarity of this core”.¹⁷ In reality, the individual lives by starting from this nucleus, which is able to make the individual a qualitatively unitary “person”. Naturally, spiritual life and singularity are qualitative determinations which base their original being in the nucleus and dwell within it, although the nature of the nucleus, immune to all physical and psychic conditioning, cannot be identified with spiritual life, of which it is only a part.

We shall now analyse the second requirement of the nucleus of the personality, which for Stein lay in its being an “enduring property”,¹⁸ which once again implies a clearly determined qualitative moment: something that remains in spite of all psycho-physical conditioning. Interesting in this regard is Stein’s description in her autobiography of her aunt Friederike, who had had a severe stroke: “Hand and foot were paralyzed [...]. Gradually the ability to understand disappeared as much as the ability to make herself understood. [...] But the decline of all her mental faculties could not destroy the *essence of her personality*”.¹⁹ On the basis of our knowledge of this nucleus, it may be assumed that its continuation is totally independent of any psycho-physical process. Thus, it cannot be deducted from such a process; to the extent to which it is intangible and endures in itself, it can give “colour” to any lived act. Each of us has individual potential that exists before any conscious choice or formative experience, and the *telos* of each individual and their full development is (and has always been) pre-inscribed in their nucleus, which is the starting point from which to arrive at the totality of their being.

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 87. English translation, p. 95.

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 89. English translation, p. 97.

¹⁹ Stein E. (2002), p. 13. English translation, pp. 36–37, our italics. The original German text of this passage is more incisive than its English translation: “[...] Aber der Verfall aller geistigen Fähigkeiten konnte den *Kern der Persönlichkeit* nicht zerstören”. Notice how in the German text the emphasis is on the “*nucleus* of the personality” [*Kern der Persönlichkeit*], which in the English translation is rendered with “the *essence* of her personality”. It is argued here that there is a substantial difference between the English version and the original German, and that *nucleus* is a better translation of *Kern* than *essence*.

4.1.2.2 The Individual I and Scotus' "*ultima solitudo*"

The development of our enquiry becomes clearer in the second section of the work (*Individuum und Gemeinschaft*),²⁰ in which Stein renews her focus on the "individual I", the key and foundational term for the constitution of collective living. It shall be necessary therefore to return to the results already acquired concerning the pure I, since, following a progressive reading of Stein's works, the singularity specific to each individual must be circumscribed with new elements: this step serves to show how, in reality, few anthropologists have highlighted the uniqueness and thus the value of each single individual.

"The individual ego is the ultimate point of emanation for all living consciousness. [...] first of all only the ego that is *this one* and no other, solitary and undivided".²¹ In terms of its structure, the individual possesses the principle of uniqueness, making it unique in its species; paradoxically its singularity cannot be subordinated to general concepts nor expressed with general terms. This characteristic of singularity, of not being amenable to generalisation, confers on the individual a distinct position, especially within the community. In addition, the individual I, experienced in its uniqueness, cannot be an accidental characteristic of the person, but is rather the essential and irreducible kernel that constitutes the foundation of any actualisation. In this singularity – which is fundamental and not amenable to further analysis – the individual is experienced in a unique and unrepeatable way, anchored in itself. "Precisely this ego, which requires no material property in order to demarcate itself off from all others in its egoic being, is what we designate as a *pure ego*".²²

Being internally constituted in a unique and unrepeatable way, the individual is given an *ultima solitudo* that does not indicate a closure, but a total "being" in itself; a *solitudo* that is the result of a free encounter with the depth of its I. Indeed, Scotus stresses that *ad personalitatem requiritur ultima solitudo, sive negatio dependentiae actualis et aptitudinalis*.²³ It is here that Stein's investigation approaches Scotus' reflection on the "*ultima solitudo*" – the ontological origin of being that characterises the absolute autonomy that the individual enjoys – especially when she argues that it is "quite extraordinary how this ego, notwithstanding its solitariness and inalienable aloneness, can enter into a *community of life* with other subjects [...]"²⁴

²⁰ See Stein E. (1922), pp. 116–283. English translation, pp. 129–314.

²¹ Ibid. p. 119. English translation, p. 133; we prefer to translate the German "das Ich" with "the I", rather than "the ego", to avoid association with the term as used in psychology, and the same consideration applies to associated terms such as "ichlich".

²² Ibid.

²³ Inspired by the formula of Richard of Saint Victor, Scotus considered the unique and unrepeatable existence of the person to be one of its defining characteristics, an incommunicability or solitude that makes the person unique and unrepeatable.

²⁴ Stein E. (1922), p. 119. English translation, p. 133. It is interesting to point out that in her *Metaphysische Gespräche* Hedwig Conrad-Martius analyses the same question: See Conrad-Martius H. (1921), p. 69: "[...] This immanent aloneness (*Verlassenheit*) seems to characterise human beings from the foundation of their essence. [...] I would just point out that this moment of immanent solitude is the key characteristic of the pure idea of the human being, in that the essential being, placed in itself or in its own centre, contains that possibility, or is entirely identical to it" (our translation).

By its nature the individual is a monad, closed in itself, and because of its uniqueness and the “recognition” of its specific singularity it can emerge from itself by “freely” opening up to others and the surrounding world.²⁵ Only on the basis of an *ultima solitudo* does the transcendence of the other become accessible, via the immediate recognition of the singularity of others, which will never be possessed by me because it can never fully be grasped. “In place of the individual ego we’ve got a subject in our case that encompasses a plurality of individual egos. Certainly I the individual ego am filled up with grief. But I feel myself to be not alone with it. Rather, I feel it as *our* grief”.²⁶ In this way the characteristic of the *ultima solitudo* is always that of an “opening towards” – and consequently a “solidarity” with – another “You”. From the foundation of the individual, the first collective dimension is thus constituted, and from the opening towards the other, the individual discovers his or her own true individuality, i.e. their identity. This is confirmed moreover by the circumstance which for Stein makes the whole intentional life of consciousness always a radical opening towards the world; towards connections present in reality (i.e. in natural, individual, socio-collective and therefore spiritual reality) that constrain the subject’s freedom of constitution: “Thus all intentional life, insofar as it constructs a world of things, turns out to be objectively bound. [...] We spoke of firm laws regulating the course of the intentional life; we may call them laws of motivation. The subject itself does not make these laws for itself. It *lives* in accordance with them, nor is it free to deviate from them (the laws themselves mark the boundary of its freedom). The subject comes upon these laws when it reflects on its own living and analyzes it in reflection. The existence of laws regulating the life of consciousness is *objective* [*objektiv*] *being*, that is, it is independent of the subject, and because it is presupposed to consciousness, it is *a priori*”.²⁷

Also significant is the reference in Stein’s reflections to the theme of “liberty”, linked to Scotus’ *ultima solitudo*, because she finds that the value contributed by individuals when forming a community can be discovered only “in the release of the individuals from their natural loneliness”.²⁸ Only an unconditional opening up, the fruit of a free acknowledgement of the other, can eliminate the hidden risk carried in the *ultima solitudo*, the “solipsism”,²⁹ which conceives the I as closed or turned in on itself. The opening up of the individual I to the collective dimension thus dissuaded Stein from unilaterally absolutising the moment of singularity alone.

²⁵ See Stein E. (1922), p. 200. English translation, pp. 222–223: “In order to fathom the essence of personality, you’ve got to keep your eye on fact that the psyche – the individual’s as well as the community’s – exhibits a remarkable double character. It’s a monad closed into itself, yet on the other hand it’s a correlate of its environment, an eye opened for everything that’s called “an object””.

²⁶ Ibid. p. 120. English translation, p. 134; italics in the original.

²⁷ Stein E. (2005a), pp. 252–253. English translation, pp. 370–371.

²⁸ Stein E. (1922), p. 247. English translation, p. 273.

²⁹ In reference to the false solipsistic closure of Husserl’s investigation of subjectivity, see Ales Bello A. (2005), pp. 48–51. English translation, pp. 33–35.

4.1.2.3 The “I-ness” of the Individual Subject as the “Original” and “Ultimate” Place, and the Opening Up to the “Extra-I” Dimension

Starting from its *ultima solitudo*, the individual is structured as a “person”³⁰ in a fully accomplished totality, within which there is already a trace of an opening towards the collective or extra-I dimension. It now remains to be established whether, given this “opening”, we may assert that the ultimate *telos* of the person, with its individual lived experiences, achieves completion in the constitution of the collective subject (*Gemeinschaft*).

Within the person-community dynamism, Stein sought to establish how the collective lived experience was constituted, and what role was played by individual lived experiences in the genesis of the collective formation. “The subject of the community [...] is not to be conceived as a “pure ego” like the individual subject. The lived experience of the community doesn’t arise for the subject of the community in the same manner in which the individual lived experience arises for the individual ego, which is characterized in its egohood as precisely such an ultimate place of origin. Ultimately the lived experiences of the community, like individual lived experiences, have their source in the individual egos that belong to the community”.³¹ Stressing the origin of the collective lived experience in the individual personality implies that the essence of the community must always be experienced in the first instance by the person, understood in their individuality – the key notion for understanding collective lived experience. Hence individuality, in living outside itself, conserves its original autonomy intact, and to the extent to which it is self-possessed, can recognise other individualities as other-than-itself without running the risk of depersonalisation. Indeed, it can give rise to the birth of a community where the individualities of each can cooperate, via reciprocal recognition, in achieving the objective of their coexistence: full harmony in the growth of one’s own and others’ personalities. We argue that individuality alone, internally precisely determined, becomes the guarantee of collective life, in which “reciprocal recognition” constitutes the spiritual activity that makes each member of the community experience the other – despite remaining unable to fully grasp either one’s own or the other’s alterity – as intangible singularity. It is also the case that individuality is never eliminated, since the qualitative essence of the person, which is “behind” every single act he or she performs, resides in it. Patrizia Manganaro points out in this regard that the community “does not elide diversity but encapsulates it and constitutes it [...] and where subjects enter into relationships with each other, there is also fertile ground for a unity of life”.³² The relationship between members of a

³⁰Regarding the term “person” – used in medieval theology to indicate the “divine persons” – in accordance with the position of Angela Ales Bello, we use this term in preference to *individual*, as it better expresses the collective lived experience in which the human being is situated. See Ales Bello A. (2000).

³¹Stein E. (1922), p. 120. English translation, pp. 134–135.

³²Manganaro P. (2008), p. 140 (our translation).

community is one of “mutual recognition”, a dynamic process able to disclose the inner world of our individuality. This enables the individual lived experiences – from the encounter with collective lived experience – to be objectivised, i.e. to return to me as something I perceive on a conscious level, in a continuous regeneration of the “movement outwards” and the “return inwards”.

The vital relationship, tending from the person towards the community, is emphasised by Stein with the observation that “the private mark of the constitutive single lived experiences determines the special noetic particularity of communal lived experiences”³³ and that to the extent to which “The individual lives, feels, and acts as a member of the community, and insofar as he does that, the community lives, feels, and acts in him and through him”.³⁴ Thus, from the unity of individual lived experiences, the lived experience of the community is constituted. However, only some of these individual lived experiences are suitable for constituting collective lived experience. This is a key point: not everything that belongs to the individual sphere enters into the world of the community. As an example, Stein points out that “the entire *life of the senses* is incapable of constituting any communal lived experience on its own”,³⁵ considering that since it is not linked to reciprocal living, the sphere of sensitivity becomes less significant when it goes beyond the sphere of subjectivity. In the same way, “egoic data [ichliche Daten]” are also individual – or as Stein calls them, “*merely subjective*” – since they “constitute values for us [... and] these values decisively influence our inner life and have an entirely personal meaning for us”.³⁶

Individual lived experiences have collective significance only if, as well as their own individual dimension, one can also speak of a supra-individual dimension. It is no surprise that Stein argues that “fantasy and fantasy world give themselves as simply private and relative to the single subject; on the other hand, as super-individual”.³⁷ The individual component is the “intuition” of the imagination, which presents the object of the imagination to each of us in different ways, while the “intention” of the real object is given to me but also to the others in the same way. Only the perceived, real object – on which our being is focused – is part of individual lived experience.

We shall dwell a moment here on the individual “intuition” of the object, since Stein shows that on perception of the thing “the subject-positing grasps the object itself under a *common meaning*”.³⁸ This meaning can be either its essential determination or the “empty form [leere Form] that sets forth the object solely as a substrate of determinations [Substrat von Bestimmungen] while leaving its intrinsic substance entirely open, although it is meant as a thing fully determined in itself”.³⁹

³³ Stein E. (1922), p. 125. English translation, p. 139.

³⁴ Ibid. English translation, pp. 139–140.

³⁵ Ibid. p. 130. English translation, p. 145.

³⁶ Ibid. p. 147. English translation, p. 164.

³⁷ Ibid. p. 135. English translation, p. 150.

³⁸ Ibid. p. 137. English translation, p. 153; italics in the original.

³⁹ Ibid.

This “*empty form*” (*Leerform*) is nothing less than a clearly determined substrate that must achieve a qualitative “filling” (*Erfüllung*).⁴⁰

4.1.2.4 *Gemeinschaft* as Analogous to the Individual Personality

Considering that the *ultima solitudo* is actually an “ontological limit” to the individual being, it is here that we would seek the reason for which individuals join the “world of the community”. Freeing their natural aloneness, which is constitutive of their uniqueness and unrepeatability, they give rise to a “community [...] as an analog to an individual personality”.⁴¹ In reality, it is an abstraction to consider the human individual as isolated (in all her works Stein always emphasises the I-others correlation), since “its existence is existence in a world, its life is life in a community”.⁴²

The sphere of the personality, which in a specific sense is usually indicated as individual “character”, makes the individual nucleus visible; in other words the individual must perform a movement from inside his or her own nucleus towards the outside, by means of which their singularity becomes explicit through the qualities of their character. However, “it belongs directly to the essence of [the] person not to be a mere instantiation of a typical property, but rather to possess an individual core which also lends to every typical character trait an individual stamp”.⁴³ Without objectivisation of the qualities of character – the nucleus is “individual as such, something indissoluble and unnameable”⁴⁴ – we would not be able to “grasp”, even in an incomplete way, the singularity which is “in front of me”, which would remain unintelligible *quoad nos*. It needs to be continuously accompanied by an “inward vision” that is able to recognise in its own singularity, as well in that of the others, the qualities of character, which are none other than the expression of a much deeper reality that transcends us. Precisely because it gains experience of itself, the interior alterity gives the person the possibility of discovering the transcendence of the other “I”s, and hence of the Infinite Being. Thus it is in the reciprocal relationship of collective living that the person experiences the first opening up towards a greater transcendence.

⁴⁰This term, which is of Husserlian origin, is discussed in detail in Husserl E. (1976), p. 21: “[...] eine bloße Wesensform, die zwar ein Wesen, aber ein völlig “leeres” ist, ein Wesen, das in der Weise einer Leerform auf alle möglichen Wesen paßt, das in seiner formalen Allgemeinheit alle, auch die höchsten materialen Allgemeinheiten unter sich hat und ihnen durch die ihr zugehörigen formalen Wahrheiten Gesetze vorschreibt”. In addition, in order to better understand the term “filling” (*Erfüllung*) the reader is referred to Husserl E. (1984), § 14: *Der Inhalt als Gegenstand, als erfüllender Sinn und als Sinn oder Bedeutung schlechthin* (p. 56 ss).

See also Fink E. (1988), p. 206.

⁴¹Stein E. (1922), p. 200. English translation, p. 222.

⁴²Stein E. (2004a), p. 134 (our translation).

⁴³Stein E. (1922), p. 238. English translation, p. 263; we feel that the original *Wesen der Person* should be rendered with the definite article.

⁴⁴Ibid. p. 208. English translation, p. 231.

Despite this, the opening towards the collective dimension requires a continuous state of attentiveness on the part of the person because “where your soul is disconnected from the actuality of living, what’s missing from behavior and from the visible being of the individual is the individual flair or, as we also say, the “personal touch””.⁴⁵ In this case – as Stein clearly stresses – living no longer proceeds from the nucleus of its being, but “the individual’s life becomes driven by sensory powers and perhaps by volition, or even carried along by the powers of someone else’s soul”.⁴⁶ Only when the individual’s life is centred on the interior of its nucleus is it also possible to speak of a “community character”, which is formed by its members in the same way as the individual personality. However “no “core” of the community can be spoken of at all [...] rather, this refers back to the core [Kern] of the individual persons who form its foundation”.⁴⁷

4.2 The “Responsibility” Arising from Spiritual Perception by Feeling (*das Fühlen*): The Intangibility of the “Person”

Our investigation will now focus on the concepts of “empty form” and qualitative fullness, the final stage required to grasp the “singularity” of the human being by feeling (*das Fühlen*). Once singularity has been defined, we will show that the theory of the *materia signata quantitate* cannot be considered sufficient for the individuation of spiritual beings.

4.2.1 *Individuation as an Opportunity for Rethinking the Anthropological Question*

In the framework of a broader examination of the *principium individuationis*, it is necessary to revisit certain analyses that are relevant to the question at hand which Stein conducted in the course of the lessons given by her in Münster in the winter semester of 1932/33 entitled *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person*.⁴⁸ Stein’s phenomenological inquiries and the study of medieval philosophy enabled her to found a new anthropology which, in contrast to a naturalistic reading of human beings (the positivist approach), can be of help in understanding the individual in its finished totality. Only a “shift of vision” can make it possible to reach the qualitatively determined substrate of the individual which corresponds to the ultimate reality of its

⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 212. English translation, p. 235.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 249. English translation, p. 275.

⁴⁸ Stein E. (2004a).

being. From here we proceed to establish how only full and clear awareness on the part of the individual regarding the foundation of their singularity – “the achievement of consciousness” – can constitute the person as an intangible and unchangeable *unicum*.

4.2.1.1 The “Shift of Vision” Required for Inner Perception

The reflection on a new anthropology emerged from the need felt by Stein to be able to integrate the results achieved by phenomenological investigations with her new educational project that aimed to teach the individual value of the personality. This was an attempt to create a Catholic pedagogy in which the Husserlian method and the contribution of medieval philosophy could find common interests, such as the study of the individual as a stratified reality, thus providing a new reading and understanding of the individual personality. Consequently, for this project, Stein felt that an anthropology that proceeded exclusively from the natural sciences was inadequate, since the fact that a “human individual is exemplary of a “type” (species) does not mean that his or her being derives or is totally explainable with reference to the “type””; rather it “is a manifestation in an individual characterisation”.⁴⁹

The individual was not to be considered as an exemplar or a simple repeater of the “species”. It was only by starting from individuality that an educational project able to guide the individual to his or her unrepeatable uniqueness – thereby lifting them above the species and any general law – could be constructed. This prefigured the programme that Stein, feeling compelled to act, intended to develop via an educational project in opposition to the repugnant “myth of the race” propounded by the growing national-socialist movement. By denying the uniqueness of the individual, reducing them to a mere general concept, the Nazi project sought to conceive the person as a simple intersection of various kinds of data (age, gender, social position, race) and as the “product” of heredity and the environment. Steinian anthropology in contrast was based on the support of the spiritual sciences, the only disciplines able to integrate individuality within an educational process,⁵⁰ in which the generic essence of human beings was replaced by the human person as an individual subject.

The role of the educator⁵¹ consists first and foremost in accomplishing a “shift of vision” – which from an initial exterior perception reaches the substrate determined by the individual – that is able to “approach the distinctive individual characteristics of the pupil; it is only by means of a strong inner contact [...] that it can penetrate to the deeper levels”,⁵² although it cannot hope to obtain complete clarity on the nature of the person before it, insofar as it is not possible to “measure” the qualita-

⁴⁹Ibid. p. 19 (our translation).

⁵⁰See *ibid.* p. 24.

⁵¹For further discussion of the question, a fundamental work is Pezzella A.M. (2007), pp. 85–90.

⁵²Stein E. (2004a), p. 15 (our translation).

tive dimension of their “how”. “The true educator is God, who alone can attain deep knowledge of every single human being”.⁵³

The educational activities are aimed at the individual, who, despite being a part of the whole (species), is already in itself a microcosm within which the qualitative individual imprint cannot be subordinated to general concepts or expressed in general terms. “Indeed, the pupil cannot be a general scheme; [...] he or she wishes to be considered with direct attention to himself or herself as an individual, as a human being with their own unrepeatability and not as an exemplar of a type”.⁵⁴

Individuality cannot be understood except by an “inward” shift of vision that is able to realise the uniqueness of the specific qualities that belong to the individual before any conscious choices or educational experiences. The individual becomes familiar to us by speaking of what he or she is as an individual person by means of a relationship founded on their “inward vision”. The educator leads the pupil from this realisation to gradually discover and understand the individual qualities that he or she already possesses, although they require an achievement of consciousness which needs to accompany every being, enabling the person to bring complete harmony to the unfolding of his or her spiritual being.

Lastly, Stein “realises” that the educational process, directed at the individual or at his or her “complexity”, must take account of “the difference between the created and uncreated being⁵⁵ and the relationship between them”.⁵⁶ Indeed, “individuality [...] is something that belongs to the individual person and proceeds directly from the Creator of each being”.⁵⁷ This close relationship between individuality and the Creator – by losing oneself in God one loses oneself in one’s own individuality – foreshadows Stein’s intention to continue the course of lessons held in Münster with an exploration of theological anthropology, as is clear from the text entitled *Was ist der Mensch?*⁵⁸

4.2.1.2 The “Ultimate” Structure of the Being: The “Empty Form”

The section of *Der Aufbau* dedicated to the origin of the species⁵⁹ contains further discussion of the question of individuation, already presented in *Einführung in die Philosophie*, but it also sets out Stein’s objective: she proposes to “reach the ultimate fundamental structures [of the human being] that are still accessible to reason: this is the task of a radical philosophical analysis”.⁶⁰

⁵³ Ibid. p. 14 (our translation).

⁵⁴ Ibid. pp. 19–20 (our translation).

⁵⁵ The finite being is created as something “unique” from the qualitative point of view, different from all the others.

⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 26 (our translation).

⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 157 (our translation).

⁵⁸ Stein E. (2005b).

⁵⁹ See Stein E. (2004a), pp. 57–73.

⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 61 (our translation).

For Stein, unformed matter⁶¹ “receives its being by means of form”, thus requiring a spatio-temporal dimension so that one individual may distinguish itself from another by means of an extrinsic principle of individuation. Once this has been established, the next step is to discover what it is that determines the passage from the species to the concrete individual, not forgetting that individuation determines the person in terms of their “unity” of living body and soul. The individual is “one” in itself, primarily and not in reference to its peers, and individuation is understood as a principle of distinction, to the extent that it is constituted in its self-determined subjectivity. This enables Stein’s continuous references to individuation as an intrinsic principle to be discovered in the “empty form [Leerform] of created beings, which is filled by a series of qualitatively different universal forms that we may call the genera of the being”.⁶² The individual, with its exterior form, is perceived as a reality that is held together from the interior, and one of its special characteristics is that it forms itself from the inside. To an exterior form corresponds an “empty form” as a “substrate”, qualitatively determined, from which the individual acquires a unity of sense in its full totality. In our case, while the “empty form” represents the interior structure able to be filled by a series of qualitative determinations, the latter do not represent the accomplishment of individuation, but only a “part” of it.

The constitutive element within the individual makes it possible to grasp how, in the relationship between universality and singularity, the individual represents the ultimate perfection of the species or common nature: “in the individual, not everything that he or she is should be attributed to the species to which he or she belongs”.⁶³ This logical process thus reconnects with the philosophy of Duns Scotus,⁶⁴ to whom Stein refers more than once.

Also of great interest is Stein’s assertion that singularity can also be addressed in terms of the “‘division’ into male and female forms”⁶⁵; in this way the stage is set for a “dual anthropology”,⁶⁶ in which Stein delineates the special characteristics inherent in the male/female distinction.

4.2.1.3 The Danger of Suppressing the Individual Human Personality

Stein’s analysis of the human person starts from the nucleus of its individuality and is based on a thorough verification process. Her objective can be surmised from her growing concern with those who consider “human beings as determined exclusively

⁶¹ Without qualities, this cannot characterise anything.

⁶² See Stein E. (2004a), p. 61 (our translation).

⁶³ Ibid. p. 68 (our translation).

⁶⁴ In this regard see the conclusions of Philibert Secretan after having analysed the question of individuation in Stein’s *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person* in Secretan P. (1976), p. 258: “[...] This step involves an issue that is clearly far more Scotist than Thomist. [...] The question of Edith Stein’s sources lies outside the remit of this limited analysis. But it may be of some interest to trace them back beyond Husserl and Descartes to Duns Scotus” (our translation).

⁶⁵ Stein E. (2004a), p. 69 (our translation). See also *ibid.* p. 34, 44: Stein attributes a *Doppelform* of male and female with strong individual differences.

⁶⁶ For a treatment of this issue the reader is referred to Ales Bello A. (1997, 2003a, 2004).

by their connection to a social system and deny the individual personality".⁶⁷ All Stein's attention is thus focused on the obstacles to the development of complete awareness on the part of the individual of his or her individuality. In this way Stein seeks to highlight the distortions that arise as a consequence of denying the individual personality, and describes the inner labour that the individual must perform in order to comprehend that once possessed, their individuality remains inalienable. This however implies a certain responsibility on the part of the individual with respect to their own personal sphere and that of others.

The human person is constituted as an *unicum* only in the "achievement of consciousness" of their individuality. This in turn enables them to emerge from themselves – otherwise they would be conditioned by external factors – "entering" the world and going forth to meet the others. In the absence of the achievement of consciousness, the individual would be "guided" by external events, and their reactions would not therefore depend on the ultimate interior core by means of which the individual possesses existence in the full sense and assumes all responsibility for their own free acts.

We argue that this desire to "achieve consciousness" marks the irreducibility founded on a nucleus of the self-centred individuality, otherwise the individual would risk being at the mercy – due to a de-centring of the individual personality – of external circumstances, with life then being "consumed" in the reactions to these. It is by means of this conscious (or centred) living that the individual "feels" and comes into contact with the flow of his or her individuality. The latter can be objectivised via the recognition of one's own alterity and by the willingness to be elevated in a continuous process of "regeneration" that affects not only the personal sphere, but all of its responses to external stimuli.

Despite all the attempts to suppress or dull the individual human personality, it can never be annulled, since it is the ultimate reality and the foundation of the spiritual being in its initial constitution, which also guarantees that the whole of the natural life of the person bears the imprint of that original and intangible "place".

4.2.2 *The Depth of the Fühlen*

The search for the sense and the foundation of the individual being (*Einzelsein*), and thus for its principle of individuation, obliged Stein for the first time to clarify, on a preliminary basis, the ontological "ambit" of her investigations. This entailed specifying in which "moments", i.e. modes, to seek the ultimate foundation of the singularity of the being: *esse existentiae* or *esse essentiae*? Indeed, although they

⁶⁷ Stein E. (Stein 2004a), p. 134 (our translation). "Denying the individual personality" was a theme taken up by Hannah Arendt in Arendt H. (1994), pp. 11–12; in which she quotes David Rousset, an internee of the Buchenwald concentration camp: "The triumph of the S.S. demands that the tortured victim allow himself to be led to the noose without protesting, that he renounce and *abandon himself to the point of ceasing to affirm his identity*" (our italics).

may appear to be merely the outside facing inwards and the inside facing outwards of the same singularity, the choice of one rather than the other of these two “moments” of being leads to different results. Bearing this in mind, it will be seen below how Stein’s investigations can be compared to the position taken by Duns Scotus in his *Ordinatio*.

Having already shown how both authors consider the “ultimate reality of being” to be the foundation of the *Einzelsein*, it follows that individuation is to be sought on the level of the *esse essentiae*, since the *esse existentiae* is merely a manifestation of a singularity that is already constituted on an ultimate level of being. In this sense, the investigations by Stein in the summer of 1931 for her work *Potency and Act*⁶⁸ – subsequently the overall plan of the work was revised in 1935⁶⁹ – can be seen as seeking to found a new ontology on singularity, understood as an aspect of the essence. In addition, Stein conducts her phenomenological reading of the metaphysical question of individuation in relation to Husserl’s “eidetic ontology”, which has no need for empirical determinations (referred to by him as formal or material ontologies).

At this point, with reference to spiritual perception by feeling (*das Fühlen*), we shall explore the concept of “empty form”, specifically regarding the issue of how it is filled, i.e. how “qualitative fullness” is achieved.

4.2.2.1 Delimiting the Context of Investigation – “Natural Sciences” and “Spiritual Sciences”

In addition to Stein’s investigation of the *Einfühlung*, her work *Einführung in die Philosophie*⁷⁰ (1919–1932) – divided into two parts on Nature and Spirit (Subjectivity) – was inspired by the course of lessons on *Natur und Geist*⁷¹ given by Husserl in 1916. The latter work provides new elements that help to clarify the theme of individuation, which had already been set out in her doctoral dissertation but is treated here by Stein in greater detail, to the point that this work by the young author may be considered an explanatory treatise on the “knowledge of things in their individuality”. First and foremost, we shall seek to determine the nature of consciousness of individuality and how it arises, before establishing what the specifically individual “lived experiences” actually are. Comparing the method of the natural sciences with that of the spiritual sciences, we will examine the field of enquiry from which to proceed in order to grasp the “intrinsic” individuality of the singular being.

⁶⁸ Stein E. (2005a).

⁶⁹ The genesis and various phases of revision of *Potenz und Akt*, the initial nucleus of the work *Finite and Eternal Being*, are documented in a series of letters to Hedwig Conrad-Martius written by Edith Stein between 1932 and 1940: See Conrad-Martius H. (Ed.) (1960a), letters of 24.II.1933; 23.III.1933; 15.XII.1934; 21.V.1935.

⁷⁰ Stein E. (2004b).

⁷¹ See the chapter on *Natur und Geist* in Husserl E. (1986).

4.2.2.2 The Intelligibility of the Individual *quoad nos*

From the epistemological point of view, the possibility of knowing beings in their individuality poses a series of questions in reference to the intelligibility of the individual *in itself* and consequently the possibility of knowing it *quoad nos*. How is it possible to “grasp” the objectuality of individual beings considering that the being is knowable only to the extent that it is the bearer of what is general? Furthermore, can the “individual” or singular be considered the object of knowledge to the same extent as the “general”? Lastly, can there be access to knowledge of the individual?

It is assumed that the general essence of the individual, which is the basis of all knowledge, does not include in itself the knowledge of its individual characteristics, which are what subsequently allows us to discern the distinctive singularity of different individuals of the same species. Thus, we must establish the type of knowledge we are dealing with when we assert the individuality of the being. First and foremost, this requires a comparison of the positions adopted by Stein and Duns Scotus, highlighting the similarities between them.

Duns Scotus, <i>De Anima</i> ¹ and <i>Ordinatio</i> :	E. Stein, <i>Einführung in die Philosophie</i> :
Let us say then that the singular, as such, is intelligible by us because intelligibility follows the entity. What then does not diminish the reason of the being, does not ‘diminish’ intelligibility either; but the singular, as such, does not diminish the reason of the being, and is now a perfect being in reality. ²	
In addition, if it was intelligible in itself, there could be a demonstration and a science of it. ³	Thus the being of individual objects, depending on its totality, may be grasped but not recognised, and, as with the intuition of the individual, cannot be brought fully to consciousness (p. 98, [our translation]).
With respect to this, this individual reality is similar to the specific reality, because it is almost an act, which determines that reality of the species almost ‘as’ possible and potential, but with respect to this it is not similar ‘but dissimilar’, because this is already ‘assumed’ to be taken by an added form, but precisely by the last reality of the form. ⁴	[...] grasping the ultimate forms of the being (p. 99 [our translation]).

¹Duns Scotus J. (2006), q. 22, No. 17, p. 231.

²Ibid.: “Dicendum igitur quod singulare est a nobis intelligibile secundum se, quia intelligibilitas sequitur entitatem. Quod igitur secundum se non diminuit de ratione entis, nec intellegibilitas; sed singulare secundum se non diminuit de ratione entis, iam est ens actu perfectum” (our translation).

³Duns Scotus J. (1973) *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, p. I, q. 6, No. 145, p. 464: “Praetera, si esset per se intelligibile, posset de ipso esse demonstratio et scientia” (our translation).

⁴Duns Scotus J. (1973) *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, p. I, q. 6, No. 180, p. 479: “Quoad hoc ista realitas individui est similis realitati specificae, quia est quasi actus, determinans illam realitatem speciei quasi possibilem et potentialem, – sed quoad hoc dissimilis, quia ista numquam sumitur a forma addita, sed praecise ab ultima realitate formae” (our translation).

From the comparison it soon emerges that for Scotus, in his *De Anima*, individuality is the most perfect form of the being and can thus be known by the intellect. Not forgetting that while the individual/singular is intelligible *in itself*, it cannot be so *quoad nos*, since, as Iammarrone (following Gilson) argues, “the singular, if we were able to know it, could be seen or intuitively grasped by us, but not defined, because the entity that adds is not of the order of the quiddity”.⁷² If we cannot know it, Scotus argues in his *Ordinatio*, then it can be neither the object of science nor of demonstration.

This reflection on the impossibility of knowing the individual *quoad nos* fits closely with what Stein argues in reference to the natural sciences, i.e. that the individual/singular can only be “grasped” (*erfaßbar*) intuitively, it not being possible to bring it fully to our knowledge. As a cognitive instrument, “intuition” plays a fundamental role in the phenomenological approach, to the extent that the individuality of the being is grasped immediately and by itself, i.e. without the help of any mediation for the knowledge of itself. Every form of knowledge necessarily presupposes intuitive knowledge, since it is from what is intuited that all cognitive processes originate. Intuition thus founds and initiates knowledge, which is constructed on the basis of the material offering itself to one’s intuition. Consequently, once the being has been intuited, the next step is perception, i.e. the act by which the concrete being comes to me in “flesh and blood” and “of itself”. Once in contact with the concrete being, the intellect examines it – as it is in itself – and grasps it “immediately” in terms of its value as a being, i.e. “of itself”. “It is a defining characteristic of perception that it concerns an individual object whose content is fully determined”⁷³ rather than an abstraction. There is however a dual approach to the individual: while natural sciences “know” the individual only from the general point of view, perception “grasps the object in its full concreteness – the individual with all its distinctive individual characteristics”.⁷⁴

Lastly, both Stein and Scotus define individuation as “grasping the ultimate forms of the being”. At this point the metaphysical and phenomenological planes are intertwined. However, for the moment we shall focus on the former, because we seek first to investigate the individual/singular differently, i.e. (to use a term characteristic of phenomenological enquiry) to “intuit” its essence.

4.2.2.3 The Approach to Individuation in the Light of Formal and Material Ontology

Before tackling the issues surrounding the stratification of individual lived experiences in the affective sphere, it is necessary to place the discussion in the context of the two important regions of the being within which, according to Stein, these lived experiences become intelligible: the objective spirit and the subjective spirit.

⁷²Iammarrone L. (2003²), p. 235 (our translation). See also Gilson É. (1952), pp. 566–580 in the Italian edition.

⁷³Stein E. (2004b), p. 18 (our translation).

⁷⁴Ibid. p. 86 (our translation).

The question is of crucial importance since it is rooted in the premise of phenomenology itself, especially the current associated with Husserl, from which Stein, with scrupulous continuity, drew her doctrinal positions. Specifically, it can be argued that Stein adopts the doctrine of formal and material ontology, skilfully placing Husserl's ontological doctrine – which, being intrinsically Aristotelian, lends itself to such adaptation – within the ontology of Thomas Aquinas, notwithstanding the differences between them. As Ales Bello points out, by “focusing her attention on Thomas Aquinas and Husserl, [Stein] underlines the fact that phenomenologists distinguish between ontology and metaphysics. The domain of the former is essences, whereas the latter concentrates on existence. For Aquinas, however, ontology refers to this latter sense of existence. In addition, Husserl refers to material and formal possibilities, but not in a specific way as related to existential realities”.⁷⁵ In other words, the approach followed by Stein was that of a “third way”, based on the reconciliation of these two ontological doctrines.⁷⁶ In doing this, Stein immediately faced the *primum* from which all analysis must begin, precisely as Husserlian phenomenology and the philosophy of Descartes and Augustine had taught, i.e. my fact of being.⁷⁷ Accurately setting out Husserl's position, an ontology emerges from this which Stein presents as follows⁷⁸ (Fig. 4.1):

⁷⁵ Ales Bello A. (2010b), p. 312.

⁷⁶ This does not mean that Stein's position on formal and material ontology differs from that of Husserl. Starting with the third *Logische Untersuchungen*, Husserl spoke of self-sufficient contents (in the sense of Stumpf) when the contents of a complex representation can be represented separately from each other, and unself-sufficient contents, which are seen in the opposite case. In this sense, not only cognitively, in our thoughts, but also in the things themselves – by their very essence – colour cannot be separated from extent: the spatial representation always presents itself with chromatic determinations. In opposition to Kant, Husserl speaks in this sense of *a priori material*, no longer formal since space is no longer the (empty) form of the processing or ordering of psychic content – sensations – or secondary qualities that may be the chromatic content. Again in opposition to Kant, Husserl affirms that the laws governing these unself-sufficient contents cannot be analytical in nature, since they have no connection to laws of a logical nature. Precisely because they are founded in the very nature of hyletic or spatial content, they are *synthetic* laws rather than analytical ones. In this way Husserl redefines the very concepts of analysis and synthesis: all propositions that are unaffected by the intrinsic nature, homogeneity/affinity or reciprocal belonging of their respective contents must necessarily be analytical laws. Such laws, according to Husserl, can be completely *formalised* (in the logical-calculative sense of the term), i.e. emptied of their content and substituted with indeterminate objectualities. In this way logic is a *formal ontology* in that it is entirely independent of the content present in its propositions: it is concerned only with the *form* of the reasonings. In contrast, synthetic laws are founded on reciprocal belonging and the intrinsic nature of the content. Thus, even their hyletic (sensible) component has a certain importance for them. This doctrine of self-sufficiency/unself-sufficiency undergoes certain variations and clarifications in *Ideen I*. Indeed, Husserl himself notes in the margin in copy 'A' of the manuscript that the concepts are slightly modified with respect to those of the *Logische Untersuchungen* – Husserl E. (1976), p. 29. Specifically, what interests Husserl (and was subsequently to interest Stein) is the relationship between unself-sufficiency and the “Dies-da”: “Ein Dies-da, dessen sachhaltiges Wesen ein Konkretum ist, heißt ein Individuum” (See *ibid.*). With the same intentions, these relationships were also to figure in *Formale und transzendente Logik*.

⁷⁷ Stein E. (2005a), p. 10. English translation, p. 9. See also Ales Bello A. (2010b), p. 312.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* p. 35. English translation, p. 48. See also Ales Bello A. (2010b), p. 312.

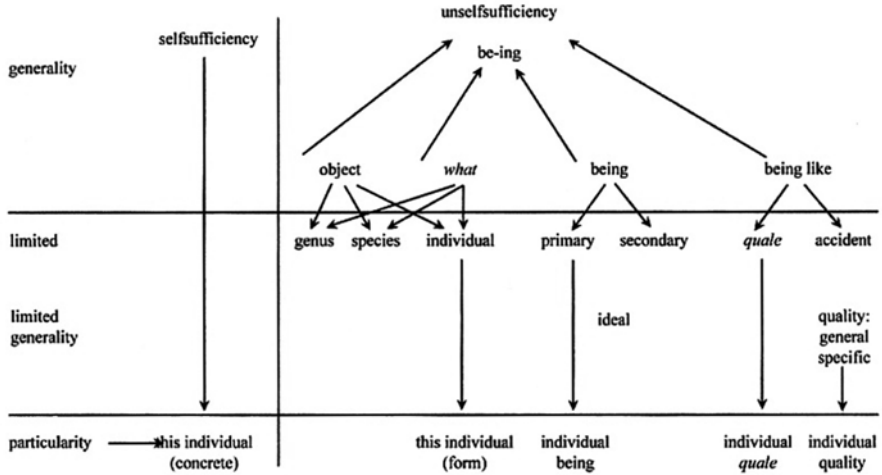


Fig. 4.1 Self-sufficiency and unself-sufficiency in Potency and Act

If we consider this scheme, we realise that Stein orders the empty ontological forms (*aliquid, quod quid est, esse*) with respect to their degree of universality (or emptiness), the stage of “fullness” being reached only in the concrete individual, which is unique and singular, the primary object that leads to nothing else. However she also orders these forms with respect to another criterion, again authentically Husserlian, that of *self-sufficiency/unself-sufficiency*: “If we examine being, only being that has no relation is independent, whereas the being of all empty forms is non-independent. Concrete objects alone are independent, and their forms ground independence. Also, at this point, one can introduce the opposites of whole and part, and simple and composite. Only the whole can be independent. Universal forms are simple, but non-independent because they depend upon a possible whole. More specific forms are composites and all individuals are independent and simple”.⁷⁹

As in Husserl, formal ontology lays the basis for material ontology, whose fundamental principle, or rather fundamental tool, is intuition. Phenomenology in particular avails itself of abstracting intuition, which may be classified into eidetic and generalising intuition: with these, starting for example from a colour *hic et nunc*, it is possible to move by increasingly general stages of “colour” towards the supreme genre of “colour in general”; in contrast, the opposite direction leads towards the concrete “what”, the individual, which in the terms of formal ontology is the most self-sufficient level of all.⁸⁰ As Ales Bello points out, examples of mate-

⁷⁹ Ales Bello A. (2010b), p. 314. We shall express here our disagreement with the use of the terms “independent” and “non-independent” in the cited English text to translate the Husserlian concepts of *selbständig/unselbständig*, and state our preference for “self-sufficient” and “unself-sufficient”, which are used in official translations of Husserl’s work – and indeed in Walter Redmond’s translation of Stein’s *Potenz und Akt*.

⁸⁰ See Ales Bello A. (2010b).

rial ontologies for Stein include Euclidean geometry, which from a few principles enables closed axiomatics, and could also include the pure doctrines of colour and sound, although these have never been undertaken and made concrete.⁸¹ The material idea that governs material ontologies is not however material itself, but is comprehensible only in connection with the spirit. For this reason, two great currents of the spirit, within which all the layers of “formed matter” are clarified, are indispensable: the “objective spirit” and the “subjective spirit”, which are precisely the “regions” from which we began our journey.

4.2.2.4 Derivation, in the Context of Material Ontology, of the Objective Spirit and the Subjective Spirit, the Regions Within Which Individuality Is Collocated

The key ideas and genres or ultimate forms of formal ontology are, according to Stein, “eternal”, i.e. they have the character of actuality regardless of entry and exit from existence (becoming); in this sense their way of being is superior to that of created things,⁸² although in their pure “being” they are just as rigid as prime matter.⁸³ According to Stein, since natural things, phenomenological things, in any case have a form, it is possible that in order to exist they require ideas on the one hand and matter on the other: in other words, their becoming is the result of the coming together of the two ontologically contrasting categories of spirit and matter.⁸⁴

Phenomenologically speaking therefore, according to Stein, we are always dealing with things that in the world are *materia signata*, or, as we may also put it, *objective spirit* or *subjective spirit*.⁸⁵ It can also confidently be argued – though this will be tackled in greater depth below – that for Stein, the ultimate element of individuation as it pertains to the person is not *materia signata* as understood in the Thomist sense.⁸⁶ This matter, which is linked to the fundamental category of material

⁸¹ See *ibid.* pp. 314–315.

⁸² See Stein E. (2005a), pp. 75–76. English translation, pp. 108–111.

⁸³ See *ibid.* p. 78. English translation, p. 112.

⁸⁴ See *ibid.* pp. 76–77. English translation, pp. 109–111.

⁸⁵ See *ibid.* pp. 80–82. English translation, pp. 116–119.

⁸⁶ Regarding this aspect the reader is referred to Alfieri F. (2009). Consider also the following passage from Stein E. (2005a), pp. 85–86. English translation, pp. 125–126: “In the case of lifeless things, we found the individuation principle to be the “piece of matter” informed by some species. Now, how are spiritual individuals individuated? Here it may be precisely the species that is doing the individuating (according to Thomas such is the case with the angels). It is also conceivable that the species is individuated by the fact that the being of the spiritual subject is bound to a piece of matter, its *material* body (according to Thomas such is the case with human individuals; on this theory we have yet to take a stand). Now, there is a third theory to be considered, namely, that the I as such *is* an individual, even apart from its bond to a material body and apart from the species that distinguishes it from other individuals in its qualities. Being separate from everything else lies in the being of the I, and the I can grasp it in its consciousness of itself. This self-consciousness is something that cannot be mistaken for any consciousness of something else; an I can only call itself “I” and can “have” itself in such wise that it can say “I””.

things, is, we would argue, a *second phenomenological degree or layer of matter*. Below this perceptible layer – significantly and explicitly broadening Husserl’s phenomenological outlook in a metaphysical direction – Stein sees *prime matter*, a concept that in this context takes on a logical and metaphysical meaning. In the form of *materia signata* or synolon, this *prime matter* enters (or is converted and processed into) individuation, achieving a degree of potentiality that depends on the wholes that it enters. In general terms it seems plausible that both the different degrees of potentiality of matter (and thus the degrees to which it can enter or be entered by the spirit) and the fact that it is originally (from a logical and metaphysical point of view) *unformed prime matter*, presuppose a necessary relationship to the spirit: “Our inquiry so far can only be preliminary, especially since it has shown that the “material [*materiell*]” thing is not purely material and should properly be understood in its makeup first from the viewpoint of spirit”.⁸⁷ This seems to fully correspond to Husserl’s analyses.

Thus, material ontology encompasses the fundamental category of the “material thing”, which, being a category, is not purely material. Specifically, it cannot be fully understood by analysing the material alone: what makes a material thing knowable is the analysis of the objective or objectivised spirit.⁸⁸ Taken on its own, the objective spirit has in turn been before the spirit of God ever since the very beginning; it finds an *analogon* in finite beings and particularly human beings. “Their living falls into several dimensions. [1] Acts follow one after another in temporal sequence [*Nacheinander*], [2] acts occur beside one another at the same time [*Nebeneinander*], and [3] acts are [isolated] from one another in their qualities [*Auseinander*] [...]. But whatever is separate springs from *one* living impulse and merges with it again into a unity of being that is not a composition. The separating and splitting take place when “contents” are taken in and processed. A world of objects is built up therein for the subject”.⁸⁹

The objective spirit must allude to another sub-region of the spirit, the subjective spirit, in turn divided into the region of the pure finite spirits and the region of the spirits of human beings. The assertions made above form the basis of the systematic consideration of matter considered as potentiality, which is expressed to varying degrees and on various levels in finite spirits such as human beings. That is to say, in passing from the body to the soul and, within the latter, to its various levels, to arrive at the spirit and at the totality of the person with its intangible personal “nucleus”, numerous degrees of “materiality” or “potentiality”, which the actuality of life can only partly “delimit”, are always at work. Thus, concerning ontology – and this brings us to the “new” aspect of *Potenz und Akt* with respect to the traditional phenomenological school in which Stein herself had been formed – the work

⁸⁷ Stein E. (2005a), p. 81. English translation, p. 118.

⁸⁸ The reader is referred once more to the passage in Stein E. (2005a), p. 81. English translation, p. 118 at the end of the work’s fourth chapter.

⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 88. English translation, p. 130. We have added to this quote the word “isolated”, as a translation of the German *gesondertes*, which Stein’s translator appears to omit. The Italian translation (p. 154) refers to both separation *and* isolation.

seeks an approach that is complementary to that of Husserl but at the same time offers an alternative. In agreement with Ales Bello, precisely in the sense of the “third way” mentioned above, it may be argued that “Stein adopts a middle way, which draws inspiration from both positions. She wishes to examine the concepts of potency and act, studying them with reference to formal and material ontology. Following this path, material ontology is the doctrine of being in its fullness and the doctrine of the existent in its different genera”.⁹⁰

Stein’s material ontology has thus arrived at its ultimate determinations via the specification of the material thing in the objective spirit, which makes clear the need to derive matter from the spirit; as a last step, this enables access to the subjective or personal spirit.

The task now is to reconstruct the way in which the various degrees of actuality and potentiality of matter in the subjective spirit are “allocated”.

4.2.2.5 The “Source” of Individual Lived Experiences Belonging to Affective Life

The problem of “subjectivity” is the *leitmotiv* that links *On the Problem of Empathy* (1917) to the second section of *Einführung in die Philosophie* (1919–1932). Specifically, the treatment of this theme – studied further in the investigations conducted by Stein in 1919 – helps us to read the two works in question from a synoptic viewpoint.

The second moment of our investigation must start with the pure I, “the original source of life, the starting point from which lived experiences radiate”.⁹¹ In this continuous “living” of the pure I, together with the flow of lived experiences that belong to them, each person is constituted as a “being-oneself-and-nobody-else” (*Es-selbst-und-kein-anderes-sein*), and therefore as an “absolute individual”,⁹² carrying in themselves an entirely distinctive imprint. Individuality lies in the original place of the I’s “living”, from which the conscious individual can “feel” that each of their lived experiences, issuing from the centre of their being, is the bearer of its own singularity; this is what distinguishes them from the others. The active awareness of the I is the indispensable condition for feeling that one is truly “living” one’s singularity, which by its nature is not linked to any spatial or temporal dimension, because it represents only the qualitative essence of our lived experiences.

It remains to be established how it is possible to grasp lived experience, the bearer of original individuality. In this, Stein describes how an individual lived experience “is not something that lasts [...] rather, it is terminated, it is concluded immediately, constituting itself as a whole”.⁹³ The difficulty consists therefore in grasping the individual note of the lived experience, given that in living the

⁹⁰ Ales Bello A. (2010b), pp. 312–313.

⁹¹ Stein E. (2004b), p. 104 (our translation).

⁹² See *ibid.* (our translation).

⁹³ *Ibid.* p. 107 (our translation).

“moment” in which it unfolds, it is already totally behind us with its individual particularity. “Being conscious of oneself is not a moment that remains identical throughout one’s life: there is a degree of awareness, the “inner light” can illuminate more or less clearly”.⁹⁴ The only possibility of grasping the traits of individual lived experience lies in the continuous perception of it, which, in its continuous flow, manifests its essential features and thus makes it possible to be newly perceived, increasingly clearly, with reiterated fillings. But what lived experiences are bearers of our individuality?

For Stein, “while on the one hand we speak of the individuality of all lived experiences, on the other we note that not all of these have a personal distinctiveness, and so it cannot be the same individuality that here and there constitutes the distinctive moment”.⁹⁵ For example, the sensual (*sinnlichen*) and intellectual inclinations belong to the “external conditions” of the development of the individual; hence “individuality, exteriorly determined, is not in the strict sense a distinctive feature”.⁹⁶ If I have sensations or perform an intellectual act, I am unreflectingly conscious of these lived experiences, but at the same time the original consciousness disappears in that I am not conscious of myself as an individual with its own individual characteristics. Only lived experiences that belong to the “affective life” and “originate from the depths of the soul bear the imprint of the individual’s singularity. In the moment when these lived experiences are gained, I feel this “individual note”, I feel that the origin is at a certain depth and I also feel the degree of depth”.⁹⁷ Only the lived experiences that are rooted in the depth of the being – not conditioned by any external element – are bearers of the unconditioned individuality of the human person.

Once these lived experiences have been identified, it is necessary to return to the source, from which the individual draws the original living, from where they are generated, i.e. the “nucleus” or “centre” of the personality.

The theme is dealt with by Stein under the aegis and the guide of the main pillar of phenomenology: intentionality. Intentionality, intelligibility and personality are the specific hallmarks of spiritual life.⁹⁸ Spiritual life essentially consists of “acts”, acts of cognition, evaluation, pleasure, displeasure, etc.⁹⁹ However, in the spiritual life of subjective spirits there is always a certain stratification of matter. The first material layer is encountered in the fundamental opening constituted by intentionality itself, i.e. the intention-world relation.¹⁰⁰ We human beings, essentially finite, are projected, open towards something else: “If we consider the pure spirit and the soul only insofar as it is spirit, the understanding or intellect denotes an essential property of spirit: *being illumined [durchleuchtet]* (that is, being visible to oneself [*für*

⁹⁴Ibid. p. 108 (our translation).

⁹⁵Ibid. pp. 133–134 (our translation).

⁹⁶Ibid. (our translation).

⁹⁷Ibid. p. 176 (our translation).

⁹⁸Stein E. (2005a), p. 83. English translation, p. 121.

⁹⁹See *ibid.* pp. 96–97. English translation, pp. 142–143.

¹⁰⁰See *ibid.*

sich selbst sichtbar) and *being open* [*geöffnet*] (turning the attention to something else by grasping it). In God both are infinite. This is why His understanding is eternally actual and perfect knowledge of Himself and of all else knowable. Finite spirits are not everything they are in enduringly changeless actuality. Their being is parceled out to them, confined to a limited measure. Their being illumined and open is also limited".¹⁰¹

A central problem that Stein seems to face at this point is what binds potentiality and actuality (matter and act) from the point of view of the *continuity* of temporal life, a theme which, as we will see, is closely related to that of the nucleus of the person. Stein observes that the possibility of transition from the conscious life to a semi-conscious or even completely unconscious life is considered by phenomenology, but argues that we pass through all these stages of actuality "without losing ourselves".¹⁰² What then is the nature of the things with these "empty traits" in the flow of internal consciousness of time that binds our personal identity?

"Looking back on it, can we say that there was really nothing in between the two periods of conscious, materially fulfilled living? I do not think so. An inner consciousness belonging to my "stream of consciousness" that develops along with it and takes part in its development – a consciousness of duration continuously filled with my living – crosses the "empty" stretch. Not only do I realize that time must have passed objectively between the two fulfilled periods, but also the living duration goes through them, although without any fulfilment that I can detect. Indeed, looking back on my stream of consciousness, I see that even segments in my waking life have gaps; I am frequently conscious only "that something was there", but my memory does not tell me *what* it was".¹⁰³

This continuist solution adopted by Stein with regard to the uniqueness of the personal life of human beings enabled her to detach this uniqueness, being *continuous*, from the possibility of active *re-memorisation*, since this possibility was limited: "So spiritual existence, we should say, does not necessarily begin when it first becomes verifiable for us. The onset of verifiability points to a change in the being itself, a transition to a higher type of spiritualness, to intellectuality; it marks a heightening of the actuality of life and consciousness and at the same time an expansion in the range of openness".¹⁰⁴

These fundamental steps connect the treatment of potency and act, and thus the treatment of the layers of materiality, to the question of the mutability or otherwise of the nucleus of the person. On the latter point, Stein's analysis – clearly influenced by the works of Conrad-Martius – skilfully extends the phenomenological analysis of the I in directions that the master, Husserl, had only partly explored. Let us proceed by degrees.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. p. 104. English translation, p. 154.

¹⁰² See *ibid.* p. 105. English translation, p. 155.

¹⁰³ Ibid. p. 105. English translation, pp. 155–156.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

The personal “I” lives, as it were, on the crest of the wave of its acts, and in this sense it is “superficialised”; but it does not live in all its acts in equal measure.¹⁰⁵ In general, the actual life is marked by the “participation of the I”, by the participation with which the I is drawn towards certain types of material content: perceptions themselves can already proceed with a more or less intense “personal participation”.¹⁰⁶ This means that the personal I encompasses the most diverse types of content – sensory, emotive, judgemental – to varying degrees of depth, which must however already be within the reach of any human being, regardless of whether they actualise it in their character, i.e. in the part of them that emerges into actuality.¹⁰⁷ The interaction between the content and form of interiority, i.e. depth, marks a contact with the object, a contact through which it can plunge into the deep with more or less force. This means that a purely materialistic-sensory reading of the processing of hyletic data, starting from human spirituality, is completely out of place for Stein, since it misrepresents the phenomenological data themselves: the ways in which the interpreting grasp (*Auffassung*) animates the content can differ, though the identity of this content remains unchanged. The difference between the various apprehensions cannot fall in the same plane as the hyletic/material: “The same harsh noise that at one time I simply allow to slip by me but that at another time annoys me by its discord and so gets to a certain depth, may also upset me at my deepest level. Let us say that it is all important for me to concentrate on what I am working on. I think I am on the point of solving a key problem [...]. Then comes the jarring noise and it tears me away from everything. I am angry over the disturbance and distressed over the loss, and I despair because I let myself get distracted so easily. In all three cases it is the same sound [...]. But its significance for me is different, and the reason is that each time I am in a different frame of mind”.¹⁰⁸

Stein immediately clears the field of any association of a “spatial” nature in the characterisation of this depth of the I: it is not a depth in the spatial sense of the term, since it can be concentrated, in some individuals, on the surface of their being: indeed there are persons who seem to live constantly distant from their “qualifying centre”, the nucleus of the person.¹⁰⁹ It must therefore be a type of “spatiality” that is entirely specific to the soul and cannot be assimilated to three-dimensional spatiality: ““The sense appetite” will appear as an “inner space”, and feelings, appetitive stances, and emotions [*Affekte*] [...] will have their specific “place” within this “space”. The corresponding potencies and habits [...] are also organized according to surface and depth. Not everything that can be truly said of a person is equally characteristic of him nor equally relevant for judging his character”.¹¹⁰ In this regard

¹⁰⁵ See *ibid.* p. 123. English translation, p. 184.

¹⁰⁶ See *ibid.* p. 124. English translation, pp. 185–186.

¹⁰⁷ See *ibid.* p. 125. English translation, pp. 186–187.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* p. 125. English translation, p. 187.

¹⁰⁹ See *ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 127. English translation, p. 190; Stein’s English translator renders the original *Habitus* with “habits”, though it may be better expressed with “habitus”, used by medieval scholars to translate Aristotle’s *Hexis*.

the following words of Ales Bello are also illuminating: “The nucleus is distinguished by its simplicity – it is not composed of parts – it is potential with respect to the spiritual life, in which it should manifest itself in such a way as to achieve its actualisation. Clearly it can remain “obscure”, but even in this case it has a certain actuality, because it is always active and real, albeit imperfectly fulfilled”.¹¹¹

The nucleus of the person is thus a *continuous* entity, situated in the depth of its being, enabling the superficialisation of some of its *habitus* in the form of acts that are generally called “character”. With respect to the continuous flow of internal consciousness of time, which becomes stronger as it grows, the nucleus of the person is connected to this flow, though it is situated outside it. As such, it is the foundation of the *analogia entis* between human beings and God.¹¹² What then is its specific weight in terms of potency and act? “The core is an *actu ens*, a being in act in contrast to sheer possibility; more precisely, it contrasts not only with logical possibility but also with sheer potency in the sense of undeveloped capability. However, the core is not *actus purus* but something actual that is capable of being heightened in being, indeed heightened to the form of being of the conscious life of spirit. The being of the core may be called potential in respect to this heightening in being”.¹¹³

In terms of simplicity, this nucleus of the person approaches the divine being, from which it distinguishes itself by being able to be concentrated in its acts only relatively during its earthly life. Moreover, the actual life of the person is not founded only on its nucleus, but also on the objective world with which it is in contact, on other persons and on dispositions that are initially potential but develop into habits (*Habitus*).¹¹⁴ The nucleus of the person is thus the deep pole around which the personal-individual character, an element with immediate superficial and collective resonance, coagulates.

“The nucleus of the person, which unfolds in their character, is impregnated with this individual colouring and constitutes the indivisible unity of the character”.¹¹⁵ By means of the transcendence of “internal perception” alone, “the unity of the individual particularity, originally experienced in the individual “personality traits” that are rooted in different depths, unfolds”.¹¹⁶ In its living, the I tends outwards, starting from this personal nucleus, which contains within itself the source of its individual characteristics. The “living” and the “tending towards” constitute the two poles within which the distinctive individual character of the individual, which is in a continuous state of consciousness, becomes visible. This shows that the I is always active, always in action. It is here that the I is constituted as a person with its personal-individual structure, and it is in this actuality that its life, drawn outwards, is continuously re-woken by the actuality of the present. In the achievement of consciousness of “itself” as a unitary person, the general plan of its “living” is actuated.

¹¹¹ Ales Bello A. (2010a), pp. 182–183 (our translation).

¹¹² Stein E. (2005a), p. 146. English translation, p. 219.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ See *ibid.* p. 147. English translation, pp. 219–220.

¹¹⁵ Stein E. (2004b), p. 136 (our translation).

¹¹⁶ Ibid. p. 178 (our translation).

As a person, the I possesses an actuality of its own, a unitary life direction, an unconditional desire to reach the deepest levels of its being, in short, a desire that brings together all the real and possible desires. The reflection of the original nucleus thus embraces the entire concrete life of the I as a harmonic life, to the extent that it is conscious of its continuous self-generation from within. “The nucleus of the personality [...] is what unfolds in the mental and physical development of the empirical person, making him or her a unitary person with individual qualities”.¹¹⁷ For Stein, these individual qualities – goodness, nobility of spirit, pride, energy – express “the absolute uniqueness, the individual note, that bear within themselves the “personal characteristics””.¹¹⁸ Everything that is encompassed by the living of the person conserves in itself ““the imprint” of his or her personality,¹¹⁹ of their distinctive traits and their personal characteristics”.¹²⁰

4.2.2.6 The “Natural Sciences” and the “Spiritual Sciences”: Their Ability to Investigate Individuation “in Itself”

Whether and in what way the natural sciences, like the spiritual sciences,¹²¹ are able to investigate the ultimate foundation of “spiritual” individuals remains to be established. The ontological structure of human beings is fairly complex in that they are composed of both “nature” and “spirit” (*Natur und Geist*), and thus, from the categorical point of view we are obliged to abstract two “original levels” of the being that are totally different, despite being connected: the psychic-original “nature” and the “spirit”. The source of the former is external with respect to the latter, the spiritual-original source of which is totally interior. Human beings are fundamentally composite yet singular beings, which is not seen in any other natural entity.

From this double-ontic constitution of the individual, we exclude *a priori* a double principle of individuation (extrinsic=*Natur*, intrinsic=*Geist*), since the *eidōs* of phenomenology is focused primarily on the essential-individual (intrinsic) moment, from which the personal life of the I irradiates. It can be established that individuation is the original locus of the “living”, which from inside the individual moves towards the outside, without remaining closed in itself, but acting, conferring its singular imprint on the individual. The gaze that looks from the inside towards the

¹¹⁷ Ibid. p. 144 (our translation).

¹¹⁸ Ibid. p. 142 (our translation).

¹¹⁹ In reference to the “imprint” of the personality left on things by an ageing man, an interesting reflection on the “Corporeality of the sunset” can be found in Callieri B. (2007), p. 96: “In the elderly person, the implications of the space they have lived in, distance and contact, often present themselves with a wealth of aspects that are interwoven with perspectives and memories, with a density of fantasies, intuitions, roads travelled and yet to travel, interwoven with the time of the desire” (our translation).

¹²⁰ Stein E. (2004b), p. 144 (our translation).

¹²¹ Fundamental in this regard is the distinction made by Wilhelm Dilthey between natural sciences (*Naturwissenschaften*) and spiritual sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*) in Dilthey W. (1990), Book I, paragraph II.

outside constitutes the unity of meaning of the individual in its absolute uniqueness.

Starting from this premise, a hermeneutic difficulty inevitably arises for the natural sciences, which are only able to determine individuality from “outside”, availing themselves of “time” and “space” as *principia individuationis*.¹²² In this view, an individual is such to the extent that it occupies a particular place, or because it is “here” and “now”. This position, similar to the theory that sees dimensional “quantity” as the individuating principle, is highly problematic, since it is not able to clarify what intrinsically makes an individual. Furthermore, it leads to the notion that time and space are in themselves self-individuating characteristics, but this cannot be argued, since the individual has a substantial unity that precedes every subsequent random unity. Obviously, random events are ontologically subsequent to what they become part of, and can only be considered “visible signs” of individuation and not the determinant causes. It follows therefore that spatio-temporal collocation is not sufficient to justify individuation as an individual “quality” within the structure of the individual itself.

The radical position taken by Stein – which was very close to that of Scotus’ critique of individuation in accidental terms – can be interpreted in this sense when she argues that the natural sciences are not able to investigate the “intrinsic” individuation of the individual. Indeed, she posits a “personality as spiritual individuality, regardless of its spatial and temporal coordinates” and argues moreover that “it is not possible to determine it through space and time”.¹²³

This assumption will be clearer if we use the distinction between *Körper* (physical body) and *Leib* (living body).¹²⁴ The spatio-temporal collocation used by the natural sciences can only determine the *Körper*. In contrast, grasping the individuation of the *Leib* entails “giving life to a science of spiritual individuals; in this case individuality must mean something different to what it does in the natural sciences: not simply a numerical singularity, but rather a qualitative state of its own”.¹²⁵ In this way Stein tends to collocate the *principium individuationis* more in the quality of the being than in its quantitative moment, and in this her position approaches that of Duns Scotus. The parallels between the two authors will become clearer when we analyse her work *Finite and Eternal Being*; in the meantime, we

¹²² See Stein E. (2004b), pp. 201–202. Important in this regard are the analyses presented in De Monticelli R. (2008²), p. 190: “Juliet [...] is distinguished from Socrates not only in terms of the shape of her body and the matter of which it is composed or the space and the time it occupies, despite claims to the contrary arising from that absurd theory of individuation that the majority of philosophers (with the significant exceptions of Scotus and Leibniz) have shared since the time of Aristotle and Strawson” (our translation). See by the same author De Monticelli R. (2000).

¹²³ Stein E. (2004b), p. 202 (our translation).

¹²⁴ In her essay *Freiheit und Gnade* Stein had distinguished between the animate body (*Leib*) endowed with a soul (*beseelt*) and the inanimate (*Körper*) body without a soul (*unbeseelt*). For further discussion of the distinction between “Körper” and “Leib”, see the respective entries in Vetter H. (Ed.) (2004) for *Körper* (edited by T. Kubitzka, pp. 318–322) and *Leib* (edited by K. Meyer Drawe, pp. 331–337).

¹²⁵ Stein E. (2004b), p. 212 (our translation).

have established the insufficiency of numerical determination alone in specifying the individual essence,¹²⁶ in reference to Stein’s intention to focus her investigations on the content of the qualitative essence of the individual moment.

Stein thus establishes a clear distinction between the natural sciences, which concern themselves with the “quantitative” moment, and the spiritual sciences, which are the only disciplines able to grasp the essence of the individual person from the “inside”, without however availing themselves of any external element. In addition, Hedwig Conrad-Martius, in her *Die Geistseele des Menschen*, also argues that “without the qualitative individuality of the spiritual soul, quantitative individuality would have no meaning”.¹²⁷

4.2.2.7 Formal Ontology – “Empty Form” and “Qualitative Fullness”

For Stein, one of Husserl’s most complex and original works, *Formale und transzendente Logik* (1929),¹²⁸ provided an explicit reference for starting her treatment of the ontological concept of “empty form” and the associated “filling” in concrete individuals. We thus come to the key terms introduced by the author that represent the constitutive moments of the individuation of the individual being (*Einzelsein*) in the dual meaning of determinate substrate (empty form), which provides the formal-ontological framework, and fullness of the being. The latter makes the individual not only a static bearer of the characteristics of the species, but also a “singular I”, since the qualitative fullness confers “its own” singularity with respect to the other singularities of the same species. An analysis of the characteristics that belong equally to the majority of the individuals of the same species lies outside the scope of this study, since such characteristics draw their *raison d’être* purely from the *Einzelsein*. The latter is the bearer of an individuating principle that cannot be responsible for “how” individuals are distinguished from each other, but rather for the *Einzelsein*’s unique and intangible constitutive structure, which results from the qualitative determination of the filling of the being’s ultimate substrate. The “fullness of the being” (*Wesensfülle*) thus has priority over any other *differentiation between* members of the same species. All this entails a radical separation between singularity, as the only constitutive act inside the individual, and the cause of differentiation between the individuals of the same species; what differentiates one individual from another cannot be adopted as the ultimate principle of singularity. Grasping exactly what the ultimate foundation of the singularity is requires a “retrospective glance” that is able to penetrate the interiority of the *Einzelsein* even

¹²⁶ See *ibid.* p. 203: “The individuality of the thing means that it is numerically one. The individuality of the person means the same thing, but also that it is qualitatively singular and that singularity is the means by which to grasp its uniqueness” (our translation).

¹²⁷ Conrad-Martius H. (1960b), p. 45 (our translation). Also interesting in this regard are the enquiries conducted in *ibid.* Chapter II (*Quantitative und qualitative Individuierung der Geistseele. Ihre biologischen Bedingungen und metaphysischen Grundlagen. Theologische Aspekte*), pp. 23–40.

¹²⁸ Husserl E. (1974).

more deeply, considering that for Stein, all “external differences hark back to inner differences, I mean, to a last simple *quale* [...]. On the other hand, from inner differences we should gather what external differences are possible”.¹²⁹

Regarding the individuation of physical things, it is interesting to note that there is a discrepancy between the first and second versions of the manuscript of *Potency and Act*. As is clear from the following citation, the relevance of material-quantitative aspects is indicated in an addendum: “the qualitative ‘**and quantitative**’ fullness to which its individual existence is bound we call its *concreteness* [*Konkretion*]”.¹³⁰ The added text ‘**and quantitative**’ belongs to the second manuscript, which was used for the annotated edition. Material-quantitative aspects are also relevant to the individuation of the person – in which they are clearly present – but the reference here is to physical things, and their presence in persons cannot count as evidence for the duality or multiplicity of the principle of individuation. The concept in this quote that is crucial to the individuation of human beings is “concreteness”, a term used by Stein that evokes Scotus’ “*contractio*”.

If we seek to enquire further into the nuances of this concept – which entails returning to the question of Stein’s material ontology – from the beginning of the second chapter Stein seeks a determination of the key concept of any ontology: while not questioning Husserl’s subdivision into formal and material ontologies, Stein carves out an original doctrinal approach to the main concepts of these two ontological axes. In reference to formal ontology, the concept of “qualified empty form” forms the basis of the phenomenology of the person: Indeed, for Stein formal ontology is the “theory of the forms of being and of be-ings”.¹³¹ The “form” is simply anything that *actualises* – in the sense of delimiting – any content, although the content itself – which is part of an individual’s *potentiality* – is of no interest to formal ontology: “once we empty *these* forms of their content, we reach the forms in the sense they have in formal ontology. What befalls us in experience are objects [*Gegenstand*] of a definite kind, material [*materiell*] or spiritual. They are in *such* wise definite that each is different from all the others, be it only by their location in space or time”.¹³²

¹²⁹ Stein E. (2005a), p. 59. English translation, p. 82.

¹³⁰ Ibid. p. 21. English translation, p. 28. Note that in the English edition in question, translated from the ESW edition, the text reads “qualitative and quantitative fullness [...]”. In contrast, in the new edition of the works of Edith Stein (ESGA) it says only *qualitative Fülle*, and the reference to *quantitative Fülle* is given as a later addition inserted by the author. Furthermore, the manuscript which Stein sent to her friend H. Conrad-Martius in 1933 contains no reference to “quantitative fullness”. This once again confirms the initial argument that in Stein’s studies qualitative determination alone constitutes the fullness of being of the *Einzelsein*. See Stein E. (Ms. Trans.), f. 29: “Seine Einmaligkeit und Unwiederholbarkeit, die es von allem andern sondert, nennen wir seine Individualität, die qualitative Fülle, an die seine individuelle Existenz gebunden ist, seine Konkretion”. This exemplar, bound in two folders, is to be found in the papers of H. Conrad-Martius held in the *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek* in Munich – see Avé-Lallemant E. (1975), p. 250. For the annotated German edition (ESGA), the editor, Hans Rainer Sepp, was only able to make use of a copy of the manuscript reconstructed by Lucy Gelber, but this manuscript differs from exemplar F I 2 in Munich. See Introduction to Stein E. (2005a), p. xxxiv.

¹³¹ Stein E. (2005a), p. 21. English translation, p. 27.

¹³² Ibid. English translation, p. 28.

In terms of content then, all individuals, both material and spiritual, are “unrepeatable” and contain a qualitative and quantitative fullness that constitutes their *concretion*. These individuals are described by a doctrine that concerns itself with “selfsufficient” beings (see Stein’s diagram on ontology).

Thus, all the meanings of “form” (spatial form of visible things, form as a vital force of an organism, form as the *idea* of things), are linked to the concept of *actual* delimitation of something potential, which ultimately is completely formless matter: “Form contrasts with what is wholly formless; such is *matter* [*Materie*] in the Aristotelian and scholastic sense of *prima materia* [prime matter]”.¹³³

It has been pointed out already that the relationship between the ultimate genera of formal ontology and the genera and species that are subordinated to it are in a relationship of delimitation. Now for Stein, this relationship should not be understood always in the sense of *specification*. While the relationship of specification is valid with respect to the relationships between genus and species (garnet – bohemian garnet),¹³⁴ it is not sufficient for the relationships between species and individuals *qua* persons: it is not sufficient, in other words, regarding the qualitative fullness of the form qualifying the personality within the region of the subjective spirit. What seems plausible is that for Stein, relationships of unselfsufficiency seem to be relatively more marked by specification. However, the latter seems to be no longer sufficient when it becomes necessary to take account of personal individuation, for which the term *concretion* cited earlier is more suitable. Indeed, it is only in a concrete and selfsufficient “this-here” that personalising individuation is accomplished; this takes place, as will be explained below, by “infusion”: “color can become specific only within the color spectrum, not, say, in different spatial shapes, although it can occur concretely in different shapes. The difference among specification, concreteness, and individuation stands out clearly here. Color receives individuality by entering the makeup of a concrete individual [...]. Concreteness is the “growing together” with the other elements [Moment] belonging to the individual’s makeup”.¹³⁵ Therefore, if this concept of concretion makes it possible to explain the links of selfsufficiency even in the spheres of inorganic *synola*, then it stands to reason that it must also be important for the qualitative individuation of the personal form, which clearly finds its ultimate support precisely in the *ultima solitudo* of the *Kern*. Confirmation of this interpretation can also be found in the following words of Bottin: “Unlike Scotus, Stein seems to be prepared to admit individuation via matter, but only for material realities. For these realities, the path followed by Thomas Aquinas can be acceptable. But when we are dealing with spiritual realities or those that are linked to spirituality in some way, this path is no longer practicable”.¹³⁶

The individual-person therefore incarnates the species with its fullness, and species and genera are empty with respect to it; this emptiness is not merely specified

¹³³ Ibid. English translation, p. 27.

¹³⁴ See *ibid.* p. 24. English translation, p. 31.

¹³⁵ Ibid. p. 31. English translation, p. 42.

¹³⁶ Bottin F. (2009), p. 127 (our translation).

in individuals – persons – it infuses them, it occupies them. Individuals “exemplify” it, but are situated outside this form, beyond this *quid*.

Only the filled forms, i.e. those that are infused or incarnated in individuals, are outside the relationship of specification and thus outside the *mereological* relationship, giving rise to concrete singularity.¹³⁷ As Ales Bello astutely observes, this enables Stein to achieve a synthesis between an essentialist approach typical of phenomenology and a metaphysical approach associated with the Thomist or, more broadly, medieval tradition (e.g. Scotus), the latter more focused on the moment of the present-real *concretum* in which individuation is fulfilled: “Given the stratification that characterises the field of essences, other approaches are also comprehensible: that of phenomenology, which, by means of the “essential reduction” approaches the *quid* of the things or their concrete sense and on the cognitive level achieves a consciousness that grasps the *spiritual meaning* of the things; and the linguistic approach, because analysing the linguistic expression reveals the *linguistic meaning*. This makes it possible to avoid excluding any perspective, indeed, to understand the different points of view by which philosophical enquiry is articulated. Therefore, Stein argues that there is no contrast between phenomenological and metaphysical enquiry: they are simply two research paths that converge on the same reality, highlighting now one aspect, now another. Clearly, the individuation of the essential being allows us to go deeper into the sense of that reality. Indeed, essential beings are distinguished from temporal-actual beings and from those that are merely thought of; however, the three moments are connected by being human”.¹³⁸

Thus, on the basis of these observations, it is clear, and will become even more so as our argument unfolds, that it is on the side of form and not that of matter that we must seek the personal individuation of human beings. Paradoxically however, for Stein this form cannot be considered the holder of generalising intentions (Fig. 4.2).

Indeed, Stein stresses only qualitative determination of the filling of the empty form since she intends to show, as Scotus does in the *Ordinatio*,¹³⁹ that the “what” (*Was*) cannot be communicated to the individual *by* the species, nor can it be sought by the individual *in* the species. On the contrary, “The *principium individuationis* [individuation principle] here must lie outside the species”,¹⁴⁰ since each singularity, by virtue of being incommunicable, must have a foundation in the individual itself.

By way of further clarification of what has been set out above, and consistent with the analyses of the ontological concept of “empty form”, we must analyse the

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ales Bello A. (2010a), p. 184 (our translation).

¹³⁹ See Duns Scotus J. (1973) *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1, No. 30, p. 402: “Sicut etiam deducit secunda ratio (cum suis probationibus omnibus), aliqua est unitas in re realis absque omni operatione intellectus, minor unitate numerali sive unitate propria singularis, quae ‘unitas’ est naturae secundum se, – et secundum istam ‘unitatem propriam’ naturae ut natura est, natura est indifferens ad unitatem singularitatis; non igitur est de se sic illa una, scilicet unitate singularitatis”.

¹⁴⁰ Stein E. (2005a), p. 29. English translation, p. 39.

29.

keineswegs alle möglichen und üblichen sind) ist Form etwas Qualifiziertes, und in diesem Sinn inhaltlich Erfülltes oder Materiales. Keine geometrische Gestalt (als rein geometrische) gleicht der andern, keine Idee der andern. Auf die Formen im Sinne der formalen Ontologie aber kommen wir erst, wenn wir diese Formen ihres Inhalts entleeren. Das, was uns in der Erfahrung begegnet, sind inhaltlich bestimmte Gegenstände, mögen sie materiell oder geistig sein; so bestimmt, daß jeder von jedem andern unterschieden ist, sei es auch nur durch seine Raum- und Zeitstelle. Seine Einmaligkeit und Unwiederholbarkeit, die es von allem andern sondert, nennen wir seine Individualität, die qualitative Fülle, an die seine individuelle Existenz gebunden ist, seine Konkretion. In dieser qualitativen Fülle ist manches, was wir auch anderswo finden können, was sich aus der Konkretion herausheben und in abstracto betrachten läßt. Aber auch wenn wir ihm seine ganze qualitative Fülle nehmen, wenn wir ihm alles nehmen, was ihn von irgend einem andern unterscheidet, bleibt noch etwas übrig: Etwas, das ist. In dieser Form tritt uns alles Seiende entgegen. Hier haben wir jene völlig leeren Seinsformen, mit denen es die formale Ontologie zu tun hat. "Etwas" oder "Gegenstand" einerseits- Sein andererseits. In dem "Etwas" steckt noch ein Doppeltes: das, was ist; und das, was es ist; der Gegenstand, seine Fülle und sein Sein. Ohne Fülle kein Sein. Darum ist auch sie eine ontologische Form. *aliquid, quod, quid est, esse*: das sind die ontologischen Grundformen. Ihre konkrete Einheit ist das Seiende: ⁿ ~~e~~ s. Vom Sein ist schon im I. Abschnitt viel die

Fig. 4.2 Ms. *Potenz und Akt*, f. 29 (see note 130)

reason why "quantitative fullness" cannot be considered an ontological priority in the filling of the empty form, necessary for the determination of singularity. It is no accident that Stein does not include it in the process of concretion together with qualitative fullness. First and foremost, it should be pointed out that the empty form

does not “come to us” empirically as such, but always as the form filled by some content. If “quantitative fullness” was included in the process of concretion, singularity would necessarily be determined by factors external to the individual itself, such as spatio-temporal determination. This would cause it to lose its intrinsic and foundational character as a singularity that is such only to the extent that it already has within itself all that determines it. Thus, only the “what”, as “qualitative fullness”, represents the individual tonality of the *Einzelsein*, which persists in itself, despite all the changes deriving from the “quantitative dimension”: “The individual is singular, unique. This may be based upon *what* the individual is; that is, in the case where its *what* admits of no repetition”.¹⁴¹ Hence, incommunicability as a guarantee of the intangible uniqueness of the individual can only belong to the qualitative determination of its being and not to the “quantitative fullness”, which is itself communicable to more than one individual. In other words, it is not the “filling” as content, but the qualitative tonality of the filling that makes the individual a singular being in a unique and unrepeatable way.

Having clarified the role of qualitative “filling” in the process of concretion, we shall now consider the “empty form”, which obtains its filling only from what is “concretely” individual. Formal ontology is concerned with the “empty form”, which “denotes a singular *together with* all that fills it, and conversely [...] can *only* be filled immediately by a singular”.¹⁴² The “empty form” in its universal role as a determined substrate is experienced by us in its individual filling by means of concrete individuals. Why then does Stein, on a preliminary basis, refer to “two forms of individuality”?¹⁴³ “In the one, “*haecceitas* [thisness]” (the “this being [*dieses Sein*]”) is based on the “*quidditas* [whatness]”; in the other, its base lies outside the *quid*”.¹⁴⁴ In both cases Stein describes different contexts of filling, depending on whether it is a case of the *haecceitas*, in reference to the ultimate reality of the empty form, or of the simple material reality in which the foundation lies outside the *Quid*. Naturally we are dealing here with two different categories of the being (the “empty form” and the “matter-form” synolon), in which, in order to be based in itself, individuality must intrinsically belong to the ultimate reality of form. Regarding the “matter-form” synolon, this is the context in which individuality is manifested, or makes itself visible, but we cannot seek its foundation – which originates only in the ultimate reality of the being – here. The “empty form” remains the same, although one may be tempted to believe that due to the radical change of physical forms, we are looking at a plurality of essential forms and/or a plurality of individual entities. This explains why, in reference to the matter-form synolon, Stein speaks of one individuating foundation that lies inside the being and one that lies outside the *Quid*. In both cases we are speaking of the same individuality, not forgetting the distinction between the intrinsic foundation of the *Einzelsein* and its external manifestation; the individual is thus ““*quidditas* [whatness]” in *haecceitate*

¹⁴¹ Ibid. English translation, p. 38.

¹⁴² Ibid. pp. 22–23. English translation, p. 30.

¹⁴³ Ibid. p. 29. English translation, p. 39.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

[thisness]”.¹⁴⁵ The individual being is thus supported by the “empty form” which, together with qualitative fullness, designates the “entelechy” (or “internal form”)¹⁴⁶ of the being. From this the ontic structure of the individual develops by moving from the inside towards the outside in a unique and unrepeatable way, since its internal formation has an entelechial origin that is qualitatively singular and not measurable.

On the basis of the arguments set out above and in agreement with Redmond, it can be argued that Stein’s position on the intrinsic principle of individuation “evidently evokes the doctrine of Scotus [...]”; and while the *external* individuation that the author proposes is fundamentally Thomist, the internal individuation is her own creation”.¹⁴⁷

4.2.2.8 The Statute of the Concept of *Prime Matter*; Formed Matters. Clarifying the Reasons Why Matter Cannot Be the Principle of Individuation

The fundamental questions tackled in the sixth chapter of *Potency and Act*, especially in the last few paragraphs, are primarily concerned with the relationship between *prime matter* and the individualising concreteness, and thus with the nature of the I itself and the personal spirit, taking account of the doctrine of Conrad-Martius.

It is precisely in the continuous comparison with the work of Conrad-Martius that Stein feels the need to better explain her position regarding the ontological statute to assign to *prime matter*. She shares Conrad-Martius’ view that all formed material bodies must rise up from below, i.e. as if from a foundation situated in the depths, but she also sought to explain the role of prime matter without considering it as an “obscure foundation”: “Whatever gives shape even in the lowest formed objects, that is, in an “item of matter”, is “idea” from above, “objective spirit,” sunk from original being into the matter, to its own substantial being. In the end all that remains of “from below” is “*prima materia*”. What prime matter is, though, is still unclear in very many ways. Does it, too, have its origin in God [...]? Several passages in the *Gespräche* touch on the question, but give no definite answer. If *prime matter* were to be conceived as absolute nothing [*Nichts*], then of course the question of its origin from absolute being would not come up. But can we imagine this nothing as living, as driving greedily for being? [...] So this entire magnificent conception of nature rests upon an obscure foundation”.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 45. English translation, p. 62.

¹⁴⁷ Redmond W. (2005), pp. 96–97 (our translation): “De la individuación interna dice que si la species specialissima, la forma última de la cosa, puede existir en solo eiemplar, hay que llamar a la diferencia específica “individual” y al eiemplar un “individuo”. [...] evidentemente evoca a la doctrina de Escoto; [...] La individuación externa que propone Stein es básicamente tomista, pero la interna es de su propia cosecha”.

¹⁴⁸ Stein E. (2005a), pp. 184–185. English translation, pp. 282–283.

For Stein however, prime matter is not an obscure foundation, at least concerning its origin, although she does not seem to question its unformed nature. She doubts that it is the determining factor, the common denominator, for individuation and the formation of beings, especially persons: the justification and assessment of the material factor must go beyond the question of whether all instances of formation are imperfect examples of the single grand “idea” towards which they tend as if driven upwards.¹⁴⁹ Specifically, obliged to exclude prime matter from the ultimate individual determination, Stein affirms that “what the “living form”, the entelechy, takes into itself is not *prima materia* but an “item of matter”, hence something already formed”.¹⁵⁰

The individualising corporeal concreteness therefore does not owe what it is to this prime matter. Even when a body takes on form and life from pre-existing inorganic material and subsequently, after life, returns to being mere matter, the thing that individuates it cannot be unformed matter, but something else. What then? “When a substantial form gives way to the other form “in the same thing”, is the unformed matter “the same”? This obviously will not do either. To be sure, it was a “piece of matter” [...]. What, then, can still be “the same” if it is neither the substantial form nor the matter? What remains is the individual’s form of object, the “this here”, in a continuity of being [...]”.¹⁵¹

Naturally, this does not mean that Stein seeks to shift individuation to a level just above mere matter; she is simply identifying the minimum level at which the formation of the body takes place. Once this level has been identified, there is continuity of personal life beyond material vicissitudes. The “living form” thus does not coincide with the “material form”, although the latter must be assumed to be material already formed for the individualising-personalising concretion: “When analogously we take as “potency” what is “given life” by the soul, we are no longer referring to pure matter but to a material object already informed. For even if we understand the “living form” not as added on to the “material form” but as taking its place, what form preceded it does indeed matter, for it is *determined* matter that is ready to receive life, and for different living forms the matter is determined in a different way. Act, understood as the actual being of the living soul, is life. This implies for one thing that the organism itself continues to be constructed; it takes in the matter it needs to build itself up [...] and forms the matter it receives into the characteristic shape of the organism formed”.¹⁵²

The Thomist principle according to which a thing is what it is by virtue of its form is therefore valid: matter is always formed by form, which thus has ontological priority. For this reason, if two things have something in common, this cannot be matter but only form. Matter thus receives its form not from itself, but from

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 185. English translation, p. 283.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. pp. 187–188. English translation, p. 287.

¹⁵² Ibid. p. 189. English translation, p. 289: note how Stein’s translator renders *geformtes* with “informed”.

something else. What is the origin therefore of the first form conferred on *prime matter*?

“*Prima materia* can receive the first form that gives it being only from the first being. First being is the *first cause*, and creation is the *first causality* [*Kausalität*] underlying all else. Earthly causality does not involve initial forming but only transforming. The lowest genus in the material [*materiell*] domain represents what is closest to *prime matter*: simple items of *matter* [*Stoff*], the *elements* [*Elemente*] out of which whatever else is material is made and emerges, but which do not themselves consist of or emerge from anything else. They hark back only to the initial forming not to any other. Every element is a species, more precisely a *species specialissima* allowing no further differentiation”¹⁵³

Prime matter finds its ultimate justification in the first creative act of God; everything that happens to simple substances in terms of transformation, always happens as a result of this act of creation; earthly causalities, material relationships between things and corporeal substantialisations of all kinds are subsequent to matter’s first assumption of form.

Prime matter understood in this way thus becomes a theoretically necessary device to make the relationships of individuation-concretion intelligible in the light of revealed Truths, and not only with reference to the philosophies of Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Scotus and Husserl – a necessity that we may consider *logical*.

As is clear from *Finite and Eternal Being*, this necessity can be explained with reference to two reasons: a prime matter preceding any formed matter is necessary, but in order to avoid duplicating the formative principles this prime matter must itself have its origin in the creative “Fiat”. For Stein, this served to avoid running into the same ambiguities as Aristotle. Indeed, when the latter quotes Homer, declaiming that “The rule of many is not good; let one be the ruler”,¹⁵⁴ he does not notice that he has fallen short of his own monism, since *prime matter* becomes just as immobile or eternal¹⁵⁵ as the unmoved mover. As Stein puts it: “The assumption of a non-become and non-corruptible prime matter is based on the premise that nothing can come from nothing and that something that is cannot become nothing”.¹⁵⁶ Stein proposes to resolve this difficulty by retreading the same road as she followed in *Potency and Act*, i.e. creationism with respect to prime matter: “Both of these propositions, however, are invalid once we acknowledge an infinite existent who has the power of calling something into existence out of nothing or of annihilating that which exists. The difficulty of explaining how matter can attain to form and how formed matter can acquire actual existence is resolved if there is no matter that could have existed – not even in potency – prior to and independently of the divine creative *Fiat!* And the question of how something that is merely “in potency” can

¹⁵³ Ibid. p. 195. English translation, p. 298.

¹⁵⁴ See Aristoteles Latinus (1976), *L XII*, 1076a 4–5, p. 523. English translation, p. 175.

¹⁵⁵ It should be pointed out however that Stein does not explain here how the concept of “eternity” employed by Aristotle is not, as is often the case in Greek culture, coterminous with its Judeo-Christian counterpart.

¹⁵⁶ Stein E. (2006), p. 204. English translation, p. 233.

become actual is satisfactorily answered if form and matter as well as existence [Dasein] itself are created by this *Fiat!*".¹⁵⁷

Formed matters then, in their various stages, are one degree of objectivisation of individuation behind the logically postulated element which is prime matter. For Stein, as finite beings we deal only and exclusively with different degrees of formation of matter, without ever encountering this prime matter, which makes sense only in the context of the creative "*Fiat!*". The problem now is to understand, considering what has already been said on the qualifying form of the personal being, the reason why Stein excluded matter (and, as we have already mentioned, also form) as a co-principle of qualification or individuation.

In order to avoid neglecting anything, it is necessary to briefly touch upon an alternative interpretation of Stein's texts to the one presented here thus far. Rosa Errico shows how for Thomas Aquinas the principle of individuation was in some cases determined, spatio-temporal matter (*De Ente*), and in some cases the form of the *personal soul* linked in its essence to the body (*De anima*).¹⁵⁸ Proceeding with her analysis, Errico affirms that "in this regard, *materia signata* is part of the essence and thus of the definition of the particular individual [...]. Matter is therefore what allows me to define Socrates. [...] Now, since *existence* does not coincide in the being with *essence*, formed matter, thanks to which something is a being, would not make something individual in terms of its essence but only in terms of its existence. It is the thing via which we see that a given being exists, its real, existential aspect, what makes the being *appear* one and not what makes it *be* one".¹⁵⁹ For Errico, it seems that this duality in individualising principles can also be found in the work of Edith Stein,¹⁶⁰ to the point of claiming that "regarding the individuality of the human being, the disagreement between Thomas Aquinas and Stein fades to the point of disappearing altogether".¹⁶¹

We do not share this reading of Edith Stein's position with respect to Thomas Aquinas, considering what has been argued thus far, for the following reasons: in the context of Stein's writings it is not possible to speak of a dual principle of individuation, at least with regard to persons: this principle must be monistic. The single, indivisible nature of this principle can be explained – as both the present author and Francesco Bottin have done in other works, working in parallel but completely separately from each other – by the simple observation that the *principium individuationis* must absolutely be situated outside any essential aspect, whether formal or material, considering that accidents are logically subsequent to their substrate, and that, although they are accidents, they can always be captured in "generalities": "First and foremost Stein sees clearly, as Scotus had rigorously established, that the characteristics that make a spiritual reality individual cannot be derived from the

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ See Errico R. (2009), p. 187.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 194 (our translation).

¹⁶⁰ See *ibid.* pp. 195–197.

¹⁶¹ Ibid. p. 208 (our translation).

principles that constitute it in an essential genus”.¹⁶² What is meant here is that if the principle of individuation is incommunicable, as Errico rightly points out,¹⁶³ then this is not because “we individuate the root of the individual being in the formal structure, in the fact that the support which contains the essence of the individual as empty form is not communicable”,¹⁶⁴ but rather because we individuate it *outside* any determination, not just material, but also *formal* (in the universalising sense). Indeed, it is no surprise that in her later works Stein herself states that “my own intrinsic *nature* [*meine Art*] and that of the other cannot be neatly taken apart so as to make manifest what we have in common and in what we differ. In this sense, then, we must admit that the essential difference [*Wesensunterschied*] in individuals cannot be grasped”.¹⁶⁵ Also leaning towards this interpretation is Bottin, who points out that Scotus was not scrupulously followed in his reasonings (substantially similar to Stein’s) by his pupils, especially when they chose to use the term *haecceitas* to translate what for Scotus was indefinable; indefinable in the same sense as it was for the analytical philosophers of the twentieth century.¹⁶⁶

4.2.2.9 From Material to “Spiritual Perception by Feeling (*das Fühlen*)”

We shall now seek to tackle the cognitive determination of singularity as it is first constituted. First and foremost, we must suspend our judgement (invoke *epoché*) regarding the simple external manifestation of the *Einzelsein* before returning to the point where no further excavation is possible, since the substrate we have reached, on which singularity rests, is the ultimate foundation from which it is only possible to “go back up again”. In addition, we can answer the question regarding the essence of singularity regardless of its simple exterior manifestation, i.e. without having to establish the extent to which the exterior manifestation presented to us empirically can determine or condition the *Einzelsein* in its singularity.

The “unity” of the *Einzelsein* is the synthesis of a double stratification of the quantitative determination (the material element) and the qualitative determination (the ambit of the spiritual element). In each cognitive system’s achievement of consciousness, since the quantitative determination constitutes the first point of access to knowledge of the “something” that is “in front of me”, it may induce us to consider this first experience sufficient to clarify the ultimate determination of singularity. Indeed, one temptation that seems to be irresistible is to place oneself in front of a human being to analyse it, extrapolating only a few of its constitutive dimensions, as if it were an “external object”. In contrast, what needs to be done is to distinguish

¹⁶² Bottin F. (2009), p. 127 (our translation).

¹⁶³ See See Errico R. (2009), p. 205.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid (our translation).

¹⁶⁵ Stein E. (2006), p. 420. English translation, p. 502. Bottin also refers to this passage in Bottin F. (2009), p. 127.

¹⁶⁶ See Bottin F. (2009), p. 128. For further treatment of these aspects the reader is referred to Chap. 3, Sect. 3.3.3 of this volume.

between the apparent quantitative determination and the intrinsic principle of the form (i.e. “entelechy”, working from within”¹⁶⁷), and consequently between simple sensory perception and “spiritual perception by feeling (*das Fühlen*)”.

On this premise, according to Stein, material “intuition” – an act of reasoning by means of which “something”, i.e. some content, is grasped – does not provide us with the “*final distinction*”¹⁶⁸ (*letzte Scheidung*) of the individual. What we grasp with our sensory or material perception does not correspond to the qualitative fullness of the being, which is the only filling that persists despite the continuous changes in its appearance, from which it is independent. Being conscious of oneself and in full self-possession of oneself, of one’s own “what”, of what one is personally, individual and simply unique, is an act of spiritual perception by feeling (*das Fühlen*). According to Stein, “the “mood [*Stimmung*]” is my present inner state of mind [*Verfassung*]: this is *how* I am at present [...] My “feeling [*Fühlen*]” is my consciousness of this mood”.¹⁶⁹ Only the *Fühlen*, as spiritual perception *ad intra*, enables us to penetrate even further into the interiority of our “being ourselves”, which is grasped in a continuous series of perceptive acts. We allow ourselves to be determined by the flow of these acts, within which singularity constantly renews and regenerates itself. We could never self-possess full singularity because with the *Fühlen* we can only “have consciousness” of a territory in which all qualitative dimensions can be experienced. We are not however able to fully possess a singularity that by its nature can neither be manipulated from the outside nor completely “possessed” by those who are studying it. This guarantees the intangibility and the free flow of a singularity not subject to any alteration.

With spiritual perception by feeling (*das Fühlen*), as if driven by some inner force, the individual frees itself from any exterior conditioning of simple living and raises itself up in the interior singularity of its being, within which it moves freely. In this case, if we examine singularity together with the interiority of the being from which it originates, it is presented as the “distinctive” and characterising element of the individual in itself, since it derives from its core. Only when the *Einzelsein* immerses itself in this “new region of the being” can it grasp with its inner vision its full “being itself”. At the same time, it cleaves to its singularity, distinguishing its own quality of being from those of other individuals outside itself. Therefore, the individual initially grasps only its individual quality, the fundamental essence of its being “conscious of its own self”, and feels the dimensions of an inner sphere flowing within its core. We are dealing here with something essentially new because it is an “original experience” of the human being,¹⁷⁰ different from the simple and

¹⁶⁷ Stein E. (2005a), p. 54. English translation, p. 76.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 57. English translation, p. 80 (our italics).

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 119. English translation, p. 178.

¹⁷⁰ It should be borne in mind however that singularity, even with the objectivity of original experience, cannot be defined (or fully grasped) by us, since it defies definition. For the purposes of our enquiry, it does however remain the case that the individual “shows” an individual characteristic determined by his or her interior. Stein spoke of this in the context of educational courses for women: See Stein E. (2000), p. 161.

common experience, which of itself cannot immediately grasp the qualitative specificity of singularity in itself.

By means of an inner backward glance, the individual perceives that its “being itself” originates, as it were, from an ultimate source that lies beyond the secondary layer of its being. It is in this source that the *Einzelsein* lives, anchored to itself and in complete “aleness”, and seems to progressively lose all contact with everything that lies “outside” itself. With Stein, it is argued here that the more the individual “lives from his depth, the more fully [*rein*] he will unfold [*entfalten*] his core, the less important will the external changes be [...]”.¹⁷¹ We are dealing with a “depth” in which the singularity of the *Einzelsein* is linked not to any accidental characteristic of the person, but to the essential and irreducible nucleus that represents the foundation of any actualisation.

4.2.2.10 Feeling (*Fühlen*) “Oneself” – Access to the Qualitative Fullness of the Being

In the final section of *Potency and Act*, which concludes with a comparison with *Metaphysische Gespräche*¹⁷² by the biologist and phenomenologist H. Conrad-Martius, Stein further explores the question of the “empty form” and the interpretation of the qualitative determination of the *Einzelsein*, as the thing that qualifies the human being as such. The ontological premise of the comparison is the nature of the relationship or link between the *Geistseele* (spiritual soul) and the *Leib* (living body), understood as being analogous to the relationship between “form” and “matter”. Rather than define the nature of this link, in this context we shall seek further clarifications in Stein’s studies of the concept of “empty form”.

Initially Stein uses the term *haecceitas* to designate the individuality of spiritual beings (angels, humans), since this *haecceitas* is founded in the *quidditas*. Consequently, she specifies the “soul” (*Seele*) as the principle of individuation of human beings in that it is individual.¹⁷³ After considering various possible solutions, including the question of *materia signata quantitate*, Stein adopts the “soul” as the principle of individuation of the *Einzelsein* – an entelechy that guides the development of human beings from their interior, considering that individual form must be sought in interiority, in the entelechy. “Being moved and shaped from within is the peculiarity of living things, their mode of being; it is *life*. And the *living* inner form that gives life is the soul”.¹⁷⁴

Stein clearly separates form in its becoming a substantial form (*Wesensform*), responsible for the development of the individual, from form as an entelechial structure (*Wesen* or *Was*) in which the singularity or the potentiality of one’s individual

¹⁷¹ Stein E. (2005a), p. 141. English translation, p. 212.

¹⁷² Conrad-Martius H. (1921).

¹⁷³ See Stein E. (2005a), p. 156. English translation, p. 234: ““The man has a soul” implies that something individual dwells in him that we call “soul””.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 164–165. English translation, p. 248.

“traits” exists before any conscious choice or experience of one’s “self”. We would argue that with this, Stein is seeking to lay the foundations of a correct vision of singularity in order to refute a probable reductionist reading of human beings in which development or even simple experience can be considered the interpretative key for accessing singularity as an individual note.

As the bearer of a singularity founded in the internal construct of its being, in the full consciousness of its “self” as such, the *Einzelsein* understands how its own individual note is also attributed to every other “You”. Having consciousness of the indivisible unity of one’s own being means feeling one’s own hyletic life (and that of others), like one’s spiritual life, as emerging from the depth of one’s being. It then returns, in a continuous flow by means of retrospective perception, to the source of its singularity, so that human beings freely become aware that their diversity is the unmistakable element that is closest to their personal being. In reality, at this point we have already entered the heart of Steinian hermeneutics regarding the onto-metaphysical foundation of the *Einzelsein*, which is precisely the “empty form”: “The empty form is man’s specific form, it is what gives him qualities as *man* [...] an individual stamp of qualities. It will not do to derive this stamp from the matter. [...] [It] is heightened together with the intensity of his spiritual being”.¹⁷⁵ The qualitative fullness of the being fills the “empty form” of a *Quale* which “is only “sensed” (*gespürt*)¹⁷⁶ as such by each in how he “feels about himself” (*sich selbst fühlt*) [...] as he himself is as himself”.¹⁷⁷

4.3 “Positive Quality of the Being” and “Empty Form” – The Originality of a “Fühlen”

In *Finite and Eternal Being*, Stein summarises the results achieved in her previous works and broadens the question of singularity by studying the “qualitative fullness” of the being in relation to the Scotist “positive quality” of individuation.

4.3.1 Preliminary Observations

Stein’s most important philosophical work, *Finite and Eternal Being*, encompasses both the medieval tradition and phenomenology, but the strong influence on it of the thought of Duns Scotus is without doubt one of its most systematically neglected

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 256, p. 260. English translation, p. 392, p. 398.

¹⁷⁶ In our opinion, “sensed” in this passage is a somewhat inadequate rendering of the original, which in German means “sensed internally”. In this case, although both refer to an interior experience, we may distinguish between “sensing internally” and the interior perception of “feeling” (*Fühlen*).

¹⁷⁷ Stein E. (2005a), p. 261. English translation, p. 400.

aspects, especially if compared to, say, Stein’s references to Thomas Aquinas. This is all the more surprising considering that some scholars have touched on the affinity between Stein and Scotus, without however delving deeper into the question.¹⁷⁸ For example, Sarah Borden writes that “Throughout *Finite and Eternal Being*, Stein appropriates many Thomistic concepts, yet also departs from Thomas, developing a more Scotist model of persons and being”.¹⁷⁹

Moreover, in the preface, Stein notes that “the question may perhaps be asked why the author has followed the lead of Plato, Augustine, and Duns Scotus rather than that of Aristotle and Thomas”.¹⁸⁰ At this point the reader acquires a hermeneutic key for understanding the final part of the work, on “The Meaning and Foundation of Individual Being”,¹⁸¹ in which Stein returns to the question that she has already discussed, but not yet clarified, of the individual being (*Einzelsein*), and thus of the individuality of the essence (*Wesen*) as a substrate. Once this question has been clarified, for Stein, the determination of the person is complete.

Stein begins by discussing the Latin term *individuum*, which she translates with “single thing” (*Einzel Ding*), corresponding to the Aristotelian term “this here” (*tode ti*, or *Dies da* in German): the “thing” that cannot be named because it is impossible to define. Determining the “this here” is difficult precisely because it consists of separating its transmissible properties, which are generic determinations, from its substrate. The latter alone is able to unambiguously represent its being “this here” and no other, since by its very nature it is not communicable. Being “this here” excludes both being different (another individual) and being many (*In-mehreren-sein*).

The problem of the substrate of the being can be tackled by starting from the “unity” of the individual that belongs to it at the moment when he or she appears to us as the “complete totality in itself”.

The individual, as a “single thing”, indicates its being indivisible (*ungeteilt*), i.e. unique in that it possesses in itself a “unity” that derives from its being an individual subject. And it will be seen how from the beginning of chapter 8, Stein already makes it clear that the unity she speaks of is not numerical or “quantitative unity” because although the *Einzelsein* is at the base of quantitative determination, we cannot claim that its uniqueness derives from it.¹⁸² According to Stein, numerical unity cannot be the foundation of individuation, since its dimensional characteristics can change, while the nature of the *Einzelsein* remains the same. In addition, the accidental determinations of the being cannot exist by themselves, and thus they do not say or add anything to its ultimate determination. At this point it should be stressed

¹⁷⁸ See, in chronological order, the studies by Höfliger A. (1968), pp. 66–83, pp. 100–107; Schulz P. (1994), pp. 228–245; Hecker H. (1995), pp. 96–100; Volek P. (1998), pp. 203–209; Redmond W. (2005), pp. 96–97. On the principle of individuation in Stein and Thomas Aquinas, see the interpretation given by Errico R. (2009), pp. 181–208.

¹⁷⁹ Borden S. (2003), p. 104.

¹⁸⁰ Stein E. (2006), p. 6. English translation, xxxi.

¹⁸¹ See *ibid.* pp. 395–441. English translation, pp. 469–527.

¹⁸² See *ibid.* pp. 396–397. English translation, pp. 470–471.

that as early as her discussion of “transcendentals”, Stein had rejected the definition of the “*unum*” given by Thomas Aquinas. She herself does not define the “*unum*” in a purely negative way, as something indistinct in itself but distinct from everything else, but rather sees in this indistinctness only an interpretation of the positive aspect of “unity”, in that it represents the ultimate irreducible thing that holds the fullness of the being together.¹⁸³ In any case, for Stein, transcendental unity, like numerical unity, is not sufficient to constitute the foundation of the indistinctness of the individual. The dispute over “transcendentals” is mentioned here since this disagreement was to lead Stein to a different solution from that of Thomas Aquinas.

The difficulty lies in obtaining direct knowledge of individual nature. Stein criticises the reasoning behind one of the most widely-read neo-Thomist philosophy manuals, Gredt’s “*Elementa*”,¹⁸⁴ and does not seem to accept the author’s position that an understanding of the individual being can be derived from its perceptible characteristics: “We distinguish [...] individual corporeal things among themselves, says Gredt, by accidental, externally and sensorially noticeable characteristics, especially by their external form and their position in space and time”.¹⁸⁵ Stein questions whether individuality is directly associated with the hyletic content of the *Einzelsein*. Content diversity is not part of the formal distinction of the essence, but of its material distinction, which is another reason for arguing that it originally derives from external inputs.¹⁸⁶

The question is crucial for Stein, because it is about whether the principle that ensures that “this here” is this and no other can be derived from the content (or material) determination, of itself perceptible. Naturally, behind this question lies Stein’s critique of Gredt’s theory that *matter* is not only the yardstick of comparison for distinguishing one *Einzelsein* from another, but also the principle of individuation of its substrate. For Gredt and Stein alike, it is clear that this matter is not simple *prime matter*, since it could never act as the principle of individuation. This in turn is due to the fact that *prime matter* is unformed, i.e. totally without determination, and so cannot be the determining foundation of the *Einzelding*. Gredt and Stein both refer to *prime matter* that has already entered a form by means of spatio-temporal determinations. Matter that has been received by form and predisposed or oriented towards expansion is *materia signata quantitate*.

For Stein, the *materia signata quantitate* of the Thomist tradition cannot be the foundation of the individual thing because although “form” is the active element while “matter” is passive, and although the active element is superior to the passive element (from the point of view of the being), this does not take us beyond the generic relationship between form and matter and thus says nothing about its being essentially a “this here”. Stein insists on the fact that the “form” part of the synolon is still part of the common structure of human beings (the species). However there

¹⁸³ See *ibid.* p. 250. English translation, p. 289.

¹⁸⁴ Gredt J. (1935). In her discussion Stein refers to the German edition of Gredt’s “*Elementa*”, originally written in Latin.

¹⁸⁵ Stein E. (2006), p. 397, note 9. English translation, p. 471.

¹⁸⁶ See *ibid.* p. 416. English translation, p. 496.

are also different individual forms.¹⁸⁷ Despite having the same qualities, each individual has those qualities in a totally individual way: “the friendliness and kindness of Socrates differs from the friendliness and kindness of every other human being”.¹⁸⁸ The *Einzelsein* is the bearer of the specificity of the species. Consequently, Stein cannot accept the foundation of the material multiplicity (*inhaltliche Mannigfaltigkeit*) of a species via matter as formulated by Thomas Aquinas (*Individuum est de ratione materiae*).¹⁸⁹

From this premise, individuality is found to depend neither on form nor on matter, since these are still two general aspects. Nor does it depend on “a certain quantity of matter”, since quantity is an accident of the substance, nor yet on its “existence”, since the latter presupposes the subsistence of the *Einzelsein*.¹⁹⁰

The “this here”, the most intimate perception of singularity as being “thus (*So*)”, is for Stein something unique, and therefore constitutes the principle of individuation of human beings, who, in order to be such, must be founded in the formal constitution of the ultimate substrate of the being. In any case, although the perception of singularity may turn out to be inexplicable, it would be illogical to give up trying purely on the basis of Husserl’s “principle of all principles”.¹⁹¹

Since it is not possible to trace individual difference back to “form” or quantitative difference, the only path left open is that of the “empty form” as the ultimate reality of the being.

4.3.2 *The Solution Proposed by Stein Is Prefigured in Duns Scotus*

In her critical analysis of the principle of individuation, Stein refutes *materia signata quantitate* as the foundation of individuation, since this foundation must be something that does not constitute the individual in a quantitative and purely numerical way. The fundamental constitution of the being consists of matter and form, and if matter is of no use to us, then the concept of “form” is what remains. But the *Einzelsein* lies within the same field of enquiry as the “empty form”, since it is not

¹⁸⁷ See *ibid.* p. 402. English translation, p. 478: “It is important, moreover, to note what is meant here by *individual essence* [*Einzelwesen*]: the “part that accounts for the species” of the individual thing (e.g. the humanity of this individual person). Accordingly, each individual thing has *its* essence, but this essence is the *same* as that of all the other members of the same species. I pointed out before that I find it impossible to accept this point of view. It seems to me that the essence of Socrates is found in his being Socrates (which includes his being human), and I hold that this essence differs not only numerically but by virtue of a special particularity from the essence of any other human being”.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.* p. 142. English translation, p. 157.

¹⁸⁹ See *ibid.* pp. 416–417. English translation, pp. 496–498.

¹⁹⁰ See *ibid.* pp. 409–413. English translation, pp. 487–492.

¹⁹¹ Husserl E. (1976), § 24, p. 51: “[...] jede originär gebende Anschauung eine Rechtsquelle der Erkenntnis sei [...]”.

distinguished from the being of another thing *in terms of content*. The “empty form” – like an objective line of demarcation that externally separates the finite being from all the rest, from everything that it is not, and internally delimits the substrate, or the depth of the being – constitutes the “basis” of singularity.

In this, Stein makes explicit reference to Duns Scotus¹⁹²: “Duns Scotus does likewise, if I understand him correctly. He sees the *principium individuationis* as something that has the marks of a **positive existent**, as something that sets the individual form of the essence apart from the universal form of the essence”.¹⁹³

The principle of individuation should not be considered as something that is added to the individual from outside, but is a **positive quality** of the being (*etwas positiv Seiendes*) which is already contained within it as the perfection of its being. The “positive quality” consists of the individual nature (its being “that”) and should not be considered a second nature in addition to the common nature (species), but rather as the common nature in the single nature¹⁹⁴: nothing is added to man by being Socrates, but it is in being Socrates that being a man is contained.

The originality of Stein’s use of the term “empty form” is in the formal structure of the term “empty”; the “base” that intrinsically belongs to it. This avoids once and for all the ambiguity inherent in the term *principium individuationis*, which has always been thought of as a principle that is added to the being from outside. The new terminology, created by Stein, extinguishes any doubt, which is something of an achievement if compared to Scotus’ long discussion in the *Ordinatio* (q. 2) of the “intrinsic principle”.¹⁹⁵

Lastly, even though Stein does not explicitly equate here the “positive quality of the being” with the Scotist phrase “ultima realitas entis”, in *Potenz und Akt*, she does use the term “haecceitas” to designate the individuality of the Einzelsein. The individual nature recalls Scotus’ positive *entitas*, in which singularity, as we have already shown, is a product neither of matter nor of form nor of the matter-form synolon. Rather, it is something which, being reality, is formally distinguished from the common nature and serves to contract it, thereby making it individually existent.

¹⁹² See Chap. 3, Sect. 3.2.6 above. In Duns Scotus J. (1973) *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, p. 1, qq. 5–6, No. 169, pp. 474–475, Scotus states: “Sicut unitas in communi per se consequitur entitatem in communi, ita quaecumque unitas per se consequitur aliquam entitatem; ergo unitas simpliciter (qualis est ‘unitas individui’ frequenter prius descripta, scilicet cui repugnat divisio in plures partes subiectivas et cui repugnat ‘non esse hoc, signatum’), si est in entibus (sicut omnis opinio supponit), consequitur per se aliquam per se entitatem; non autem consequitur per se entitatem naturae, quia illius est aliqua unitas propria et per se, realis, sicut probatum est in solutione primae quaestionis; igitur consequitur aliquam entitatem aliam, determinantem istam, et illa facit unum per se cum entitate naturae, quia ‘totum’ cuius est haec unitas, perfectum est de se”.

¹⁹³ Stein E. (2006), pp. 408–409. English translation, p. 610; rather than “something that has the marks of a positive existent”, for the original *etwas positiv Seiendes* we prefer “a positive quality of the being”. Stein used the study by Meßner R. (1934).

¹⁹⁴ Stein E. (2006), p. 402. English translation, p. 478.

¹⁹⁵ See Duns Scotus J. (1973) *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 2, No. 57, pp. 416–417: “[...] Quod necesse est per aliquid *positivum intrinsecum* huic lapidi, tamquam per rationem propriam, *repugnare sibi dividi in partes subiectivas*; et illud positivum erit illud quod dicitur esse per se causa individuationis, quia per individuationem intelligo illam *indivisibilitatem sive repugnantiam ad divisibilitatem*”.

4.3.3 *Open Questions*

Since Plato, the question of individuality – what is the being and the knowledge of it as “that being” – has been the subject of debate, drawing the interest of numerous philosophers who have sought to clarify a seemingly unsolvable question. On the basis of a long tradition, in the twentieth century Edith Stein returned to the question of the *principium individuationis* and, aware of both the Thomist position of the *materia signata quantitate* and that of the Franciscan Friar Duns Scotus regarding the “*ultima realitas entis*”, drew up an “original” theory by linking the scholastic tradition to phenomenological philosophy. She did not apply the terms handed down by tradition acritically and naively, but on the contrary sought to clarify their meaning, and thus to “illustrate” them by means of her own terminology.

While her metaphysical structure is similar to Duns Scotus’ doctrine of being, her interpretative key remains the Husserlian notion of “*constitution*”: when consciousness is directed towards something, it intends or constitutes that thing as some *kind* of thing, and in our case, the perception of singularity is assumed to be “a *particular* type of thing” that emerges in its singular features. For Stein, the correct understanding of the essential structure of our being probably becomes a priority with respect to the knowledge of reality achieved by means of material perception.

Using the medieval tradition as a starting point, Stein takes up the challenge of founding, on the basis of a solid metaphysical structure, a new ontology of the person that is able to grasp the “full” meaning of its being, and thus finds the “way” to reach the foundation of the eternal being. The intangible nature of singularity is unique and precious in the sight of God and “it does not seem fitting to see in its essence or nature a *species* that can be individualized (*vereinzeln*) in a multiplicity of alike structures”¹⁹⁶; indeed, if it was so, how could He dwell in each one of us? When we believe we have discovered the human being, we find ourselves dealing with something that we could never express in terms of generic properties nor classify as a “type”, by virtue of its singularity which makes it an absolutely “unique” being.

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¹⁹⁶Stein E. (2006), p. 425. English translation, p. 508.

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Chapter 5

Conclusion

I shall now present the conclusion to this study, bearing in mind the objectives set out in the *Introduction*.

In Chap. 2, I sought to present a summary of the convergences among the authors of the Göttingen circle regarding the use of Scotus' doctrines. Husserl himself makes reference to Scotus, albeit only in an *excerptum*. In fact, my research found that in many cases the work of these authors was oriented towards *pseudo-Scotist* sources, for example Heidegger, who makes reference to a text that was actually by Thomas of Erfurt. Stein and Conrad-Martius were introduced to the conceptual universe of Duns Scotus (in reality Vitalis de Furno) as a consequence of the help they gave to Koyré for the translation of his work *Essai sur l'idée de Dieu et les preuves de son existence chez Descartes* in 1921. It was only possible to obtain these results by systematic consultation of Stein's letters, especially the letters she wrote to Conrad-Martius, which show clearly that Stein's interest, and hence the convergences with and towards Scotist themes, was manifested years before the considerable interest she subsequently showed in the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas.

It was necessary to conduct a close reading of chapter VII of *Finite and Eternal Being*,¹ where the author states that the *Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio* are by Scotus and cites a paper by P. Ephrem Longpré as affirming their authenticity. However, consultation of this article shows that in reality Longpré was not referring to the *Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio*, but to *De primo omnium rerum principio*, which is a completely different work. Stein was working with an edition that included both texts, and appears to have confused them. This interpretation is confirmed by the fact that Marianus Müller, who edited the annotated edition of *De primo omnium rerum principio* (actually a *Tractatus*, a completely different genre from the *Quaestiones*), published in 1941, also cited Longpré in affirming that Scotus was its true author.

¹ See reproduction of manuscript, Figs. 2.1 and 2.2 in Chap. 2.

By consulting all XXVI *Quaestiones*, which are all contained in codex Is, it was possible to establish that the first XVI *Quaestiones* are also found in codex T, while the subsequent ones (XVI–XXVI) are found in codex V (for further details the reader is referred to the descriptions in Sect. 2.2.1. of Chap. 2 and the synopsis in Table 1 above). A careful study of the three codices, aimed at understanding the relationships between them, established beyond doubt that the author of all 26 *Quaestiones* is the Franciscan Vitalis de Furno. He thus became the unwitting source of the pseudo-Scotist doctrines for both Stein and Conrad-Martius and ultimately Alexandre Koyré. In this regard it was considered necessary, partly to allow for greater critical precision regarding Stein's works, to reconstruct Vitalis de Furno's main work and secondary bibliography (many documents of which were not easy to find) in their entirety. The result was a meticulous study of his works and their attribution, particularly the *Quaestiones*.

Once Stein's sources on the theme of individuation had been ascertained, in Chap. 3 our focus was first and foremost on the Scotist doctrine of the principle of individuation. The first step was to reconstruct the historical medieval context that induced so many philosophers, including Scotus, to become involved in the debate over individuation. The study of the great Scottish philosopher evidenced enormous difficulties, regarding not so much where to find his doctrines pertaining to individuation (mainly in the *Ordinatio*) as his dense terminological stratification, a symptom of the author's own evolution over time with respect to key concepts. Faced with this shifting terminology, even Scotus' disciples found themselves obliged to resolve problems of interpretation by coining new terms such as *haecceitas*, which led unwittingly to further terminological and interpretative stratifications.

Annotated editions of Scotus' works currently reflect two schools of thought: one linked to the International Scotist Commission (Commissione Scotista) in Rome and the other linked to the Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure University in New York State. According to the former, the two works in question, the *Ordinatio* and the *Quaestiones super libros metaphysicorum* (Q. XIII), represent two stages in Scotus' writings, the more mature of which is clearly the *Ordinatio*; in contrast, the view of the latter school is that the mature Scotus is seen in *Quaestio XIII*. We felt it was appropriate to begin the examination of Scotus' works with the *Ordinatio*, analysing *Quaestiones* I–VI therein, since it is here that Scotus tackles the theme of individuation via the assessment and confutation of those views that contrasted with his own.

Scotus shows how the principle of individuation must be intrinsic, positive and unique, and that it cannot be attributed to the accidental properties that characterise each being, such as quantity and matter: individuation is deducible neither from matter nor from form, nor yet from the compound of matter and form; its true origin is the “ultima realitas entis”.

Once this was all established, we looked specifically at *Quaestio XIII*, which, despite resembling the *Ordinatio* in some ways, on the topic of individuation uses quite different terminology. The conceptual immaturity of the Q. XIII with respect to the absolute originality of the *Ordinatio* is exemplified by the reference in the

former to the concept of “*forma individualis*”, a term never used in the *Ordinatio*, which in contrast refers to the concept of “*ultima realitas formae*”. This interpretation is supported by the position of other authors such as Shibuya et al., who argue that, with the concept of “*ultima realitas entis*” as a positive principle, Scotus’ theoretical position goes way beyond the concept of “*forma individualis*”, in which Aristotelian overtones can still be felt.

We sought to highlight how Scotus gradually modified his conception of individuation, starting – it is true – from the concept of “*forma individualis*”, but evolving towards the absolutely new concept of “*ultima realitas entis*”.

Once confident of having determined the content of Scotus’ position on individuation, in Chap. 4 we moved on to Stein’s work² on the issue of the nature or the constitutive element of the human being and its singularity. We began with Stein’s book on empathy, her first work, since it is precisely in this context that Stein poses the question of what is meant by individuality when she asserts that this I “is ‘itself’ and no other”.³ This made it necessary to reconstruct the sources of the unitary nature of the I, which Stein saw as important. In an entirely spontaneous way, her work on empathy brought her closer to Scotus in another respect: Stein considered individuality/singularity, i.e. what distinguishes personality as such, as not entirely knowable. For Stein there could be no “total” knowledge or explication of the singularity of the person: the most that could be obtained was an *intuitive* accessibility, via spiritual perception by feeling (*das Fühlen*). In this way the person can be spiritually “felt” in its singularity, with its distinctive imprint, but cannot be explicated in any form of discursive knowledge.

For Stein, from *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities* onwards, individuation has an absolutely unique qualitative imprint that “tinges” first and foremost its so-called personal “nucleus”; in the final part of this work, after Stein highlights the precise “locus” of the person in the said “nucleus”, it is possible to discern a parallel between Scotus’ concept of “*ultima solitudo*” and the “immanent aloneness (*Verlassenheit*)” referred to by Stein. She starts by dispelling any remaining doubt concerning the non-determinability of the nucleus by the quantitative and numerical elements inherent in singularity, which are merely secondary elements in its determination. She then points out that individuation is situated beyond the reach of any possible psychic or material determination. Indeed, it is the unsuppressible properties of this nucleus, its immutability, consistency and permanence, that confer a certain path on the development of the person and not the other way round: it is not the development of the person that forges the nucleus, but rather the nucleus that determines the psychic and/or material evolution of the person. No quantitative determination therefore – and this is what my work highlights – can undermine any qualitative element that characterises the nucleus of the person, which Stein insists

²Having already tackled these issues in other studies, I made reference to the parallel doctrines of Conrad-Martius on individuation. For a treatment of this point the reader is referred to Alfieri F. (2010).

³Stein E. (2008), p. 54. English translation, p. 38.

lies outside spatio-temporality, since every instance of spatio-temporality entails a reference to either the formal or the material conditions of determination.

This “*ultima solitudo*” is considered by Stein, just as it was by Scotus, to be an ontological limit that must be overcome: a state of being in oneself, a state of being in contact with the *depth* of one’s I, requires a subsequent “opening up”. *Ultima solitudo* and depth must enable the transcendence of the I towards the others, i.e. towards forms of community life: only by living in this ineffable depth, the nexus of every personal act, can the person then find himself or herself in the world, in the *Gemeinschaft*. It is worth dwelling for a moment on the ontological statute that Stein appears to either confer on (or discover in) this *ultima solitudo* that characterises the being of the human person: although it characterises the human being as such, although it concerns every person as such, this *ultima solitudo* should not be understood in Stein’s view as a specifically universal characteristic or trait, *nor can it be universalised*. Its mode of adherence to the human person, in reality inextricable, is dictated by its colouring and by its being felt by a particular *Stimmung* that can only be individual. It is precisely the presence of this emotional tonality, able to instil in every human being the ability to recognise one’s depth as unique, that makes any notion of a “universalised” *ultima solitudo* impossible.

At this point the metaphysical questions that Stein had drawn from medieval philosophy come together with the analyses and results obtained using a descriptive-phenomenological approach. Indeed, in *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person*, she affirms that a philosophy is radical to the extent that it seeks to reach the ultimate fundamental structures of the human being. Once the possibility of any extrinsic principle for the determination of the person has been ruled out, the individuation of the intrinsic principle may begin; it must lie in the *empty form* together with its qualitative filling, because it is only from this that the individual acquires a unity of meaning in its full totality.

In the light of this, it was then possible to move on to a consideration of *Potency and Act* and its treatment of the problem of individuation. It was pointed out that Stein, following Husserl in terms of his general approach to formal and material ontology, was able to fit these doctrines within medieval (specifically Thomist and, more remotely, Aristotelian) categories in order to strengthen a concept of individuation, in its uniqueness, which is rooted in the already established concept of personal nucleus (*kern*). The fundamental result, which needs to be emphasised here, is that in this work Stein does not accept any determination of the principle of individuation that can, in the Thomistic sense, be traced back to quantitative conditions of matter (*materia signata quantitate*, as formed matter). The disagreements with respect to Thomas Aquinas are also highlighted and supported by Bottin’s authoritative reading. The alternative interpretation to the one set out in this study, according to which the principle of individuation in Stein follows Thomistic principles, manifesting itself via the formal components of the individual, is thus without foundation. This is in fact attempted by Rosa Errico, whose approach however runs into difficulty concerning the fact that for Stein the principle of individuation lay outside any material or formal condition, something which had been clear to her ever since her indirect contact with Scotus’ *Ordinatio*.

This becomes even clearer on consulting chapter VIII of *Finite and Eternal Being*, in which, for Stein, the *materia signata quantitate* of the Thomist tradition cannot be the foundation of individuality because it leaves us embroiled in the generic relationship of matter and form, which, being of an entirely general nature, tells us nothing of the individual person or thing. Indeed, Stein echoed Duns Scotus in seeing “the *principium individuationis* as something that has the marks of a positive existent [*etwas positiv Seiendes*]”, and is such insofar as it is founded not on a simple *Leerform*, but on a positive quality of the being that acquires visibility in its *concreteness* (*Konkretion*). The latter is presented in *Potency and Act* as a particular way – an inherent human characteristic – of finding individualisation, given that for human beings an individualisation in the sense of the specification of the fundamental categories of being is not sufficient. According to Stein, the authentic *tode ti* in the personality is reached not by running through all the formal categories of the being as *ens*, the being as *esse*, the *object*, the *what*, the *how* (categories that derive from formal ontology reinterpreted in an Aristotelian-Thomist key), but – since it represents concretion – by placing it or causing it to fit directly into self-sufficiency. In this sense the *principium individuationis* cannot be derived from an approach that concerns itself solely with the specification of variously intertwined genera and species alone. On the contrary, it is something that can be seen at work in human reality only when grasped from the point of view of *qualitative fullness*, itself something of a paradox in that it makes reference to ontological layers such as depth and *ultima solitudo*.

Our reading of Stein’s works should also be seen as situated within the modern tendency towards a naturalisation of the personality. This demonstrates, on a phenomenological basis, that the concepts of “*ultima solitudo*” and “personal nucleus”, which are immutable and intangible since they ensure the total idiosyncrasy of personal individuality regardless of any material (quantifiable) and formal element, do not allow for the consideration of the primary aspect of each person in terms of any earthly category, whether this be qualitative (sociological) or quantitative (neuroscientific). From my point of view, the territory explored by Stein casts doubt on the possibility and appropriateness of a “naturalisation” of phenomenology, as well as the means by which this may be accomplished. Of course, this assumes that in the intentions of its supporters, the naturalisation of phenomenology, which is the science of the qualitative complexity of the being *par excellence*, must enter (or at least seek to enter) the specific territory of the personality. Some questions arising from naturalisation, to the extent to which they have a bearing on the definition of the *Essential Identity* of an individual,⁴ claim to derive the human personality from bio-psycho-physiological factors that are unique to each person.⁵ From my point of view this cannot be admitted, given that these features belong to the quantitative factors which – despite conditioning the development of the person – are quite separate from what truly qualifies the person according to Stein. As I have already highlighted, I do not accept that the same essential elements of human individuality,

⁴ See De Monticelli R. (2006), p. 364.

⁵ See *ibid.*

i.e. its uniqueness and depth,⁶ lend themselves to essentialisation: they cannot, that is, be part of a concept of Essential Identity, which would inevitably entail the moment of universalisation. For Stein, being a person means *feeling* oneself to be surrounded by an incommensurable depth in an *ultima solitudo*, qualitative elements that cannot be treated on the same level as universal invariants that are susceptible to some kind of formalisation. Indeed, as has been pointed out at length in the current work, Stein sees the *principium individuationis* as being situated well apart from any quantitative and formal condition, both instances that can be considered *in specie*.

More generally, what emerges is the difficulty in the naturalisation of phenomenology with reference to human beings, given that the scientific and quantitative interpretation has been called into doubt by phenomenology itself. Indeed, on the question of how a naturalisation of phenomenology is not possible – in the full debate between the quantitative and “qualitative” dimensions of the phenomenon itself – Angela Ales Bello argues that “within the phenomenological school the idea persists that the scientific reading of nature – and indeed of human beings – cannot provide an exhaustive understanding of it; the need for a philosophy of nature that highlights its qualitative elements remains”.⁷

Of course, research in this field is open, as the scientific community should be, but I believe that a position that is theoretically respectful of the persona as such and of the anthropological specificity of the human being cannot dispense with the features that Stein’s phenomenology assigned to personal individuality, which constitute a cultural and philosophical resource at our disposal.

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⁶With no wish to conduct a polemic, I would like to point out here that although it does cite Leibniz, De Monticelli’s analysis lacks any reference to Stein, which however at this point is essential. Given the “classical” nature of the theme of depth in Stein’s works, suitable references to her would perhaps have been more relevant than a comparison with authors such as van Inwagen and Baker, on whose “classical” nature history has yet to give its verdict. Furthermore, there is an evident close affinity between the concepts deployed by De Monticelli, including “depth” and the “hidden reality” of the soul (See *ibid.* p. 362), with the Steinian notions of *ultima solitudo*, *interior castle* (*Seelenburg*), *depth of the soul*, etc.

⁷Ales Bello A. (2012), p. 38 (our translation).

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Postface

Eidetic Thought and Medieval Paradigm

“A voice”, for example that of a street-seller calling the attention of passers-by, “despite being unique and identical only to itself”, is heard and thus “shared by many listeners” in many ways that differ from each other. And yet it is always recognised by all “as one and the same voice”. Men and women, young and old, even irrational animals, every aware subject perceives what all hear in their own special way, depending on the subject’s location, physical condition, interior faculties, emotional state and the degree of interest they have in the sound and its meaning. How the sound is perceived also depends on its evocative capacity and its relationship to silence and the other voices that accompany it. Yet all concur that it is the sound of one voice. And despite the diversity of each individual perception, all are convinced that it is and remains identical in itself, in the intensity and frequency with which it is emitted by its source, without this objective identity being altered by the many different perceptions that it produces.

In the fifth chapter of his treatise on *Divine Names*, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite uses this effective simile to illustrate concisely his conception of the eternal pre-existence in God – i.e. in the divine *causae primordiales* – of the manifold effects of his infinite causation. The supreme Cause is the only reality existing as the true “principle”. Indeed, it is causal not because of its relationship with the effects, but because it possesses in itself full productive effectiveness: it has no other cause other than itself, and “contains all things in its perfect identity, in accordance with a multiplicity that is pure simplification”. Its identity is full and absolute unity, superior to any finite unity, which is always a relative individualisation, relying for its existence on the distinction between itself and other finite complications and pluralities. “And all things participate in the Cause, although it remains above all a

single, in itself undiversified thing”, and it must be recognised as such by all the particular subjects capable of knowing it.¹

God is the pure being. A continuous and uninterrupted line of thought running throughout the Latin Middle Ages affirms with Augustine that the pure being coincides with the truth: God *is* the truth, while true things share in the truth. Indeed, nothing can exist without in some way being knowable as existing; and the prime cause of being is also the prime cause of the knowability of all things.² According to the unanimous orientation of late-ancient, medieval and modern Christian thinkers, every finite thing *is* and *is knowable* insofar as it is part of a *system* of relations and comparisons with other things. But this entire system exists, and in it subsists the ultimate reason for everything that is truly thinkable, insofar as above it there reigns a higher thinkability: that to which the *principle in itself* is subject, considering that in order to exist and to be a cause, that principle does not depend on any other cause (as an effect of it), nor does it exist as a consequence of being thought by something. On the contrary, from this principle, by the simple fact of being thought by it, arises everything that exists. God is the principle of Himself, without depending on any of the things that are caused. On the contrary, He is the principle, but not because things depend on His being the principle: He is the pure principle, not in that He is the principle of something, but insofar as He is *the* principle. He is thus the pure being and the pure knowable; His being is not conditioned by anything that is, and His being knowable and true is not guaranteed by anything able to know Him and to know His truth.

For this reason the words in our language which we use to speak of God in a meaningful way (i.e. with the intention of being truthful) are all necessarily and inevitably *transcendental*: they are effective and able to justify the sense of every other meaningful physical word that draws its meaning from them; but they are not authentically predicable except of the pure Principle, which is One without being the beginning of any multiplicity; which is Identical and Eternal without being comparable with any difference and without being affected by any tendency to

¹ See Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (1990), 5, 9–10 (*Patrologia Graeca* 3, 825A), p. 188, 17 – p. 189, 7. Latin version by Johannes Scotus Eriugena (*Patrologia Latina* 122, 1150D–115A): “Omnia ergo huic [i. e. Causae divinae] existentia secundum unam omnium excelsam scientiam referendum, quoniam quidem ex esse substantifica processione et bonitate inchoans, et per omnia veniens, et omnia ex seipsa ut sint implens [...]. Omnia autem similiter continet secundum super-simplicatam suam multitudinem, et ab omnibus singulariter participatur: sicut et vox una existens et eadem a multis audientibus velut una participatur. Omnium ergo principium et finis existentium”. This pseudo-Dionysian text was used by Hugo Etherianis, a Latin theologian working in Constantinople in the second half of the twelfth century, in a context that was particularly significant for the evolution of the methodology of medieval metaphysical and theological knowledge: see d’Onofrio (2012a). In this and the following citations in the text and the footnotes, the italics are mine. In one or two cases in the citations I have adjusted the punctuation used in the cited editions.

² See Augustine of Hippo (1962), *De vera religione*, 36, 66 (*Patrologia Latina* 34, 151), p. 230, 14 – p. 231, 1: “Illa est *veritas* quae id implere potuit et id esse quod illud est. Ipsa est quae illud ostendit, sicut est”; Augustine of Hippo (1998), II, 16, 24 (*Patrologia Latina* 34, 208), p. 146, 15–16: “Particeps enim veritatis potest esse anima humana: *ipsa autem veritas Deus* est incommutabilis supra illam”.

change; which is True without being knowable by any created knowing subject, which is able to know only imperfect forms and provisional manifestations of His original Truth.

God's Truth, which is the truth of every true thing, exists in itself with no relationship to any other truth. And if all true things share in this Truth, it is because they can be true and able to relate to other true things. For intelligent beings this means their ability to study true things, but without ever being able to study the Truth in itself, because they will never be able to know it in its unity and incomparable non-alterability. With reference to the exceptional speculative effort of the masters of later Greek Neoplatonism, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite points out that while the Truth makes all things true, none of them makes the Truth true, and for this reason no finite subject can grasp its original essence. God-Truth, a *vox* that all listen to but nobody truly apprehends, may also be compared to a seal (σφραγίς, *signum*) that leaves the mark of its operation on all sealed things but does not derive its ability to seal from them. On the contrary, it maintains this ability even when not actually deployed, even when there are no sealed things (either because they do not yet exist or because they no longer exist). And to the objection that the seal is not everything and is not the same in its various impressions, we may respond that "the cause of this is not the seal, which is entirely identical in each case", but is rather "the diversity of the things" on which the seal is impressed, which causes its manifestations to vary. Quoting once more the words of Pseudo-Dionysius, Truth is like the centre of a perfect circle (κύκλος, *circulus*), which subsists as the origin of all the radii leading to all the points of the circumference without any of these being the cause of its status as the centre: the radii simultaneously run towards the centre and run from it; the further they are from the centre the more it is necessary to distinguish them and describe them in their differentiated singularity, while the more they converge on it, the more similar they are to each other.³

³ See Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (1990), 5, 6 (*Patrologia Graeca* 3, 821A), p. 185, 4–10; Latin version (*Patrologia Latina* 122, 1149B): "Et in centro omnes circuli lineae secundum primam unitatem consubstitutae sunt. Et omnes habet *signum* in semetipso simplas uniformiter unitas ad se invicem, et ad unum principium, ex quo procedebant, et in ipso quidem centro universaliter adunantur. Breviter autem eo distantes, breviter et discernuntur: magis autem recedentes, magis. Et simpliciter, quanto centro proximiores sunt, tantum et ipsi et sibi invicem adunantur: et quantum eo, tantum et a se invicem distant". See also *ibid.* 2, 5 (*Patrologia Graeca* 3, 644AB), p. 129, 4–9; Latin version (*Patrologia Latina* 1122CD): "Et hoc etiam commune, et unitum, et unum est toti deitati, omnem ipsam totam ab unoquoque participantium participari, et a nullo iterum nulla parte: sicut rota in medio *circuli* ab omnibus in circulo circumpositis rectis lineis, et sicut *signo* efformata multa participant principalis exempli signo, et in unoquoque efformatorum toto et eodem existente, et in nullo secundum nullam partem". See Thomas Aquinas (1856), *Scriptum super Sententias*, I, q. 1, a. 2. s.c. 1, Vol. VI, p. 6a: "Sed divina scientia determinat de rebus per rationem divinam quae omnia complectitur: omnia enim et ab ipso et ad ipsum sunt. Ergo ipsa una existens potest de diversis esse"; Thomas Aquinas (1950), cap. 5, lect. 3, p. 250, §§ 670–672 (in italics are the words of Dionysius quoted above in note 1): "*Omnia* in esse *continet* et conservat *secundum* simplicem sui infinitam unitatem. [...] Singularis et una existens *participatur* ab omnibus, sicut *et vox, una et eadem existens, participatur a multis audientibus*: est enim vox una secundum principium, multiplex vero secundum diffusionem. [...] Divina essentia est *principium omnium existentium et finis*".

Recognisable everywhere, God's Truth is never really intelligible in itself when it appears in the limited conditions of phenomena. From this observation follow considerations that are highly important for theology. For example, being the 'creator' is not, in God, a consequence of His relationship with created things, but rather an absolute property of His being one and purely true: otherwise His essence would share in other things, and together with all other things He would be derived from what He shares in. In the same way, being 'provident' is not in Him a consequence of His love for created things; on the contrary, He loves His creation because, incomprehensibly, He is in Himself 'provident' in the same moment in which He is the 'creator'. Furthermore, God is 'just', without being moved by any desire for justice; He is 'merciful', without feeling any compassion. But then, consistently with this, even His being 'Three as One' is a property of His being a pure and perfect 'principle', not the mere consequence of a relationship with the finite numerosity of the diverse.⁴

By following to the limit this contemplative approach to the perfection of the One, human beings can also thus analyse the truth of what, even before believing, they read in the Scripture concerning the incarnation of the Son, the fundamental mystery of the Christian faith. They can understand how even this unimaginable event, if seen as true and consistent with all the other recognisable truths of the divine (i.e. the transcendental ones), is not a consequence of God's love for sinful humanity, but on the contrary is an effect of the love, absolute and infinite, with which God loves His creation and hopes to be as one with it: thus it is revealed to the mind of the theologian that the divine seeks to be incarnated even before creating; that the divine seeks to enter the time of creation because He has loved it for all eternity. This love is in fact a natural attribute of God's substance; indeed, it *is* God's substance. It is thus not true that the incarnation is the result of creation and the consequence of sin; on the contrary, the creation and redemption are the effect of the Son's incarnation, which is eternally contemplated and desired by the Father, because it is loved by the Spirit.

⁴Explicit on this theme is the thought of Anselm of Canterbury, whose bold theological rationality seeks to understand the words of the Scriptures when they describe the multiple and diversified attributes of God without ever losing sight of the absolute fullness of His superior unity and identity as an absolute principle. See *De processione Spiritus sancti*, 1 (*Patrologia Latina* 158, columns 285B–286A), in Anselm of Canterbury (1946–1961), vol. II, p. 177, 18 – p. 178, 5: “Credunt [*scil. Graeci et Latini*] quidem unum et solum ac perfectum esse Deum, nec ullam eum habere partem, sed totum esse quidquid est. Hunc quoque confitentur esse Patrem, et Filium, et Spiritum sanctum, ita ut si solus dicatur Pater, aut Filius, aut Spiritus sanctus, sive duo simul, Pater et Filius, aut Pater et Spiritus sanctus, aut Filius et Spiritus sanctus, sive tres simul, Pater, Filius, et Spiritus sanctus, *idem totus et perfectus designetur Deus, quamvis non idem significet nomen Patris aut Filii, quod nomen Dei*”. See also *ibid.* 10, 311C–312A, p. 205, 21–30: “Quippe cum dicimus Deum *principium* creaturae, intelligimus Patrem et Filium et Spiritum sanctum *unum principium*, non tria principia, sicut unum Creatorem, non tres creatores, quamvis tres sint Pater et Filius et Spiritus sanctus. [...] Ita, cum Spiritus sanctus dicitur esse de Patre et de Filio, non est de duobus principiis, sed de uno, quod est Pater et Filius, sicut est de uno Deo qui est Pater et Filius”. On the nature of Anselm's *ratio*, see d'Onofrio G. (2008), esp. pp. 285–288.

This deduction stemming from the eternal need for the incarnation, theologically understood as the reason for and not the consequence of human history, evidently coincides with one of the most original and significant themes in the thought of Duns Scotus.⁵ In his thorough analytical study of the constitutive role played by *Doctor Subtilis* as a source or reference point in the formation of the thought of Edith Stein, Francesco Alfieri has highlighted the crucial role played in this context by the Scotist doctrine of the reality of the individual, and more generally, by the themes of philosophical anthropology, particularly as they pertain to contemporary phenomenological reflections in the theoretical and ethical fields. In contrast, one feels compelled to deduce that Stein's attention does not seem to have been drawn to the Scotist theology of the incarnation. From our previous considerations, this is somewhat surprising, since it seems to be a fundamental aspect of the most authentic eidetic thought, and its roots lie in the purest and most ancient theological explorations of early Christian Platonic thought. Nor do either Stein or Heidegger, in their studies of Scotus' anthropology, appear to pay much attention to his significant Mariological reflections. According to the latter, if the incarnate Son of God chose to be born of an immaculate virgin this was not because another form of birth would not have been sufficiently dignified or legitimate for Him, but because the incomprehensible divine love has always loved and will always love the way of His Incarnation, which for all eternity has been foreseeable and envisaged as being exempt from any multiplicity and contamination with the finite or with forms that are only partially a manifestation of the truth. The pure virginity of Mary is the perfect fulfilment of the unity, uncontaminated by accidental element, of the human form.⁶ I believe that Dante Alighieri (a contemporary of Scotus) was inspired by the same order of thought when he composed the verses that are spoken by St Bernard of Clairvaux in praise of the Virgin Mary: "thou art she who didst so *ennoble* human nature that its Maker did not disdain to be made its making".⁷ Dante of course had long insisted in the *Convivio* and the *Commedia* on the theoretical meaning of the "nobility" of human beings as being an approximation of the original perfection of the human *entelechy* or the eternal idea of the *humanitas* in God.

Stein's historical and philosophical reflection on the work of Scotus thus emerges from Francesco Alfieri's study as being dictated by the desire to discover in the scholastic tradition the foundations of – to use the expression proposed by Angela Ales Bello – a "phenomenology of the human being". Given Stein's focus on the evolution of the metaphysics of the individual, in which the Franciscans played a key role from the late thirteenth century onwards, it is natural that such a

⁵ See Duns Scotus J. (1891–1895), *Ordinatio* [= *Opus Oxoniense*] III, d. 19, q. unica, No. 6 (schol.), vol. XIV, p. 714a: "Quantum ad primum dico quod incarnatio Christi non fuit occasionaliter praevisa sed sicut finis immediate videbatur a Deo ab aeterno, ita Christus in natura humana cum sit propinquior fini caeteris prius praedestinabatur, loquendo de his quae praedestinantur".

⁶ See *ibid.* *Ordinatio* III, d. 3, q. 1, vol. XIV, pp. 159–176; *ibid.* *Reportata parisiensia* III, d. 3, q. 1, vol. XXIII, pp. 261–267.

⁷ See Dante Alighieri (1961), XXXIII, 4–6, p. 479.

phenomenology was oriented by what Alfieri in this study calls “*convergences* towards Scotist doctrines”. Alfieri’s success in this regard also shows how important it was for the maturation of the phenomenological method to verify its applicability to the themes of medieval metaphysics. And yet, indirectly, it also highlights how many potential opportunities to extend this relationship between phenomenology and medieval thought were left unexplored and undeveloped in the work of Stein herself and the other phenomenologists of the twentieth century. Aside from the question of individuation, tackled by phenomenological studies with particular attention to the Scotist doctrine of *haecceitas*, the encounter with the works of *Doctor Subtilis* – if adequately contextualised in a historiographically open framework, free of any prejudicial orientations – may have been able to generate or at least initiate, with far more penetrating clarity, a broader and more fruitful constructive methodological comparison between the general foundations of Christian knowledge (projected over the course of almost 15 centuries) and those of contemporary phenomenology. Edith Stein above all – as Alfieri’s inquiries incontrovertibly demonstrate – would have been able to conduct a productive analysis of the phenomenological significance of some of the key themes of Platonic and Augustinian speculation in the Middle Ages and early modern epoch, extending the results beyond the ethical and anthropological sphere. Indeed, her interest in scholastic thought was rooted precisely in her adherence to Husserlian methodology and the consistency of the philosophical dimension with its theological counterpart, which has been typical of Christian thought since its origins. If this did not happen, the reason must be sought in the fact that in the early decades of the twentieth century, studies of the history of medieval philosophy were – all things considered – still in an initial and exploratory phase. Such a state of affairs was not yet conducive to an adequate understanding of many of its speculative trains of thought, not only on an anthropological level but also in logical and epistemological terms and above all regarding metaphysical knowledge.

Duns Scotus himself generously dedicated much effort to the long and subtle search, Neoplatonist in its origins, for a ‘metaphysics’ that was founded solely on the direct perception of the truth in itself regarding the causes and principles of reality, and not – like the ‘*prima philosophia*’ of the Islamic-peripatetic tree of knowledge – on a comparison *a posteriori* with the criteria and outcomes of the sciences that were subordinated to it. Refusing to make any concession to *analogy* between spheres of knowledge subordinated to different processes of epistemological validation, he invited Christian theologians to grasp the opportunity provided by the self-manifestation of the divine in the revelation to contemplate directly the *univocal nature* of the Being in itself. He also urged them to recognise the semantic identity of the notion of the Being in itself with the absolute meaning of the transcendental notions of metaphysics, the closest to its simple perfection and the least contaminated by comparison with its finite and multiple manifestations in the natural order. According to Scotus, it is precisely among these impure expressions of the being that the numerous sciences inferior to metaphysics are obliged to wander, building

slender bridges of barely consistent arguments between notions that correspond only indirectly to the specific reality of their objects.⁸

In fact however, despite Scotus' reputation as a revolutionary with respect to the scholastic thought of his day, his 'reform' of metaphysical knowledge was preceded by numerous other thinkers over the course of the centuries from the late Ancient period to the Middle Ages. An uninterrupted tradition of thought had affirmed that our understanding of the authentic attributes of the One, identical to the highest revealed truths, could not be subordinated to their comparability with the finite modes of the being. According to Neoplatonist theology, which had long ago been harmonised with the revelation by the Fathers of the Church and then welcomed with almost disarming spontaneity by numerous witnesses in the course of the early Middle Ages, the human mind must not attempt to fathom the unitary nature and absolute subsistence of the Divine Cause, trying to understand God's properties by means of its own habitual processes of relative distinction and comparison. Ultimately, God is not One because He appears not to be multiple when compared to the multiple; if anything it is the multiple, when compared with the One, which displays its inability to be one. The Oneness of God does not arise from His difference from the multiple. In God, Oneness (and also the Trinity for that matter) means nothing more than the perfect absence of multiplicity (and indeed, of any relation with multiplicity).

This means, however, that precisely because the purest connotations of the infinite principle cannot be understood except insofar as they are directly and univocally synonymous with its absolute simplicity, it must conversely be admitted that the truth of all the specific connotations of any finite entity is identifiable by our intelligence – once again on the basis of the principle of *relative distinction* – only because it is determined as such by the divine principle. On the basis of spontaneous acts of productive knowledge, God creates finite things by thinking of them as determined and distinct, unrepeatable in their singular subsistence – an operation that in Scotus corresponds to the principle of (so-called) *haecceitas*.⁹ In other words,

⁸ See Duns Scotus J. (1954), *Ordinatio* I d. 3, p. 1, q. 3, No. 137, p. 85, 12–22: “Dico quod primum obiectum intellectus nostri est ens, quia in ipso concurrens duplex primitas, scilicet communitatis et virtualitatis, nam omne per se intelligibile aut includit essentialiter rationem entis, vel continetur virtualiter vel essentialiter in includente essentialiter rationem entis: omnia enim genera et species et individua, et omnes partes essentielles generum, et ens increatum includunt ens quidditative; omnes autem differentiae ultimae includuntur in aliquibus istorum essentialiter, et omnes passionnes entis includuntur in ente et in suis inferioribus virtualiter. Ergo illa quibus ens non est univocum dictum in ‘quid’, includuntur in illis quibus ens est sic univocum”.

⁹ See Duns Scotus J. (1973) *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 6, Nos. 187–188, p. 483: “Omnis entitas quidditativa – sive partialis sive totalis – alicuius generis est de se indifferenter ‘ut entitas quidditativa’ ad hanc entitatem et illam, ita quod ‘ut entitas quidditativa’ est naturaliter prior ista entitate ut haec est, – et ut prior est naturaliter, sicut non convenit sibi esse hanc, ita non repugnat sibi ex ratione sua suum oppositum. [...] Non est igitur ‘ista entitas’ materia vel forma vel compositum, in quantum quodlibet istorum est ‘natura’, sed est ultima realitas entis”.

God does not know finite things because they are, but they *are* because God, freely and actively, knows them as finite.

Metaphysical-theological knowledge of the human mind is thus invited to contemplate a truth that is simultaneously that of the highest assertions on divine reality (the *transcendentalia*) and that of all the cognitive and argumentative determinations of the specific sciences. If the truth of all things is in God and God alone is the principle of their being true, then the reality of each thing that is not God lies in its being known by God, who thereby guarantees its objective reality and finite truth. This reality-truth of the creature lies in its being eternally thought and wanted by the Creator, i.e. planned and destined to actualise a series of potentialities inherent in its very existence as something distinct from other things, and yet effectively real only in the overall concert of the innumerable other things that are thought, wanted and planned by the same cause of its being.

When the pagan philosophers of the early Roman imperial period rebuked the bearers of the Christian message for spreading fantastical and baseless notions, proclaimed and defended by fanatics purely out of superstition and supercilious ignorance, the apostles of the new religion understood that they needed to respond to these criticisms by highlighting the comprehensive doctrinal consistency of their faith: and their more subtle members understood that in order to do this it was essential to turn these accusations on their head. Thus they sought to show that human rationality, which in the ancient system of thought purports to be the judge of the divine and its manifestations, actually needs to be far more modest; rather, it should be seen as capable of no more than a limited participation, the work of intelligent creatures, in the divine knowledge of the perfection of the universe, which is the only full, superior and validatory knowledge for all inferior knowledge. In fact, many ancient philosophers themselves conceded that the unified ascent of humanity towards the understanding of the truth can only be assured by the cohesion of every individual act of knowledge by finite minds in a superior, all-embracing and eternal *Logos*. It is precisely by including within itself all individual things that such a *Logos* wants them, produces them, causes them to be and to become, governs them and guides them towards righteousness.

Like the *vox*, the centre of the circle or the seal of the Pseudo-Dionysian metaphors, the divine *Logos* is the cause and substance of the truth, or true reality, in which individual creatures can share: from the stone that knows only the weight of its body, obliging its parts to adhere firmly to each other, to the angel that approaches, in the highest sense possible for a limited being, full knowledge, which is the exclusive prerogative of the *Logos*. Manifesting itself to each individual intelligence via the knowability of creatures as limited forms of truth, i.e. as finite *logoi*, and enabling itself to be loved when the individual loves creatures as limited forms of righteousness, the universal *Logos* is basically the only object of knowledge and desire of all creatures. Thus, a markedly *phenomenological* reading of the relationships between the knowing subject and known object was grafted precisely on to metaphysical *exemplarism* – reinvented by Christian cultural civilisation on the Platonic model and already adapted by the Fathers of the Church to the biblical scheme of the relationships between creator and creature – from whence it grew and spread, more or less consciously, throughout speculative Christian civilisation.

The aspiration of individual created intelligences, both human and angelic, to verify the outcomes of their limited acts of will and knowledge by achieving – consistent with their possibilities – the maximum harmony with the vision of the *Logos* is clearly founded on the assumption that finite minds are obliged to know and to desire in accordance with specific prospective orientations, and are inevitably prompted to conduct constant verifications of the potential capacity for sharing their own positions with a plurality of other subjects that are ‘normal’ (i.e. that accept the same ‘norms’ that regulate their interior acts of will and knowledge). Historically, this change of perspective took place in the late-ancient to early medieval period, i.e. before the rediscovery of Aristotelian epistemology, when theologians and intellectuals invited the various human subjects to jointly base the verification of their limited knowledge on the elementary formal criteria of the liberal arts in general and dialectics (or logic) in particular: in other words, on a ‘normative’ doctrine of science that could be accepted as being able to reflect, in simple specific forms, absolute science, which was possessed only by the divine intelligence.¹⁰

The first suggestion, barely mentioned but impressive in terms of its lucidity, that human philosophising could be founded in this way on the common reflection of the truth emanating from the universal *Logos* is perhaps to be found in a famous page of the *Stromata* by Clement of Alexandria. This was a comment on the beginnings of theoresis among the ancient pagans which included a fragmentary remark on the first verses of the poem *Peri physeos* by Parmenides of Elea: “in his poem Parmenides [...] says: ‘Observe these things, though they be distant, with the thought that they are fully present’”.¹¹ Clement recognises in these words an exhortation to human minds to seek the objective foundation of their knowledge in choral theoretical harmony with the fact that all truth, perceptible and intelligible, is possessed by the divine intellect, with a single and totalising gaze: “Truly those who hope and those who believe see with their minds the intelligible and the future. Indeed, we say that ‘justice’ exists, and that ‘beauty’ exists, and then we also say that there is a ‘truth’. However we have never seen any of these things with our eyes, but only with the mind”. The believer thus sees with the intellect the same truth that God sees, and which the philosophers tried so hard to grasp: “Now the *Logos* of God says: ‘I am the truth’ (John 14, 6): the *Logos* is thus only to be contemplated with the intellect”. And again: “The idea is the contemplation of God or, as the barbarians [i.e. the Christians] say, the *Logos* of God”.¹² In this way Clement expresses his certainty that natural reasoning – even before being confirmed by revelation – was also able to perceive at least the aspiration common to all finite intelligences to found the uniformity, and thus the objectivity of one’s knowledge processes, on the comparison with the eternal presence of the truth in an intellectual subject that is superior to nature, able to know and to govern the universe.

¹⁰ See d’Onofrio G. (1986).

¹¹ Clement of Alexandria (1960), *Stromata*, V, chap. 2, 15, 5 (= Diels-Kranz, 28.B.4), p. 335.

¹² Ibid. chap. 3, 16, 1–2, p. 336 (our translation).

In this way philosophy recognises the opportunity to postulate an original process of production of the truth, to which, in order to be ‘true’, each single item of knowledge must conform. In addition, philosophy must behave in its research as if this assumption was validated and certain, in the same way in which simple believers have been able to assume it as the foundation of all human progress, harmonising themselves with the vision which of every thing they attribute to divine providence.¹³ Indeed, it is evident that with respect to the natural *logos* of the philosophers – susceptible to corruption because it is based on the articulations of corporal life (as shown by the materialistic theorising of this doctrine proposed by the Stoics) – the Christians, thanks to their faith in the revelation, directly contemplate what the *Logos* itself communicated, in the language of rational creatures, regarding its own reality. Thus, although full contemplation of His incorruptible truth is denied to human beings in the current life, thanks to this communication – freely given – they have been able to travel along the road of knowledge that saves them from corruption and sorrow.

On the extension of this complementarity between *intelligere* and *credere*, Augustine formulated the conviction that the finite mind must be educated by the study of philosophy and science in order to understand how one may ascend from the variability and accidental changeability of the corruptible world to the stability of intelligible forms.¹⁴ In his *De magistro* in particular, he indicates linguistic communication as the instrument that provides human beings with a shared use and enjoyment of the outcomes of knowledge of the intelligible as a stepping stone towards the divine: understood in all cases as a form of *docere*, the function of human language is to conduct a constant dialogue between the actually intelligible and the potentially intelligible, guaranteed by respect for the tools of definition and argumentation established by the theoreticians of the liberal arts.¹⁵ Moreover, in an effective *Sermon* in which he illustrates to the people, among other passages from scripture, St Paul’s announcement to the Corinthians that Christ “is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness” (*1 Cor 1, 30*), Augustine points out that for finite minds, subject to earthly travails, it is possible to grasp, in its full manifestation of the truth and goodness of the Word incarnate, the key that opens for human beings, if they

¹³ See *ibid.* chap. 10, 80, 5 – 81, 1, p. 472.

¹⁴ See Augustine of Hippo (1970), *De libero arbitrio*, I, 2, 4, 11 (*Patrologia Latina* 32, 1224), p. 213, 10–13: “Aderit enim Deus, et nos *intelligere quod credimus* faciet. Praescriptum enim per prophetam gradum, qui ait ‘Nisi credideritis, non intelligetis’ (*Isaiah 7:9, sec. Sept.*), tenere nos bene nobis conscii sumus”.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* *De magistro*, 11, 37–38 (*Patrologia Latina* 32, 1216), p. 195, 37 – p. 196, 46: “Quod ergo intelligo, id etiam credo: at non omne quod credo, etiam intelligo. Omne autem quod intelligo, scio: non omne quod credo, scio. Nec ideo nescio quam sit utile credere etiam multa quae nescio. [...] De universis autem quae intelligimus non loquentem qui personat foris, sed intus ipsi menti praesidentem consulimus veritatem, verbis fortasse ut consulamus admoniti”.

believe, theoretical access (wisdom, *sapientia*) and ethical-practical access (justice, *iustitia*) to the stability of the real in itself: this is nourishment that continuously satisfies and never runs out, because it is food for the inner person, light for the eyes of the soul and the mind.¹⁶ Drawing on the Neoplatonist tradition, like Pseudo-Dionysius, citing the image of the single *vox* that many listen to in different ways and from different perspectives, Augustine also points out that the outcome of this common interior reception of its *sonus* is an *intellectus* (i.e. knowledge of an intelligible order), which is as indivisible as it is sharable. Inscribing itself in the intimate spiritual matter of the soul (“*in corde*”), as if by a “magnum miraculum”, the intelligible sense of the word transforms its accidental and transitory manifestation into something stable and unifying, that leads individual minds to grasp the same knowledge, to desire the same good, to share in the same wisdom and the same justice.¹⁷ The communion of the *intellectus*, produced by the *verbum*, is stable in the minds of those who speak and in the minds of those who listen. It joins the various parties participating in the dialogue in the unity of the meaning, beyond subjective and partial distractions. But if this is the marvellous way in which the volatile and uncertain human word operates, what shall we say then of the divine *Verbum*, incorruptible and stable, which is eternally present in the generation by the

¹⁶ See Augustine of Hippo (1961), *Sermo 28 (De versu Psalmi CIV “Laetetur cor quaerentium Dominum”)*, 2 (*Patrologia Latina* 38, 183), p. 368, 24 – p. 369, 38: “De ipso autem Domino Iesu Christo dictum est quia *factus est nobis iustitia et sapientia* (see 1 Corinthians 1:30). Ecce epulae praeparatae sunt. Iustitia Christus est; nusquam deest; non a coquis praeparatur nobis, nec de transmarinis partibus veluti poma peregrina a negotiatoribus apportatur. Cibus est quem sentit omnis qui sanas fauces habet. Interioris hominis (see Romans 7:22) cibus est qui se ipsum commendans ait: ‘Ego sum panis vivus, qui de coelo descendi’ (John 6:51). Cibus est qui reficit, nec deficit: cibus est qui insumitur, et non consumitur: cibus est qui esurientes satiat, et integer manet. Cum hinc ad mensas vestras discesseritis, nihil tale manducabitis. Quia ergo ad istas epulas convenistis, bene comedite: sed cum abieritis, bene digerite. Bene enim manducat et male digerit, qui audit verbum Dei et non facit: non enim ducit utilem succum, sed crudum ructat indigestione fastidium”.

¹⁷ See *ibid.* *Sermo 28 (De versu Psalmi CIV “Laetetur cor quaerentium Dominum”)*, 4 (*Patrologia Latina* 38, 184), p. 369, 60 – 370, 82: “De his enim sensibus corporis mentis intelligibilia coniciamus. Ecce loquor Charitati vestrae. Adsunt aures, adsunt mentes. Duo quaedam nominavi, aures et mentes; et in eo quod loquor, duo quaedam sunt, sonus et intellectus: simul feruntur, simul ad aurem perveniunt; sonus remanet in aure, intellectus descendit in cor. Sed de sono ipso prius advertamus quanto excellentius intellectum amare debemus. Sonus est quasi corpus, intellectus est quasi animus. [...] Verumtamen sic quomodo quoddam transitorium magnum habet miraculum. Ecce enim si vobis esurientibus panem apponerem, non perveniret ad singulos totum. Divideretis vobis quod posuissem, et quanto plures essetis, tanto minus haberetis. Modo autem sermonem profero, verba inter vos et syllabas non dividitis, nec secatis sermonem meum, ut alius tollat istam partem, alius illam, et sic minutatim et particulatim ad singulos quosque quod dico perveniat. Sed totum audit unus, totum audiunt duo, totum audiunt plures, et quotquot venerint totum audiunt. Et omnibus sufficit, et singulis integrum est: praeparatur ad audiendum auris tua, nec eam fraudat vicina auris aliena”.

Father and temporally effective in the incarnation by the Virgin¹⁸? And what to say of the divine *Intellectus*, God's knowledge of His own Word, which is the truth that is communicated to all individual *intellecti*, guaranteeing their agreement? Just as the natural word, passing from ear to ear, generates in human individuals the same unifying intelligence, when they hear the unifying and utterly true divine Word, what is generated in finite minds is the same divine Intellect: in accordance with a high but clear intuition – which Augustine dispenses, with the simplicity of the great masters, to the faithful who listen to his preaching – the Word *regenerates itself* in the minds of individual human beings when they know the truth, and in the minds of all human beings when they share it. In this way, each can be the real locus of their renewed incarnation.¹⁹

The authentic philosopher (“*verus philosophus*”²⁰) is thus he or she who can teach not so much (or not only) the truth (which is already possessed by whoever believes, in the word of the Scripture), and not so much (or not only) what is good (which is in the law of the Gospel), but the way in which the mind and the will of the individual can approach truth and goodness in the mind and the will of the divine, received and universalised in agreement with all conscious and loving souls. Augustine is a “true philosopher” when – as in this exceptional sermon – he teaches the people by ‘speaking’ to the individual *logos* of the divine *Logos*. This is because he helps, by means of his mission as a teacher and preacher, and thus as a theologian, the Christ of history to be reborn in the story of the sharing of the Church in the truth of the eternal Christ. This is the meaning of the attribution to the second person of the Trinity of the name of Wisdom: Christ is universal knowledge, i.e.

¹⁸ See *ibid.* *Sermo 28 (De versu Psalmi CIV “Laetetur cor quaerentium Dominum”)*, 4, p. 370, 82–90: “Si hoc fit de verbo sonante, quid fit de Verbo omnipotente? Quomodo enim vox ista nostra auribus omnium audientium singulis tota est et apud singulos tota est; nec tot sunt meae voces quot vestrae aures, sed una vox multas aures implet, non divisa, sed omnibus tota: sic cogitate Verbum Dei totum in coelis, totum in terris, totum in angelis, totum apud Patrem, totum apud Virginem, totum in aeternitate, totum in carne, totum ad inferos, cum visitaret, totum in paradiso, quo latro-nem transtulit”.

¹⁹ See *ibid.* *Sermo 28 (De versu Psalmi CIV “Laetetur cor quaerentium Dominum”)*, 5 (*Patrologia Latina* 38, 184–185), p. 370, 91 – p. 371, 108: “Quid, si de intellectu aliquid dicam? Et quanto minus est quam Verbum Dei? Ecce enim sonum profero. Sed cum protulero, iam non revoco. Sed si volo audiri, alterum sonum profero, et cum ipse transierit, profero alterum, aut silentium consequetur. Intellectum vero et profero ad te, et teneo apud me. Et invenis quod audisti, et non perdo quod dixi. [...] Dominus enim ipsa principalis veritas est. Intellectus ergo manens in corde meo migrat ad tuum, nec deserit meum. Verumtamen cum intellectu inest cordi meo, et volo ut insit etiam cordi tuo, quaero qua ad te transeat quasi vehiculum sonum; et assumo sonum, et quasi impono intellectum, et profero, et produco, et doceo et non amitto. Si potuit hoc facere intellectus meus de voce mea, non potuit Verbum Dei de carne sua? Ecce enim Verbum Dei Deus apud Deum, sapientia Dei manens incommutabiliter apud Patrem, ut procederet ad nos, carnem quasi sonum quaesivit, eique se inseruit, et ad nos processit, et a Patre non recessit”.

²⁰ See Augustine of Hippo (1955), *De civitate Dei*, VIII, 1 (*Patrologia Latina* 41, 224), p. 216, 9–12: “Porro si sapientia Deus est, per quem facta sunt omnia, sicut divina auctoritas veritasque monstravit (see the Book of Wisdom 7:24–27; Hebrews 1:2–3), *verus philosophus est amator Dei*”. See also: Paulinus the Deacon, *Vita Sancti Ambrosii episcopi Mediolanensis*, 7, (*Patrologia Latina* 14, 29B): “Philosophiam profiteri voluit, futurus sed *verus philosophus Christi*”.

knowledge of everything and of everybody; having himself become a man, He unified and directed towards the truth and towards good the intelligence and the will of every one of them, and “He became *knowledge* and *justice* for all”. And in imitation of this “knowledge” and this “justice”, so that they might share in truth and good, all who participate in the Word pronounced eternally by the Father are taught and ‘illuminated’.²¹

The tacit adhesion to this *exemplaristic-phenomenological orientation*, which is behind all human progress in “true philosophy”, is one of the foundations of what I have long referred to as the *paradigm of medieval thought*. This orientation – which is characteristic of western Christian thought, from its apostolic origins up until the religious divisions of the late Middle Ages and the explosion of the Reformation – subordinates every scientific and knowledge process to the assumption of obligatory compatibility with the knowledge of a higher order, stable and certain, which is guaranteed to all believers by the adhesion to the true words of the revelation and its legitimate interpreters. While taking account of the diversity of approaches, interests and methods, and of the fragmentation, over the course of the medieval period, of ideas and ideologies, it is fair to say that all the orientations and all the speculations by authors who lived between the fourth and the sixteenth century were essentially grafted on to this basic certainty, without ever contesting it.²² This does not mean that medieval knowledge is all ‘religious’ in essence, as a result of some extrinsic obligation. However, it can never proceed, in any of its results, even the boldest and most enlightened, without a direct comparison with the ‘position’ of truth established by the faith. That such a comparison cannot be avoided is not because it is imposed from outside, by means of political or religious measures of control or ideological censorship; rather, it derived, in those centuries, from the conception of human thought itself and the relationship between the knowing subject and the truth.

In this common paradigmatic framework, medieval speculation as a whole is also consistently characterised by adhesion to an *exemplaristic* theology.²³ In the

²¹ See Augustine of Hippo (1968), *De Trinitate* VII, 3, 4, p. 251, 1–18: “Cur ergo in Scripturis nunquam fere de sapientia quidquam dicitur, nisi ut ostendatur a Deo genita vel creata? genita scilicet, per quam facta sunt omnia: creata vero vel facta, sicut in hominibus, cum ad eam quae non creata et facta, sed genita est, convertuntur et illustrantur; in ipsis enim fit aliquid quod vocetur eorum sapientia: vel illud Scripturis praenuntiantibus aut narrantibus, quod ‘Verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis’ (John 1:14); hoc modo enim Christus facta sapientia est, quia factus est homo. An propterea non loquitur in illis libris sapientia vel de illa dicitur aliquid, nisi quod eam de Deo natam ostendat aut factam, quamvis sit et Pater ipsa sapientia, quia illa nobis sapientia commendanda erat et imitanda cuius imitatione formamur? Pater enim eam dicit, ut Verbum eius sit, non quomodo profertur ex ore verbum sonans aut ante pronuntiationem cogitatur: spatiis enim temporum hoc completur, illud autem aeternum est, et *illuminando* dicit nobis et de se et de Patre, quod dicendum est hominibus”.

²² See d’Onofrio (Ed.) (2012b), particularly my own contribution *Between Larissa and Damascus. Philosophical Paradigm and Medieval Thought; a Historiographical Theory*, *ibid.* I, pp. 13–46.

²³ See d’Onofrio G. (2005b); d’Onofrio G. (2005a); d’Onofrio G. (2012c).

centuries between Augustine of Hippo and Nicholas of Cusa, no thinker doubted that the *logos* that the philosophers of antiquity had assumed as the spiritual principle governing the universe was the same divine *Logos* mentioned in the fourth Gospel. This is the *Logos* that created everything, planning the intelligible perfection of the universal *ideae* (or *causae* or *rationes*) and of everything that exists: “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1, 3). This *logos* – or *ratio*, *nous*, *intellectus*, *mens*, or universal *ars* of the divine principle – is the *vox* (or *verbum*) that God himself pronounces, affirming the truth of all things by His very existence. It abides in Him in an ideal perfection and is achieved by many individuals, at different times and in different ways, each in their own circumscribed sphere of existence. It follows that at all times, for the whole of medieval Christian thought, every knowing subject other than God and the *intellectus* of God, from the supreme angelic intelligence to the lowest level on the scale of being, acquires true knowledge only when, respecting and applying the rules of science that are followed in nature by the traces of the *Logos*, it tends to align its limited perspective to the perfect, all-embracing, exact and eternal vision, according to which the universe is contemplated by the unique and unitary divine gaze. God thinks all things while, perfectly and fully, He thinks himself.

The philosophers however, were not able to apprehend by themselves that for the individual and imperfect participation of finite subjects in full knowledge of the truth, a way of correction from the error – i.e. a solution to the *errare*, to the process of knowing by proceeding along limited and therefore unfruitful paths – might lie in a radical ‘overturning’ of the terms of the knowledge process, i.e. in a lowering of the divine *Logos* to the finite perspective of the created individual *logoi*. Along this way of redemption a possibility opened up for the individual finite *logoi* to channel and resolve their incompleteness in the universal love of Christ, who sought to bring *life* and ‘objective’ *truth* to all (John 14, 6). By participating in the Christian communion of the truth, every individual human being was able to recognise in the existence of the other a reflection of their own condition and perceive this as a stimulus to extend their own limited nature towards the truth of the principle: from envious egotism, which fuels and supports all subjective readings of the truth, to shared participation in a higher unity.²⁴

²⁴On the tension between *invidia* and *charitas* see, among many possible texts, the following: Ambrosius of Milan (1902), 46, v. 24 (*Patrologia Latina* 15, 1626AB), p. 161, 16–25: “Amen dico vobis quod nemo propheta acceptus est in patria sua. Non mediocriter *invidia* proditur, quae civicae *charitatis* oblita in acerba odia causas amoris inflectit. Simul hoc exemplo pariter et oraculo declaratur quod frustra opem misericordiae coelestis exspectes, si alienae fructibus virtutis invidias; aspernator enim Dominus invidorum est et ab iis qui divina beneficia in aliis persequuntur miracula suae potestatis avertit. Dominicae quippe carnis actus divinitatis exemplum est: et ‘invisibilia’ nobis ‘eius per ea quae sunt visibilia demonstrantur’ (Romans 1:20)”; Ambrosiaster (1968), *In Epistolam Pauli ad Corinthos primam*, 13, 2 (*Patrologia Latina* 17, 252AB), p. 146, 9–17: “Et si habeam omnem scientiam. Nihil mihi prodest scientia, si charitas non sit. Denique scribis et pharisaeis nihil profuit, dicente Salvatore: ‘Vos habetis clavem scientiae et neque vos intratis neque alios sinitis introire’ (Luke 11:52); *per invidiam* enim *charitatem* *corruptentes* scientiam eius ad nihilum deduxerunt. Nam et Tertullianus et Novatianus non parvae scientiae fuerunt: sed quia per zelum charitatis foedera perdiderunt, in schisma versi, ad

Fruitfully oriented by this paradigm, philosophy in the Middle Ages thus sought above all to identify the *criteria* that would enable the *recognition of universally shared truths*, i.e. of the critical and epistemological criteria that guaranteed the relative scientific basis of the various disciplines and made it possible to distinguish uncertain from absolute knowledge.

At the heart of medieval philosophical research there is always a need to classify the distinct forms of knowledge: from the schematic but subtle codification of the rules of the seven liberal arts in the early Middle Ages to the subsequent recovery, starting in the twelfth century, of the (more solid) Aristotelian epistemology, which organised sciences hierarchically in order of growing specialisation while attributing to each a given field of enquiry and a precise task of verifying its content. In all cases however, the aim was a progressive harmonisation of the various ‘regions’ of knowledge in accordance with a shared horizon common to all active intelligences.²⁵ In each discipline it is necessary to recognise the outcome of various approaches precisely in order to guarantee, when distinguishing between them, their overall harmony. In every distinct field of inquiry, the differentiation of the nature of the object implies a different arrangement of the functions activated by the knowing subject. Just as different vectors of sensory knowledge (hearing, sight, touch, etc.) must be applied when perceiving different sensory qualities (sound, colour, weight, etc.), in order to distinguish the nature of physical phenomena from that of mathematical relations and so on, the subject must activate different functions depending on the case, operating differently in the specific scientific field in question.

This epistemological model draws its inspiration from a classification of sciences that is Aristotelian in origin, but reinterpreted in a Neoplatonist perspective by Severinus Boethius in his *Opuscula sacra* and *Consolatio*.²⁶ From Boethius onwards, in this form, it was passed on with varying degrees of effectiveness throughout the entire Middle Ages. In the Platonic perspective of the “last of the Romans”, the diversification of functions corresponds to the activities of various faculties of the soul, distinct principles for the formal structuring of knowledge, which produce it by operating in accordance with distinct foundations of knowledge acquisition. According to the doctrine set out in the first of the *Opuscula*, the *De Trinitate* – grasping the forms of reality as they inhere to bodies and as they are involved in the process of change (physics) is quite a different matter from

perditionem sui haereses creaverunt”; Augustine of Hippo (1954), *In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus*, LXVII, 2 (*Patrologia Latina* 35, 1812), p. 495, 1 – p. 496, 31 “Sed quid est quod sequitur, In domo Patris mei mansiones multae sunt (John 14:2) [...] Multae mansiones, diversas meritum in una vita aeterna significant dignitates. [...] Atque ita Deus ‘erit omnia in omnibus’ (1 Corinthians 15:28), ut quoniam ‘Deus charitas est’ (John 4:8), per charitatem fiat ut quod habent singuli, commune sit omnibus. Sic enim quisque etiam ipse habet, cum amat in altero quod ipse non habet. Non erit itaque aliqua *invidia* imparis claritatis, quoniam regnabit in omnibus unitas *charitatis*”.

²⁵ See *infra*, note 42.

²⁶ On Boethius, see d’Onofrio G. (2008), pp. 77–142.

considering them separately from their relationship with matter and evaluating them, with exact measurements and calculations, as theoretical structures of the truth (mathematics); and it is quite a different matter again to consider the nature of the absolute form as perfection in itself (not combined with and contaminated by limiting alterations), and thus as a *causa sui* (metaphysical and theological knowledge). In each of these three fields, the only thing that is not different is the way in which the object of the knowledge is grasped in order to know it. The difference lies above all in the methods by which, depending on the manifestation of the object, the science associated with it is constructed.²⁷

Indeed, it is true, as is illustrated in the *Consolatio* to the suffering Boethius by Philosophy personified, that the same knowable datum, for example a 'man', is grasped and analysed differently by the various scientific theories: sensitive knowledge is judged in its corporeal form together with the matter that shapes and organises; the imagination considers it in the same corporeal and individual form, but separated from matter; reason clarifies its intelligible truth by abstracting the form and considering it as a universal, in itself and not in its combination with bodies. Finally, acting on an even higher level than this is the intellectual intuition that considers the human form as included in the pure and absolute form of the truth: the form of the divine principle, the superior form of all existent things, because it is the principle itself, forming and unformed thought, in which all the forms of multiple things are formed. These different degrees of knowledge do not however lead to the recognition of distinct realities, one for each degree: on the contrary, by adopting different methods for each case, selected on the basis of the condition of the thing under consideration, they narrow the gap between the subject and an increasingly perfected representation of the object itself. This is in accordance with the principle that each degree of inferior knowledge is re-understood and re-validated, in all its relative truthfulness, to the degree immediately superior to it, until it is seen that the truth in itself of every possible object lies only in the purity of the superior mind, which is divine because it is uncontaminated and eternal; which contemplates everything at once, and justifies everything by retrieving all the individual instances of goodness in the absolute goodness of the divine will; which admires everything and appreciates everything by resolving every diversity in the harmonious beauty of its identical perfection.²⁸

With respect to the constant self-perpetuation (albeit with some complex variations) of this speculative model in the medieval world, the Word incarnate, nucleus of Christian preaching and thus the heart of the entire civilisation arising from it, encompasses within itself both poles of this relationship, which precedes any other reality: as God, He is the principle that knows everything and causes it to be; as a man he is both the thing that is known, the object, with its limits and determination relative to other objects, and the knowing singular subject, imperfect and incomplete,

²⁷ On this three-way division of philosophy, Aristotelian in origin but applied by Boethius in accordance with the Neoplatonist reading of Proclus Lycaeus, see d'Onofrio G. (2001).

²⁸ See Boethius (2000), V, pr. 4, 27–33 and 38–39 (*Patrologia Latina* 63, 849A–850B), p. 149, 80–p. 150, 100 and p. 150, 111–p. 151, 116.

which does not cause things to be, but recognises them as existing because they are thought by the divine subject. Since the moment when, with Augustine, it saw the opportunity to ‘convert’ to the revelation of the Son of God incarnate, philosophy has understood that it is oriented in this way to grasp the reality of all its objects by the same revelation in which Christ narrated how all things are true only in His thought. Nailed to the cross, He recovered and gathered within himself all things that He, as the divine Word, had created, and in whose name everything that exists is true. This is the meaning of His words pronounced in the fourth Gospel: “Et ego si exaltatus fuero a terra, omnia traham ad meipsum”.²⁹ Paul illustrates these words to the Philippians: “Propter quod et Deus exaltavit illum: et donavit illi *nomenquod est super omne nomen*: ut in nomine Iesu omne genu flectatur caelestium, terrestrium et infernorum”.³⁰ This is the sense in which Christian theological speculation grasped these words, grafting them on to the Neoplatonist perspective of joining every truth to the One via the productive contemplation of the *nous*. One of the first Christian theologians, Gaius Marius Victorinus, had already clearly taught this in his comment on a verse from the Epistle to the Philippians, grafting its doctrine on to the theological-cosmological foundation of the Johannine prologue: “Christ is truly the *logos*, which is with God, and abides in God, and is next to God, and thus is also God Himself. This is the *logos* of God because it derives from His operation, and because it had to become Jesus Christ, and His name ought to be exalted above all names. And this name is precisely the name *logos*. Being the *logos*, it is the *form* of God. Truly with God it is joined, united, and is with God one thing only. And for this reason the *logos* is also God, ‘by means of whom all things were created’ and in whom all that is produced is real (*vita est*), and this has been the case since the beginning, and without the *logos* ‘nothing was created’”.³¹

The redemption of creatures is their joining the Logos, and thus their return to the state in which they are when God contemplates them in their absolute truth, and contemplating them causes them to be. Once the eidetic nature of knowledge – i.e. the original certainty of the existence of everything that is real in the eternal and all-embracing reality of the divine mind – has been established, philosophy is transformed, for human beings, from an analysis *a posteriori* of the features and

²⁹ John 12:32: “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me” (King James Version): the use of “all men” here reflects the original Koine (Greek), which says “πάντας”, but the *Vulgate* – which was practically the only version read in western Europe in the Middle Ages – uses *omnia* (“everything”).

³⁰ Philippians 2:9–10: “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth” (KJV).

³¹ Gaius Marius Victorinus (1986), *In epistolam Pauli ad Philippenses*, 2, 9–11 (*Patrologia Latina* 8, 1209D–1210A), p. 192, 10–18: “Christus, id est λόγος qui cum Deo est et apud Deum iuxta Deum, et idcirco etiam ipse Deus, cui λόγω hoc ex operatione eius provenit ut et Christus esset Iesus et exaltaretur et supra omnia nomina nomen acciperet, λόγος, inquam; iste in eo quod λόγος est, forma Dei est, vere iungitur, copulatur unumque est, et idcirco et λόγος Deus est per quem creata sunt omnia et in quo creata sunt omnia et in quo quod effectum est, vita est, et hoc fuit a principio, et sine λόγω factum est nihil”.

conditioning of the data of experience into the search *a priori* for traces of (or clues to) the truth of the immutable models of the real. Above all lower forms of knowledge, it recognises the supreme truths of human metaphysics as the explanatory principles of everything. These truths are fully consistent with the affirmations of revealed theology: the *divine names* or properties of the pure Being, i.e. the *transcendentals*.

The path taken by the ascent of the human subject, from the knowability of the particular to the retrieval of the transcendental truth needed to justify it, was skillfully grasped and described by Anselm of Canterbury in his *Monologion*. This work contains four successive demonstrations that correspond to four different ways in which the human mind can identify, from the knowability of given properties of the particular being, the regulatory truth of the corresponding inalterable and original forms that are absolute properties of the divine principle. Far from being *a posteriori* demonstrations of the existence of a prime cause of created effects (in accordance with the Aristotelian scheme that was to be revived by Thomas Aquinas), the four ‘ways’ of the *Monologion* are logical procedures that make it necessary to go back to an original form, immutable and perfectly accomplished, understood as guaranteeing the knowability of the particular forms of the creation. The systematic theology of Anselm of Canterbury is thus fully in agreement with Augustine’s speculative foundation of the ‘conversion’ of human knowledge from the consideration of the imperfect determinations of the particular to the contemplation of the same forms, but perfect, actuated in the eternal reality of the Logos.³²

This *phenomenological perspective*, which is characteristic of Augustinism, was seen throughout the Middle Ages. However, it emerged more clearly and more tangibly above all at certain key moments. This is the sense of the doctrine of the *essentiae* that governed Boethius’ classification of sciences in the *quadrivium* from his earliest writings³³: the search for the universal is the end point of the entire organisation of scientific knowledge that he initiated; interrupted by his premature death, in the last two books of the *Consolatio* it deals with the final contemplation by suffering humanity of the original eidetic truth.³⁴

In the *Periphyseon*, Johannes Scotus Eriugena translated this aspiration into a grandiose speculative system, founded on the full agreement between rational inquiry and revelation. The harmony of the different forms of knowledge led humanity to understand that the finite mind will never be able to know the reality of the *ousia* of any creature, because this is the exclusive prerogative of the divine mind or Word, which contemplates in itself the eternal *rationes primordiales*, i.e. the pure and original substances of the whole of creation, not subject to accidental variations. Every human attempt to grasp the reality of essences is subordinated to the limits

³² See d’Onofrio G. (1996a); d’Onofrio G. (2008), pp. 227–236.

³³ See Boethius (1867) (*Patrologia Latina* 63, 1079D–1080D), p. 7, 26 – p. 8, 4: “Est enim sapientia rerum, quae sunt sui inmutabilem substantiam sortiuntur, comprehensio veritatis. Esse autem illa dicimus, quae nec intentione crescunt nec retractione minuuntur nec variationibus permutantur, sed in propria semper vi suae se naturae subsidiis nixa custodiunt”.

³⁴ See d’Onofrio G. (2001).

and specificities of the faculty being used, whether this be sense (common to human beings and animals), discursive reason or intuitive intellect (common to human beings and angels). This is because by means of its faculties the soul is in any case always able only to grasp the imperfect manifestations of the truth. This is the main consequence of the fact that with original sin humanity abdicated the capacity to contemplate in the Word the authentic and original order of reality. But if human beings became assimilated to the divine Intellect once again and shared in its productive knowledge, the human intellect could also discover that the authentic causes (*rationes primordiales*) of the being of every thing lie in its being known: “each intellect becomes what it can know, whatever that is, and together with it becomes a single thing”.³⁵ If human beings succeed, thanks to the authentic cooperation of reason and faith, in knowing the divine Intellect, they become God, in the eternity of beatitude, just as, in the temporality created by Him, God became, through the Incarnation, a human being.³⁶

Two centuries later, in his treatise entitled *De Trinitate*, Richard of Saint Victor – who was mentioned by Dante in *Paradiso* as a model of mystic theology³⁷ – used the example of the sharing of the *doctrina* between the person who teaches it and the person who learns it to effectively illustrate the mystery of the divine trinity: the three persons are distinct while they subsist in one nature just as in a dialogue between master and disciple: a single science unifies them in a single intelligible reality.³⁸ Thus, at the height of scholastic theology, Bonaventure also praised the hierarchy of the cognitive faculties as gradual steps towards a truth that the “mind” will be able to grasp at the end of its “itinerary” only by contemplating it “in God”.³⁹ In his *De origine rerum praedicamentalium*, Theodoric of Freiberg, a Dominican

³⁵ See Johannes Scotus Eriugena (2000), 780AB, p. 57, 1568–1569: “In omni siquidem quodcunque purus intellectus perfectissime cognoscit, fit, eique unum efficitur”.

³⁶ See d’Onofrio G. (2008), pp. 143–208.

³⁷ See Dante Alighieri (2001), X, 130–132, pp. 293–294: “[...] l’ardente spiro / [...] di Riccardo, / che a considerar fu più che viro”. The verb “considerare” typically expresses mystical contemplation (as in the title of the treatise *De consideratione* by Bernard of Clairvaux).

³⁸ See Richard de Saint-Victor (1999²), VI, 24 (*Patrologia Latina* 196, 989C–990A), pp. 452–454: “Superius docuimus quod una eademque scientia possit esse in duobus, si artis alicuius notitiam quam unus apprehendit, alterum ad plenum docuerit. Si itaque nomen doctrinae tam passive quam active accipiatur, ut doctrina dicatur tam eius qui docet, quam eius qui docetur, profecto si hoc gemino modo doctrinam accipiamus, alia erit doctrina unius, et alia absque dubio doctrina alterius. Sicut scientia dicitur ab eo quod est scire, sic sane doctrina ab eo quod est docere. [...] Si in humana natura scientia ex scientia gignitur, cur in divina natura non multo rectius sapientia sapientiam gignere dicatur, ubi sapientia idem quod substantia omnino esse convincitur? Sicut in humana natura scientia docens et scientia edocta est una eademque scientia, verumtamen alia et alia doctrina; sic in divina natura, sapientia gignens et sapientia genita est una eademque sapientia, et quod consequens est una eademque substantia, verumtamen alia et alia persona. Sicut itaque in humana natura ex eo quod unius scientia est accepta, alterius inaccepta, nec accepta sit inaccepta, nullatenus sequitur quod sit in eis alia et alia scientia, sed alia et alia doctrina; sic in natura divina, ex eo quod unius substantia est genita, alterius ingenita nec genita sit ingenita, nullo modo sequitur quod ibi sit alia et alia substantia, sed alia et alia persona”.

³⁹ See d’Onofrio G. (2008), pp. 295–297.

active in the Cologne school which was part of the cultural and speculative legacy of Albertus Magnus, presented a new reading of Boethius' epistemology inspired as much by Aristotelian realistic metaphysics as by Augustine's exemplarism: science is always the outcome of processing by the subject of data that reach the mind through experience. However, such processing is regulated by *a priori* forms that are present in the human intellect (the *res praedicamentales*) and reflect the things' original ontological conditions. Such conditions were indeed desired by God and brought into existence as the outcomes of the various sciences operating in accordance with the activities of various faculties of the soul, thereby ensuring an effective ontological correspondence (and consistency) between mental object and real object.⁴⁰ Theodoric thus opened the door to a mystic re-reading, which flourished in the spiritual context of the *devotio moderna*, of Augustine's *abditum mentis* as the "foundation (*grunt*) of the soul", place of the ultimate and most authentic manifestation of the truth to the finite intelligence in search of the truth. Here reason grasps the truth by harmonising its mental structures with the eternal *formae* of the being in the divine Intellect. Proceeding on this path, Meister Eckhart was not afraid to affirm that in the *grunt* not only was Christ made flesh once more, as Augustine had already stated in his *De magistro*: in it, at the highest levels of theological-mystical knowledge, with the remaking of the human *intellectus* in the perfect image of the divine, the same eternal generation by the Father of the Son, the divine Word, is repeated within created temporality.⁴¹

Lastly, in the humanistic era, another great apostle of the mystical outcome of Christian speculation, Nicholas of Cusa, proposed the inversion (with respect to the Aristotelian tradition) of the relationship between subject and predicate, at the very heart of what has been termed the Cusanian epistemological 'revolution', at the dawn of the modern epoch: the relationship between subject and object must be assessed by the philosopher not as an attempt to subjugate the intellect to the givenness of the extra-mental being, since no intellect is able to grasp the substance of created things (which coincides with the unknowable divine idea); rather, it should be seen as a gradual process of improvement of the representability of real things on the basis of the operation of the transcendental forms of each manifestation of the being, which guide the intelligence only if the latter seeks a living relationship of harmony and effective participation with the perfection of the divine Intellect that contemplates and governs everything.⁴² In the dialogue *De pace fidei*, Nicholas of Cusa thus identifies – precisely in the recovery of the eidetic-phenomenological conception of knowing – the instrument with which to resolve the controversies among theologians that were tearing late medieval civilisation apart and to promote

⁴⁰ See d'Onofrio G. (2011a).

⁴¹ See Wéber É.-H. (1996), pp. 433–435.

⁴² On Nicholas of Cusa see d'Onofrio G. (2008), pp. 265–279 and 301–317. Nicholas of Cusa was one of the first philosophers to explicitly use the concept of cognitive 'regions'; see Nicholas of Cusa (1972), *De coniecturis*, 13, 134, p. 130, 2–5; Nicholas of Cusa (1964), Vol. I, p. 148: "Natura autem universalis, ut universi circulus, in se primo tres regionum atque naturarum intellectualium, rationalium atque sensitivarum, complicat orbis".

a new, unifying, shared approach to the truth, faced with the risk of a general collapse as a result of invasion by the Ottoman Turks. By ‘overturning’ the criterion that ensured the production of the truth, Nicholas of Cusa opens up the human mind, immersed in temporality, to the possibility of understanding how diversity of philosophical and religious opinion, as well as the subjective passions and forms of egotism that are typical of the human subject, is really no more than the deleterious consequence of knowledge remaining at the level of individualisation and incompleteness.⁴³

If therefore every specific doctrine – economic, political and above all religious – is just a limited manifestation of the absolute in itself, arising case by case from particular historical conditions, then the real task of the philosopher (urgent and immediate in Nicholas of Cusa’s day, just as it is today) is that of *reforming the diversification of the points of view*, whose contradictory nature is only apparent: each of them – like the material nature of the *vox*, in the image proposed by pseudo-Dionysius and Augustine alike – is in fact the consequence of a deviant lingering of knowledge among the inadequate incompleteness of the knowing subject, which leads only to conflagration and contrast, unless it can be resolved in the harmony of a higher truth.

Thus reduced – following this line of thought, which was transmitted and renewed over the centuries of the Middle Ages right up until the Renaissance – to an investigation not so much of the content of scientific knowledge as of the approaches and criteria that make it possible, this philosophical speculation sought to theoretically extend the reach of the knowledge acquired by *reason* by means of *revelation*, which thereby offers content that is certain, undisputed and not subject to scientific verification or validation. Reason has access to this content only by means of neutral and epistemologically unmotivated assent, which has no possibility of epistemological verification but consists purely of the assumption of a state of acceptance or refusal. In accordance with the terminology of the Latin West (and in particular the language of the late-ancient Latin treatises on logic, from Cicero’s *Topica* to Boethius), this means that the philosophy of the medieval Christian centuries is not expected to *invenire*, i.e. ‘find’ or ‘retrieve’ the object of knowledge (which is first and foremost the truth of the being); rather it is expected only to produce descriptions and deduce consequences, i.e. to *iudicare*, to judge, using the same vocabulary, which means to express a critical judgement on the logical-scientific coherence of the truth, which cannot be ‘found’ except by the testimony of external sources.⁴⁴

⁴³ See d’Onofrio G. (2009).

⁴⁴ See Cicero (1891), *Topica*, 2, 6, p. 426, 20–27: “Cum omnis ratio diligens disserendi duas habeat partis, unam inveniendi alteram iudicandi, utriusque princeps, ut mihi quidem videtur, Aristoteles fuit. Stoici autem in altera elaboraverunt; iudicandi enim vias diligenter persecuti sunt ea scientia quam *dialektikén* appellant, inveniendi artem, quae *topikén* dicitur, quae et ad usum potior erat et ordine naturae certe prior, totam reliquerunt”. See also Boethius (1906), *Editio secunda*, I, 2 (*Patrologia Latina* 64, 73A–74A), p. 139, 20 – p. 140, 12; and *In Topica Ciceronis commentaria* I (*Patrologia Latina* 64, 1044C–1048A). See d’Onofrio G. (1986), pp. 94–96.

For human beings, these sources may be either *experience* or *faith*. ‘Experience’ is understood as every passive acquisition of information on external reality that is possible for the subject; ‘faith’ is understood as the outcome of any agreement (extraneous, as an act of ‘belief’, to the critical *iudicium* of rationality) that the subject ascribes to a witness who purports to be the holder of certain knowledge. For this reason, as Anselm of Canterbury clearly pointed out, faith is also a form of *experience*, albeit indirect, in that it allows the mind to passively absorb information about an object that is external to it.⁴⁵ It is clear however, as Augustine taught with revolutionary clarity from his youthful philosophical dialogues onwards, that a rapid comparison between, on the one hand, the uncertainty and incompleteness that always accompanies experience produced by corporeal perception and, on the other hand, the unequivocal absoluteness of the higher truth communicated in the form of faith by Christian revelation, can only lead to an irrefutable recognition of the superiority, as a source of knowledge, of the latter over the former. And since in the Middle Ages, as has already been pointed out, acceptance of the revelation was universally and paradigmatically shared, it can be argued that the philosophy of this epoch always sought to verify (“iudicare”) only the capacity of the human mind to measure itself against, and harmonise itself with, the gaze by which God contemplates the whole of reality, the final expression of which must coincide entirely with the truth of Scripture.

This plainly confirms that philosophy in the Middle Ages had a *critical* task, and was not supposed to be *inventive* concerning the truth of the real. This brings that model of thought surprisingly close to the methods and requirements of neo-Kantian criticism, which considers philosophy to be the search for the formal *a priori* ordering of the data provided by experience. In fact, exemplaristic (or eidetic) medieval thought also investigated not the thing in itself, but the ways in which it manifests itself. On both the theoretical and ethical levels, this speculation offers the human mind a form of knowledge that basically consists of the capacity to grasp a regulatory principle of all its acts of knowledge and all behavioural norms that are recognised by it. But in that case, the real *critical rule* of truth and goodness cannot (and must not) be anything other than the *universal human being*: the divine human idea, immutable and perfect, the eternal *humanitas*, the purely actual and never potential *entelechy* of the human being. It is to this that all individual human beings tend to assimilate in the common practical aspiration for the achievement of happiness, as much in the course of their life on earth as in the life that is to come. What the universal human being knows and respects is true, and what the universal human being desires and loves is good. This is the only possible criterion, universal and necessary, that makes it possible to regulate the scientific perception of the truth, the ethical use of things and the aesthetic enjoyment of beauty in the creation.

⁴⁵ See Anselm of Canterbury (1946–1961), *Epistola de incarnatione Verbi*, 1, 264C, Vol. II, p. 9, 5–8: “Nimirum hoc ipsum quod dico: qui non crediderit, non intelliget. Nam qui non crediderit, non experietur, et qui expertus non fuerit non cognoscet. Quantum enim rei auditum superat experientia, tantum vincit audientis cognitionem experientis scientia”.

As a consequence of the alignment to this medieval speculative paradigm, for many thinkers of that time each scientific discipline represents the formal regulation of one of the various routes that the human mind can take in its overall aspiration to determine and order the reality of the known object. The latter is never knowable as such, in a complete form, by finite intelligences, and can be investigated only as a partial manifestation of one of the transcendental properties of the divine principle. Each science is characterised by a distinctive combination of significant signs, adequate only in the field of knowledge that can be delineated by isolating a specific manner of the truth's manifestation. Thus, for example, the laws of physics are 'found' by the mind as an outcome of the organisation of its knowledge when it considers things as subject to *criticism* in accordance with their subordination to the principle of the relations between cause and effect. The laws of metaphysics resolve these relationships by determining them *critically* in subordination to the effectiveness of a supreme and absolute Cause, which is only ever a cause and never caused. Moral norms are responsible for the formal classification and organisation of the scale of values corresponding to the actions of men in relation to the supreme Value, which is absolute and not derived from other practical determinations. The principles of logic are responsible for the cognitive determinability and the need for formal concatenations in relation to their alignment with universal regulatory principles of the Form of all forms or supreme Logos. The intuition of aesthetic contemplation is responsible for the appreciation of the participation of the particular things in the cosmic *ordo*, as a contribution to the universal transcendental fulfilment of the same absolute Form.

Precisely because they are all parallel to and equidistant from each other, none of these *distinct* sections or articulations of knowledge is claimed, among medieval thinkers, to reflect the reality of the thing in itself in absolute terms (i.e. objectively, regardless of the relative activity of the subject): indeed, each of them is conceived as the outcome of a different type of effort designed to bring the intelligence, by means of various and successive *intentions*, closer to the way in which finite things manifest their nature as the outcome of the will and the work of a creative subject, which above any other subject, produces them, causes them to be and supports them. This subsistence of all things in the thought and the will, i.e. the love, of the supreme knowing Subject in fact represents, in this speculative framework, the primary safeguard against any kind of subjectivism and particularism, which may lead human intelligence to pursue differentiated ways of organising knowledge that are distinct from each other and not linked, without being able to harmonise them. Indeed, this is what happens in the banal historiographical reading of Averroism as the vindication of different and opposing – and thus 'double' – forms of truth. Divine knowledge and will, unified in a single, all-embracing and totalising *intentio* of the truth and good, is the reason why everything that is necessary and true subsists. Christian faith, and the philosophy that has converted to it, agree that the existence of reality is governed by objective rules because the mind of God is the certain place in which every creature truly subsists and acquires all the specificities of its existence, although the ways in which the finite subject can approach this truth are inevitably multiple and distinct from each other.

If the historians of thought limited themselves to a prejudicial assessment of medieval thought as generally subordinated to a radical objectivistic realism, they would risk losing sight of a valuable contribution to the study of many contemporary themes of thought. A prejudicial historiography of this kind has in the past resulted from the conviction that the entire Middle Ages should be considered as subordinated to a *correspondentist* conception of the theory of knowledge. In this view, the guarantee of truth can only come from the experimental datum and the *a posteriori* contact of the subject with an incomplete reception of properties and characteristics of the object. Interestingly – and paradoxically – it was precisely in the context of twentieth century neo-criticism that this conviction took root.

Comparing the thought of Nicholas of Cusa, recognised as the first witness to the modern epistemological revolution, with the *divisio naturae* of Johannes Scotus Eriugena, Erns Cassirer describes the latter as the author of a titanic (yet unsuccessful) *correspondentist* attempt to depict the order of reality as a mechanical succession of causes and effects: a rigid system of degrees of the being that are distinct and unconnected, within whose inflexible formal concatenation the Carolingian thinker sought to insert – and thus to distinguish – God Himself as the cause and the purpose of the universe. According to Cassirer, in Eriugena's work, discursive and descriptive rationality, as the only instrument available to a subject understood as the purely passive receptacle of external data, is used, with its own logical and formal tools, to reconstruct this rigid schematic arrangement, in a (vain) attempt to reconcile it with the transcendent reality of the revealed divine.⁴⁶ The paradoxical nature of Cassirer's error of interpretation was based on a superficial reading of the speculative theory of the *Periphyseon*. In addition, it perpetuated the serious critical misunderstanding of that system of thought, which more than any other medieval speculation anticipated (by at least five centuries) and productively consolidated the Cusanian conception of the authentic relationship between the subject and object of knowledge. This is because before Nicholas of Cusa, and with the same clear speculative penetration, Johannes Scotus Eriugena understood that the reconstruction of the truth of reality is subordinate to the full convergence of the incomplete parts of the *intellectus* that is created in the all-embracing logical-ontological perfection of the eternal divine *Intellectus*.

This episode of historiographical distortion illustrates the potential for misunderstanding and wasting instances of medieval philosophical and theological thought that can make valuable contributions to contemporary research into the relationships between mind and reality. The historiographical assumption from which Cassirer and others proceeded, in this distorted reading of the data, was that before the modern epoch there had been no *Erkenntnistheorie* driven by the need to introduce into the act of knowing the contribution of the *a priori* action of the subject of knowledge, which is the only source of objectivity in knowing. A more attentive and less prejudicial assessment of late ancient and medieval Christian thought could in contrast highlight the frequent presence, from Clement of Alexandria to Duns Scotus, of evident signs of the idea that the subject must face the real objectivity of

⁴⁶ See Cassirer E. (1927), pp. 43–44.

things, overcoming the deceptive and subjective composition of images arising from the activity of the senses and imagination. The true and proper *adaequatio* of the intellect to the thing – for practically all medieval authors – is actually, first and foremost, the perception of a *correspondentism* not so much with the spatio-temporal variability of the corporeal datum as with the eternal intellectual act of God the creator and provider, in whose *infinite* thought *all finite things really* subsist and are really *eternal*. This is because only the God of the Christian revelation can be this way, i.e. the intelligent and provident creator who loves His creation, while a mechanistic perspective reduces, depending on the needs of logic, the transcendental properties of the first principle of natural philosophy.

What the reading and study of medieval thought can offer the development of contemporary thought thus still appears to be largely undervalued. Currently, diverse and often contradictory claims to absolute possession of the truth seek to impose themselves as valid across the spectrum, even for the minds and wills that resist their persuasive force, and refuse to become involved in their subjective perception of the truth. Faced with this somewhat risky situation, the inexhaustible potential of a divine and infinite reference point as the eternal principle of the truth is the only possible solution to the conflicts between distinct human individualities. It can even serve this purpose if it is taken up in a purely instrumental form, as the principle governing dialogue between individual subjects, before being made the object of faith, and is thus also suitable for the pagan, infidel, heretic and atheist. Reduced to being responsible not for the veracity of the diverse and often conflicting doctrinal assertions, but for the formulation of its critical *iudicium* on their correctness, philosophy has the task – which is not in fact reductive but essential and valuable for the fate of humanity – of intervening critically in the notions acquired on the basis of the external sharing of the truth. By indicating the possibility of sharing such truths, philosophy would become the primary guarantor of peace.

Every single living thing, as soon as its individual knowing life begins, is induced to admit and recognise as truth only its own individual existing *identity*, and to strive, by living, to keep this identity alive. On the basis of this principle, everything that differs from the 'I' is taken as real only because the individual subject recognises it: as if every individual was charged with, and capable of, justifying, in the dimension of his or her own interiority, the very existence of the entire universe. Intuitively, the *reality* of the cosmos is in fact such only for the single individual that inhabits it. It is this subordination of reality to its inhabitation that justifies the existence of all the other 'I's, i.e. those who, when communicating with that individual, also seek to present themselves as individual *identities* and as such to oppose the identity of that individual. The individual *identity* is not however the creator of the reality it inhabits, with respect to which it is like a *datum*, obliged to follow it like an explorer involved in an infinite investigation and an interminable mission of conquest.

The task is infinite because the question of why it unfolds has no answer: every attempt on the part of the individual to conduct research into not so much 'what' the

universe in which it moves is, as ‘why’ it exists, ‘why’ other *identities* in search of subsistence exist (or assert their right to exist) in it, and ‘why’ he or she as an individual exists, is destined to be unsuccessful. No particular subject finds in themselves the justifying principle of their own or the others’ existence, or that of their search for truth and goodness, or the necessarily incomplete solutions and answers, which they occasionally convince themselves they have found, to their questions. The discovery of the hopelessness of this effort might however be fatal, extinguishing in the knowing subject the very desire for knowledge, which alone can save that subject. For this reason the subject abandons himself or herself to *habitation*: they let themselves be swayed by the pseudo-conviction that the external world continues at all times to be what it is, even while they do not explore it and do not know it, that things continue to subsist outside the subject, and that the other ‘I’s continue to search, like the subject, for incomplete forms of truth and goodness. However, nothing can guarantee that this conviction is correct.

Gregory the Great imagines in the *Dialogues* that a woman gives birth to a son while sealed within the four walls of a windowless room in an inaccessible prison, to which the jailers bring food and water so that they can both continue to live: only the testimony of the mother can inform the son about the existence of the outside world. Only by respecting the identity of a subject different from myself, who tells me the truth as they see it, can I hope to progress without errors in the reality to which we both belong. The son of that woman will be able one day to confirm the existence of the outside world only if he succeeds in leaving the prison and exploring what lies outside its walls.⁴⁷ The sense of Gregory’s metaphor is clear. The prison in which the individual subject lives is the spatio-temporal condition of the changeable earthly life, the outside world is the realm of the intelligibles, the stable and real universe of the essences, which the individual subject can no longer explore until the walls of its individual finiteness are demolished. Human beings can believe in the truth of the world of the intelligibles because they discuss and compare the individual experiences by which they approach it. However, if only they were able to share in the truth of an absolute subject, which knows the whole of the truly existing universe and communicates it to the other relative subjects, they could then be certain of living a real life.

In this life however, inside the prison of spatio-temporal finiteness, human beings can only think and act *as if* reality itself existed only thanks to the fact that it is thought and produced by a universal subject-principle: another subject, all-knowing

⁴⁷ See Grégoire le Grand (1980), *Liber Quartus*, 1 (3) (*Patrologia Latina* 66, 320AB), p. 20, 22–37: “Ac si enim praegnans mulier mittatur in carcerem ibique puerum pariat, qui natus puer in carcere nutriatur et crescat; cui si fortasse mater quae hunc genuit, solem, lunam, stellas, montes et campos, volantes aves, currentes equos nominet, ille vero qui est in carcere natus et nutritus nihil aliud quam tenebras carceris sciat, et haec quidem esse audiat, sed quia ea per experimentum non novit, veraciter esse diffidat; ita in hac exsilii sui caecitate nati homines, dum esse summa et invisibilia audiunt, diffidunt an vera sint, quia sola haec infima in quibus nati sunt visibilia noverunt. Unde factum est ut ipse invisibilium et visibilium creator ad humani generis redemptionem Unigenitus Patris veniret, et sanctum Spiritum ad corda nostra mitteret, quatenus per eum vivificati crederemus, quae adhuc scire per experimentum non possumus”.

and all-powerful, in which not only our 'I' but also the 'I' and the *identity* of every single individual are recognised and resolved objectively, i.e. universally and necessarily truthfully. Only by assuming the support of a universal Intelligence, which justifies reality as a knowing and acting subject, will we be able to maintain continuously and by ourselves, without entering into conflict with other individual subjective *identities*, the ability to judge the reality of things critically. The very subsistence of our individual *identity* is therefore the most valid proof of the existence of God: the individual exists because God exists.

Composing a variation on Plato's 'Allegory of the Cave', the young Aristotle had symptomatically prefigured in his *De philosophia* (in a text handed down by Cicero) the possible conclusion of the tale of Gregory the Great: let us imagine that some men have always lived underground and one day they manage to come out into the open and see the marvels of the world, the earth, the sea and the sky, the stars and the light that illuminates everything. They would obviously not be able to stop themselves thinking that the gods truly exist, and that things of that size could be nothing less than their works ("et esse deos et haec tanta operam deorum esse").⁴⁸

Whether He is seen as the Being of Parmenides, or the ideal World of Plato, or the immobile Motor and uncaused Cause of Aristotle, or the exemplary Word of Augustine, or the *quo maius* of Anselm, or the pure Act and the perfectly existing Essence of Thomas Aquinas, the assumption of God as the principle guaranteeing the truth is thus an indispensable postulate for the coherence and stability of any possible philosophical judgement. This would always be true, as long as reason did not choose to renounce its role as knowing critical scepticism, even just taking this assumption purely instrumentally, as the principle of the objective communication of the truth between individual finite rationalities. Treating this assumption as the effect of a universally shared act of faith, medieval Christian philosophers succeeded in making it the original engine of all their research (*inventio*) into truth, trusting in the words of St Paul in his address to the philosophers of the Areopagus of Athens: "[God] hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said".⁴⁹

The Christian law of charity emerges from these historical and critical observations as something far more fundamental (i.e. metaphysical) than a purely ethical norm, as it promotes the exaltation of virtuous behaviour that is essential for building a community of intentions from the components of a spiritual society. Universal love for all individuals of the human species, raised above the love of oneself so as to be absorbed into the shared love of all humanity for the divine principle, is the

⁴⁸ See Aristotle (1955), *De philosophia* (Περὶ φιλοσοφίας), fragment 13, p. 81 = Cicero, *De natura deorum*, II, 37, 95–96.

⁴⁹ Acts 17, 26–28, from the King James Version. In the Vulgate, the passage is as follows: "[Deus] definiens statuta tempora et terminos habitationis eorum, quaerere Deum si forte attraherent eum aut *inveniant*, quamvis non longe ab unoquoque nostrorum: in ipso enim vivimus et movemur et sumus, sicut et quidam vestrorum poetarum dixerunt".

principle of unification and thus validation of the individual intentionalities with which each tends towards the conquest of the Truth and Goodness. Medieval civilisation, in its broadest historical definition based on its identification with the universal empire – from Constantine until the last attempt to assert the unitary nature of Christendom in the time of Charles V of Hapsburg and the battle of Lepanto – is universally supported and governed, in the consciousness of the philosophers and theologians who were its interpreters and promoters, by this *principle of charity*: it constantly inspired the search, on the part of living individual subjects (i.e. individual *identities*), for the sharing of a stable and productive common object. The search was conducted along multiple paths, in the groove of the projection of the individual knowing and ethical *intentiones* in a concert of wills and intelligences, the more authentically harmonious, the more fruitful.

When Alcuin of York criticised Charlemagne over the forced conversion of the Saxons, urging him to send to the newly conquered territories not soldiers armed with swords but teachers and preachers equipped with books and scientific knowledge,⁵⁰ he was applying in his mind the same principle of the charitable adhesion of humanity to the laws of the first Intellect, which supports the densely speculative verses of Dante's *Divina Commedia*. In the latter work, damnation corresponds to the freezing of the multiplication of the intents and perspectives of knowledge imposed by "envy", which denies the individual the fulfilment of the ideal perfection of their nature, founded on loving sharing. In contrast, beatitude is the fulfilment of the universal cohesion to the divine will, the "deep charity which" – according to the formula celebrated among the souls blessed by Pier Damiani, the theologian of divine omnipotence – "makes us prompt in service of the Counsel that rules the world".⁵¹ The implementation of the divine project in obedience to the principle of charity is pursued by the Blessed of Dante's paradise as much on the level of practical reason as on the level of theoretical life: the individual who in paradise orients the *intentio* of his or her own will to the sharing of a superior will commonly shared is indeed, first and foremost, the one who also directs his or her own science, in the form of a knowing *intentio*, towards a shared participation in the laws that govern the universe. Thus, in God as in the Blessed, knowing that two plus two equals four means wanting four to be the result of two times two, and vice versa. The union of wills and of knowledge is what Dante calls the "peace" of

⁵⁰ See *Epistola ad Carolum regem*, in A. Dümmler (Ed.) (1895), 110 (*Patrologia Latina* 101), pp. 157–159. Also by Alcuin of York, see *Epistola ad Armonem Salisburgensem* in A. Dümmler (Ed.) (1895), 113, p. 164, 27–34: "Quomodo potest homo cogi ut credat quod non credit? Impelli potest homo ad baptismum, sed non ad fidem: veluti isti haeretici qui adoptionem carnis in Christo confirmant, nullatenus ad catholicam fidem converti possunt, quia nullam habent voluntatem orthodoxae fidei professionem cum universali Ecclesia cognoscendi. Docendus est itaque homo rationalem habens intelligentiam, et multimoda praedicatione attrahendus, ut sacrae fidei veritatem agnoscat. Et maxime Dei omnipotentis pro eo deprecanda est clementia, quia otiosa est lingua docentis, si gratia divina cor auditoris non imbuit".

⁵¹ Dante Alighieri (1961), XXI, 70–71, p. 307.

“Divine Science”⁵²: because, if it is true that charitable love is aimed at the sharing of the will of God, then knowing the truth of God, with the investigation of the *nature* He created and the interpretation of the *scriptura* He inspired, is the way to understand and respect His commandments and both understand and want their implementation. Thus for Dante – the perfect interpreter of the *medieval paradigm* – knowledge of the truth means the universal sharing in the First Love, to which “Gracious will, into which rightly-breathing love always resolves itself” tends.⁵³ the sharing of goals, which ensures the achievement of happiness for every individual in the fulfilment of the primary desires of each and of all.

When individuals are invited to participate, as far as they are able, in the fullness of the truth and goodness inherent in the perfection of the mind and divine love (i.e. in the Son-knowledge and in the Spirit-love in which the essence-power of the Father is actuated), they set as their ultimate goal not the illegitimate affirmation and expansion of their own subjectivity, but their inclusion in the concert of singularity harmonising with the divine intentionality. And just as the diversity of the sciences contributes to the unitary execution of overall knowledge on the level of epistemological reason, in the same way, in the final sharing of the pure, authentic, original and universally shareable divine intentionality by the Blessed, it is precisely the diversity of the participants that contributes, with the fulfilment of their individual and distinct perfections, to the fulfilment of universal perfection in the universal and eternal archetype.⁵⁴ The whole of medieval civilisation pursues the implementation of a task, at once theoretical and ethical, that coincides with the overall meaning of the idea of *Christianitas*, indicated by theologians as the way to recover happiness for humanity, oriented towards the recomposition of an original project that was shattered into infinite particularities immediately after creation due to sin.⁵⁵

The best outcome of this philosophy is thus precisely the recognition of the *truth of the universals*, the search for which, a constant throughout the Middle Ages, was also the object of much denigration on the part of the ‘enlightened’ historians of rationalistic philosophy.⁵⁶ The world of universals is in reality the equivalent of a superior regionality of knowledge that coincides with the one inhabited by the being in itself, i.e. by the divine subject, which shares in nothing, precisely because it subsists only as a being, and in which everything shares, because its being depends only on this sharing. Anselm of Canterbury, above all with the *unum argumentum* in his *Proslogion*, grasped this full subsistence of the divine, which we are obliged to

⁵² See Dante Alighieri (1995), Vol. II xiv 19, p. 138, 103–106: “Lo Cielo empireo per la sua pace simiglia la Divina Scienza, che *piena è di tutta pace*; la quale non sofferà lite alcuna d’oppinioni o di sofisticati argomenti, per la eccellentissima certezza del suo subietto, lo quale è Dio”.

⁵³ Dante Alighieri (1961), XV, 2, p. 215.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 70–87, pp. 90–93.

⁵⁵ See d’Onofrio G. (1996b); and d’Onofrio G. (1996c).

⁵⁶ See d’Onofrio G. (2011b).

think of as a reason for the being and the true being of every individual, precisely given the impossibility, and because of the impossibility, of thinking of it as subordinate to an external reason of its being. Duns Scotus understood this perfectly, certifying, with his *coloratio Anselmi*, the fact that the non-contradictory thinkability of the infinite being does not depend on other particular thinkabilities; on the contrary, the infinite being is the principle of every thinkability, precisely because the ability of an infinite being to subsist is not contradictory, and because it is not contradictory that a finite being necessarily refers to something infinite.⁵⁷

The being is *infinite* or *eternal* because it is extraneous to any sharing. However, all things that are finite beings share in it in order to be finite. It is in this absolutely fundamental nature that we must seek the speculative peculiarity of the Christian thinking that Edith Stein intended to recover as a possible foundation of the *re-reading of medieval thought in a phenomenological key*, something which Martin Heidegger planned but subsequently abandoned, as Francesco Alfieri reminds us in his introduction to the present volume. This act of renunciation was perhaps determined by the fact that an authentic implementation of the speculative perspective of past Christian thinkers would have required him to *re-read phenomenology in a medievalist key*, i.e. in the light of the fertile contemporary relevance, without chronological or circumstantial limitations, of the model of thought that we have indicated as the *medieval paradigm*. If understood as an *attempt to elevate thought to the level of the being* – against any inverse attempt to reduce the being to subjective individual perception – medieval thought can not only open up modern philosophy to a field of studies that is clarifiable on the basis of a critical application of the phenomenological method, but can also, inversely, provide access to a perspective of thought that is appropriate for further consolidation and justification of the very meaning of that method.

One of the main ills of the twentieth century historiography of philosophy was *comparativism*: i.e. the ideologically driven and prejudicial notion that the only philosophical writings of the past that can draw the interest of the contemporary thinker, directly or indirectly, are those that show a validity that goes beyond the limits of the civilisation in which they were conceived and propagated. All the rest, in this perspective, is merely the archaeology of thought, dominated by antiquated tastes that have nothing to do with philosophy's current concerns. The idea of reading the history of medieval speculation (philosophical and theological) as an area of studies that may be useful for refining contemporary perspectives is generated and propounded and proceeds in exactly the opposite direction: *medieval thought* does not have to be read in the light of what *contemporary thought* might find in it that confirms, anticipates or prepares the ground for its own lines of enquiry. On the contrary, *medieval thought*, if investigated for what the philosophers who produced it actually sought to achieve, i.e. a key with which to interpret the world, the 'I', earthly and other-worldly reality, can highlight possible ways of refining and maturing aspects of *contemporary thought*. In effect, in the speculative processes that were characteristic of the Middle Ages many philosophical orientations can find not

⁵⁷ See Duns Scotus J. (1950), *Ordinatio* I, d. 2, p. 1, qq. 1–2, Nos. 137–139, p. 208.

only interesting precedents, but also clarification and more detailed treatment of specific themes.

However, it is above all in the field of phenomenological research that the speculative paradigm created and universally accepted by medieval intellectuals can be useful, not only as a handy historiographical reference but also as a theoretical model for establishing a close relationship between eidetic-theological and phenomenological thought. Christian theology cannot fail to recognise that below the divine *Logos* only imperfect manifestations of its truth can be the object of intellection, of limited and incomplete notions and at least relatively effective exertion of critical judgement for human minds. A similar phenomenological claim characterised many episodes in the history of medieval thought, due to the fact that every true piece of knowledge was recognised, in the medieval paradigm, only as an incomplete spark of the truth.⁵⁸ Medieval speculation was theological enough to recognise that natural *intelligent reason* can provide a justification and an explanation of each thing, even of itself, but not of the *being*, which requires God as the unintelligible creative cause to be received as the truth. It also understood that in order to exist, natural science has no need of God, because the operation of the divine is not the object of scientific knowledge, and thus there is no need to assume it and investigate its causes (which are contemplated by faith) in order to explain its effects, which alone are the concern of science. *Scientia* has its own specific field of inquiry (nature as a datum) and its own methodological instrument (*critical rationality*), and is not obliged to justify the being of things, despite explaining their origin.

Moreover, every form of *subjectivism* – and within this category, every form of incompleteness and every rigid source of political and religious radicalism – is an irreparable contradiction of the objectivity that supports the truth of knowledge guaranteed by the oneness of divine thought, which thinks of the whole of creation. Only critical reason can perfect, even by approaching it only in theory, this universal knowledge, and strive to make it comprehensible to all, via study and teaching. Indeed, only the assumption of the subsistence of each true thing in the eidetic contemplation of an original Thought enables the knowledge of finite and ‘normal’ thought to move forward. This progress is in turn subjugated by the reference to the givenness of the non-verifiable empirical processes that it shares with the other

⁵⁸ See my considerations in this regard in d’Onofrio G. (2011a), p. 48: “A phenomenological philosophy that agrees to orient itself in all its lines of enquiry *as if* it was set within a speculative framework corresponding to what was universally shared by the wise Christians of the Middle Ages, i.e. admitting, even in a merely instrumental way, but also as a *founding* (and indisputable) *principle* of every one of its lines of enquiry, the eidetic subsistence of the truth in the omniscient immutability of a free and divine causative Thought, might find in this speculative ‘attitude’ a justification, as well as a boost, a resolute impulse for research into the conditions that the subject must fulfil when it seeks to objectively experience the reality of the individual empirical givennesses. The empathy between individual subjects might be more easily achieved if one assumes the harmonisation of the individual intentionalities not with other ‘normal’ individual subjectivities, potentially variable and not universally verifiable, but with the immediate understanding of the totality of the truth and its absoluteness, which is possible, even purely as an instrumental hypothesis, in a divine Intellect” (our translation).

finite and 'normal' subjectivities, without being able to guarantee any universalising and necessitating response.

At the end of the *Consolatio*, Philosophy personified invites Boethius to consider himself capable of sharing in the perfection of the divine Intelligence, as the only way to recognise the justificatory goodness of each thing and each event.⁵⁹ The philosopher of today might wonder, in the light of this teaching – the true inheritance of a man close to the rupture of the fragile link that binds every person to their earthly life – whether and to what extent it is useful to place the knowability of every phenomenon under the pacifying aegis of a divine gaze, which is absolutely unconditioned precisely while it is the very principle of conditioning for every created thing.

The effective subsistence of such a divine gaze can never be 'true' (i.e. demonstrated) for philosophy, but always and only subordinated to assent by faith. Nevertheless, the modern-day philosopher might perhaps understand that this *formal* assumption of true knowledge could have a value as the principle of conciliation – in that it constitutes the conversion to the One – of the infinite subjective differences of opinion, ideology and religion and above all of discord, radicalism, fanaticism, intolerance and persecution that destroy *peace* in the world of human beings. This is a *peace*, as Dante put it, which is fundamentally theological, and of which any modern philosopher may be a legitimate holder, rediscovering the unsuppressible value of the dignified and inalienable identity of every human being. In the shared adhesion to this model the single individual could theoretically find the reasons for a continuously renewable dialogue with other human identities and establish their validity so that they may be applied in particular moments of silence and conflict.

The consonance of the many forms of knowledge in the common recognition of a single universal *Logos* is the foundation on which the *dialogue* between various subjectivities can base itself. Every single manifestation of the being, destined for annihilation in the separation from everything, is achieved and satisfies the subject only by harmonising with the superior subsistence of the original source of the Being, extraneous to any reduction of its perfect subsistence. In the Middle Ages, philosophy (and with it science and the organisation of the sciences) was thus the search, in the various fields of study, for criteria that could ensure, with the judgement of critical reasoning, dialogue between the singularities. The acquired procedures of the so-called 'exact sciences', from the most simple to the most complex, could be admitted and recognised as true by all knowing subjects, because they are rooted in the eternal stability of the *essentiae* or *forms* that do not change: thus, just as it cannot doubt that the square of three is nine and that the whole is greater than the part, the individual intellect could significantly extend the sharability, when legitimate, of other people's thought, and recognise itself in it. Each individual mind could grasp and assess in the concert of the sharing of truths and errors, confirmations and corrections, joys and sufferings, opinions and reasons, ideologies and orientations. Participation in true happiness could mean the

⁵⁹ See *supra*, note 28.

universal sharability of the individual point of view, achievable in symmetrical participation in the unbearability of suffering: thus everyone would know that they save themselves by their loving adherence to the intentionality of the other and condemn themselves by their disinterest for the other. The merciful and the peaceful could build the common city by working together with all those who hunger for knowledge and justice. The egotists and envious, the violent and the torturers, the intolerant defenders of ideologies, rapists and assassins would know the suffering of their victims – they would understand them and share them. The unification of critical judgement, which guides scientific knowledge towards its current and future progress, could be refounded on the admission (even purely functional) of a shared *logos* that – like the voice of a street-seller that everybody hears and recognises along the street – knows the universal truth, feels the joys and bears the suffering of all the individual, minimal thinking subjects that pass through the inordinate relativity of earthly life.

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