

# William of Ware on the Soul and Its Powers

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## William of Ware, I *Sent.*, d. 3, q. 7 (= q. 25)

“Is a power of the soul the same as the soul’s essence, so that a form, immediately through its essence, is a principle of action.”

(Utrum potentia animae sit ipsa essentia eius ita quod forma immediate per essentiam suam sit principium actionis.)

- Celestino Piana, “La Controversia della distinzione fra anima e potenze ai primordi della scuola scotista (1310-1330 c.)”, in: *Miscellanea del Centro di Studi Medievali*. Serie prima (Milan 1956), pp. 65-168, esp. p. 164 (cf. p. 87 n. 4, p. 124 n. 6).
- John H.L. van den Bercken, “John Duns Scotus in Two Minds about the Powers of the Soul”, *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales* 82/2 (2015), pp. 199-240, esp. pp. 212-213.

- G. Gàl, “Gulielmi de Ware, O.F.M.: Doctrina philosophica per summa capita proposita”, *Franciscan Studies* 14 (1954), pp. 155-80 (= part 1), 265-92 (= part 2), esp. pp. 283-286 (“Distinctio formalis potentiarum”).

# What I'll Be Doing

- 1) Brief intro to the later medieval debate on the soul and its powers
- 2) William of Ware's view
- 3) An unnoticed resemblance between Ware and Scotus on the issue

# Soul and Its Powers: Intro

The soul (*anima*) is just that kind of substantial form that makes a physical living thing alive.

# Soul and Its Powers: Intro

The disposition or tendency to bring about a living thing's characteristic life activities is called a power of the soul (*potentia animae*).

# Soul and Its Powers: Intro

## The BIG questions:

- 1) what exactly, ontologically speaking, *is* a power of the soul?
- 2) what is the precise relation between the soul's powers and the soul's essence or substance (*essentia, substantia animae*)?



# Soul and Its Powers: Intro

Two BIG diametrically opposed theories

The distinction theory

vs.

The identity theory

# Soul and Its Powers: Intro

**Distinction theory** of the powers of the soul claims that:

the soul's essence and its powers, and the powers among themselves, must all be, in some way or another, distinct from each other.

# Soul and Its Powers: Intro

## A Distinction Theorist: Thomas Aquinas

### The “always-on” argument

“If a power of the soul were the same as the soul’s essence, it follows that a human being would always be understanding, just as, because the soul, through its essence, informs the body, the soul always perfects the body.”

“Item, si potentia animae esset idem quod essentia, sequitur quod homo semper intelligeret, sicut quia anima per suam essentiam informat corpus, semper ipsum perficit.” (Ware, §23; cf., e.g., Aquinas, *ST I*, q. 77, a. 1, resp.)

# Soul and Its Powers: Intro

## Identity Theory Arguments (Olivi, Henry of Ghent)

- 1) intellect and will would be beatifiable accidents
- 2) an accident, the will, would be free and hence more perfect than its subject, the essence of the soul

# William of Ware's View

“Powers are *virtutes* of the essence, through which the essence elicits diverse operations, but those *virtutes* nevertheless **are the essence** .... But now, because the soul is a principle of eliciting diverse acts, it is required to posit that it has many *virtutes*, which nonetheless **are the very same (*id ipsa*) as the soul really but differing according to *ratio***. Thus, a power adds to the [soul's] essence a *virtus*, not that the *virtus* is other [than the essence] but insofar as [the essence] has the *virtus* of understanding it is called the intellective power, insofar as it has the *virtus* of willing it is called the will. And these powers differ from the soul's essence and among themselves just as the divine attributes differ among themselves and from the divine essence.”

“... potentiae sunt virtutes ipsius essentiae per quas elicit diversas operationes, quae tamen virtutes sunt ipsa essentia.... Nunc autem, quia anima est principium eliciendi diversos actus, oportet ponere ipsam habere multas virtutes, quae tamen sunt id idem quod ipsa realiter et differunt secundum rationem .... Unde potentia super essentiam animae addit virtutem, non quod virtus sit aliud sed in quantum habet virtutem intelligendi dicitur potentia intellectiva, in quantum habet virtutem volendi dicitur voluntas; et differunt istae potentiae ab essentia animae et inter se sicut differunt attributa divina inter se et ab essentia divina.” (Ware, §§89, 91)

# William of Ware's View

“Material Diversity Argument” for Strong Distinction between the Soul and its Powers

“Item, materia est propter formam, ex II *Physicorum* et II *De anima*; actus activorum sunt in patiente, igitur diversitas materialis est propter diversitatem formalem. Et hoc dicit Commentator, I *De anima*, quod membra cervi differunt a membris leonis, quia anima differt ab anima. Sed in organis materialibus est diversitas. Igitur et in potentiis sensitivis.” (Ware, §35)

# William of Ware's View

## Ware's Reply to the Material Diversity Argument:

“Material diversity *is* on account of formal diversity, whether that formal diversity is real or virtual (*virutalem*). In the matter at hand, the material diversity is on account of a formal diversity, not a real formal diversity but a virtual one. For one form, having ten *virtutes* unitively (*unitive*), fashions the matter the same as those *virtutes* would fashion the matter, if they were distinct among themselves essentially.”

“... diversitas materialis est propter diversitatem formalem, vel realem vel virtualem. Modo in proposito diversitas materialis est propter diversitatem formalem, non realem sed virtualem. Idem enim facit materiae habere unam formam habentem 10 virtutes unitive quod facerent illae virtutes sibi, si essent inter se distinctae essentialiter.” (Ware, §75)

# William of Ware's View

“...sicut ex parte obiecti est quod ipsum in se consideratum dicitur ens; prout vero perficit et movet intellectum per speciem suam habet rationem veri ut natum est adaequare sibi intellectum; prout vero habet rationem perfecti potentis inclinare voluntatem dicitur bonum (**et ista tria per ordinem – ens, verum, bonum – sunt idem quod ipsum obiectum**) ...” (Ware, §90)

*(Quotation continued next slide)*



# William of Ware's View

“... the soul as it is considered in and of itself (*in se*) is called ‘essence’, as it is considered as naturally being moved by the true under the *ratio* of true it is called ‘intellect’, as it is considered as naturally being inclined toward the good under the reason of good it is called ‘will’.”

“... sic ex parte animae ipsa prout in se consideratur dicitur essentia, prout est illud quod natum est moveri a vero sub ratione veri dicitur intellectus, prout vero consideratur ut illud quod natum est inclinari in bonum sub ratione boni dicitur voluntas.” (Ware, §90)

*(Quotation continued from previous slide)*

# William of Ware's View

- 1) **et ista tria per ordinem – ens, verum, bonum – sunt idem quod ipsum obiectum** (see slide 16)
- 2) [the soul] has many *virtutes*, which nonetheless **are the very same (*id ipsa*) as the soul really (*realiter*) but differing according to *ratio* (*secundum rationem*)** ... (see slide 13)
- 3) “... the material diversity is on account of a formal diversity, not a **real** formal diversity but a **virtual** one.” (see slide 15)

# William of Ware's View

the soul's having a number of differing powers is, for William, a sort of partitioning (*particulationes*) of the soul, "dividing the entire essence as parts would".

"... sic istae potentiae sunt quasi quaedam partes, dividentes totam essentiam per modum partis. Unde anima dividitur in potentias sicut in quasdam particulationes virtutum, quia essentia sub una virtute non est sub illa ratione sub qua est sub alia virtute." (Ware, §94)

# William of Ware's View

## Distinction between the divine attributes.

“There is an opinion that, eliminating from consideration any intellect, created or uncreated, still these [divine] attributes would differ by reason (*ratione*), and this is shown because these attributal perfections are there in a perfectly unified (*unitissime*) and as truly as can be. From the first, namely from the fact that the attributes are there unitively (*unitive*), is removed any composition that indicates imperfection; there is there maximal simplicity. From the second, namely that they are there as truly as can be, it follows that the perfections and the properties of such attributes are there as truly as can be.”

William of Ware, *I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 3: “Alia est opinio quod circumscripto omni intellectu creato et increato adhuc ista attributa differrent ratione, et hoc ostenditur sic, quia istae perfectiones attributales ibi sunt unitissime et verissime .... Ex primo, scilicet ex hoc quod sunt ibi unitive, tollitur omnis compositio quae arguit imperfectionem, et est ibi maxima simplicitas. Ex secundo, scilicet quod sunt ibi verissime, sequitur quod sunt ibi verissime perfectiones talium attributorum et proprietates ...”

Ed. Garrett R. Smith, “The Problem of Divine Attributes from Thomas Aquinas to Duns Scotus” (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 2013), pp. 158-165, (analysis of Ware's view), pp. 223-247 (edition of Ware's *I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 3, with Intro to the text on pp. 218-222), this text p. 237, ll. 381-389

# William of Ware's View

Is this a **formal distinction**?

I.e., a distinction existing in the thing itself, before any activity of the intellect, and yet not compromising the simplicity of the thing itself, because less than a real distinction.

Recall:

“... the material diversity is on account of a **formal** diversity, not a real **formal** diversity but a virtual one.” (see slide 15)

# Scotus' View (In Bullet Points)

1)

“... the powers are not different things [from], but are unitively (*unitive*) contained in the essence of the soul”

(“... potentiae non sunt res alia, sed sunt unitive contentae in essentia animae” = John Duns Scotus, *Reportata Parisiensa In Opera Omnia*, vol. 11.1, ed. Luke Wadding (Lyon 1639; rpt. Hildesheim 1968), p. 348b.)

# Scotus' View (In Bullet Points)

2)

“Alia est continentia unitiva, quando subiectum unitive continet aliqua, quae sunt quasi passiones, sicut passiones entis non sunt res alia ab ente, quia quandocumque determinatur ipsa res, est ens, vera, bona ...”

(Ed. cit., p. 348b)

# Scotus' View (In Bullet Points)

3)

**“... the powers are not formally or quidditatively the same as each other or as the essence of the soul, and yet they are not different things, but they are the same as to their identity (*idem identitate*). Hence items like this have a distinction according to their formal accounts (*rationes formales*), the kind of distinction that would be a real distinction if they were different things and really distinct.”**

(“... non sunt potentiae idem formaliter vel quidditative, nec inter se nec etiam cum essentia animae, nec tamen sunt res aliae sed idem identitate. Ideo talia habent talem distinctionem secundum rationes formales, qualem haberent realem distinctionem, si essent res aliae realiter distinctae.” (Ed. cit., p. 348b))



# Ware and Scotus (Bibliography)

- Celestino Piana, “La Controversia della distinzione fra anima e potenze ai primordi della scuola scotista (1310-1330 c.)”, in: *Miscellanea del Centro di Studi Medievali*. Serie prima (Milan 1956), pp. 65-168, esp. p. 164 (cf. p. 87 n. 4, p. 124 n. 6).
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# Ware and Scotus

## Thomas Aquinas “Category Argument”

“[Aquinas] proves this in this way according to the Philosopher, V and X *Metaphysics*, that in every genus act and potency belong to the same genus and that they divide every genus. But the acts of the soul’s powers are accidents. Therefore, the powers are as well.”

“... probant sic secundum Philosophum, V et X *Metaphysicae*, quod in omni genere est actus et potentia eiusdem generis et quod dividunt omne genus. Sed actus potentiarum animae sunt accidentia. Igitur, et potentiae.” (Ware, §22; cf., e.g., Aquinas, *ST I*, q. 77, a. 1, resp.)

# Ware and Scotus

“The proposition [that, in every genus there is an act and a power belonging to the same genus and that they divide the genus] is true when it’s about **[a]** a potency that becomes an act, just like a human being in potency is in the same genus as that human being in act. But the proposition is not true when it’s about **[b]** a power eliciting an act and the act elicited.”

“Ad argumentum in se: quod illa propositio habet veritatem de potentia quae fit actus, puta quod in eodem genere est homo in potentia et homo in actu; non autem habet veritatem de potentia elicitante actum et de actu elicito.” (Ware, §55)

# Ware and Scotus

“In reply to the first argument [= the Category Argument] I say that ‘power’ (*potentia*) is taken in two senses. **[b]** In one way, power is taken as a principle of a being (*entis*) and so [understood] it is divided into active and passive principles ... **[a]** In another way power and act are taken as *differentiae* of being ... [and in this way] power and act belong to the same species and individual and are numerically the same, because what first exists in potentiality and diminished being (*esse diminuto*), is subsequently in act and having being without qualification.”

“Ad primam dico quod potentia dupliciter accipitur. Uno modo pro principio entis et sic dividitur in principium activum et passivum .... Alio modo ut potentia et actus sunt differentia entis. Secundo modo potentia et actus sunt eiusdem speciei et individui et idem numero, quia quod prius est potentia et esse diminuto, postea est in actu et habet esse simpliciter ...” Scotus, II *Sent.*, d. 16 (Ed. cit., p. 345b)

# Ware and Scotus

## Ware

“Ad argumentum in se: quod illa propositio habet veritatem **[a]** de potentia quae fit actus, puta quod in eodem genere est homo in potentia et homo in actu; non autem habet veritatem **[b]** de potentia elicitante actum et de actu elicito.”

## Scotus

“Ad primam dico quod potentia dupliciter accipitur. **[b]** Uno modo pro principio entis et sic dividitur in principium activum et passivum .... **[a]** Alio modo ut potentia et actus sunt differentia entis. Secundo modo potentia et actus sunt eiusdem speciei et individui et idem numero, quia quod prius est potentia et esse diminuto, postea est in actu et habet esse simpliciter ...”

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Thank You!!