

The Cartesian Origins of Intentionality: Thought and Sensation as *Directio* in Thomas Bonarte  
(1612/13–~1670)<sup>1</sup>

While medieval scholastic philosophers theorized about intentionality, the early modern period is characterized by attention to the phenomenon of consciousness. In taking consciousness to be the mark of the mental, Descartes exemplifies this philosophical shift. That, at least, is the picture that has emerged from the last several decades of research on medieval and early modern philosophy of mind.<sup>2</sup> This narrative has deep roots: when Franz Clemens Brentano introduced the

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<sup>1</sup> [acknowledgements redacted for review]

References to Thomas Bonarte, *Concordia scientiae cum fide* (Cologne, 1659) are to C, followed by book, paragraph number, and page number).

References to René Descartes, *Oeuvres de Descartes*, ed. Charles Adam and Paul Tannery, 12 vols. (Paris: 1897-1913) are to “AT,” volume, and page number. References to René Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, trans. John Cottingham et al., 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), are to “CSM,” volume, and page number for vols. 1-2 and “CSMK III” and page number for vol. 3. All translations are from *The Philosophical Writings* unless otherwise noted.

<sup>2</sup> For a sample of contemporary research on medieval scholastic theorizing about intentionality, see: Jeffrey E. Brower and Susan Brower-Toland, “Aquinas on Mental Representation: Concepts and Intentionality,” *Philosophical Review* 117, no. 2 (2008): 193–243; Susan Brower-Toland, “Ockham on Judgment, Concepts, and the Problem of Intentionality,” *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 37 (2007): 67–110; Elizabeth Karger, “Adam Wodeham on the Intentionality of Cognitions,” in *Ancient and Medieval Theories of Intentionality*, ed. Dominik Perler (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 283–300; Peter King, “Mediaeval Intentionality and Pseudo-Intentionality,” *Quaestio (Turnhout)* 10 (2010): 25–44; Robert Pasnau, *Theories of Cognition in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge University Press, 1997); Calvin Normore, “Primitive Intentionality and Reduced Intentionality: Ockham’s Legacy,” *Quaestio (Turnhout)* 10 (2010): 255–66; Dominik Perler, *Theorien Der Intentionalität Im Mittelalter*, Philosophische Abhandlungen 82 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2002); Martin Pickavé, “On the Intentionality of the Emotions (and of Other Appetitive Acts),” *Quaestio* 10 (2010): 45–63; Giorgio Pini, “Two Models of Thinking,” in *Intentionality, Cognition, and Mental Representation in Medieval Philosophy* (Fordham, 2015), 81–103.

For two introductions to the topic of early modern theories of consciousness, on which there is a vast literature, see Larry M. Jorgensen, “Seventeenth-Century Theories of Consciousness,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Spring 2020 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2020), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/consciousness-17th/> and Vili Lähteenmäki, “Consciousness in Early Modern Philosophy and Science,” in *Encyclopedia of Early Modern Philosophy and the Sciences*, ed. D. Jalobeanu and C.T. Wolfe, Springer: Cham, 2021, p. 1–12, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-20791-9\\_189-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-20791-9_189-1). A sense of the comparative centrality of consciousness in scholarship on medieval and early modern philosophy of mind, respectively, can be gained from the recent series *The History of the Philosophy of Mind* (6 vols., ed. Rebecca Copenhaver and Christopher Shields (general editors), New York: Routledge, 2019). Across two volumes devoted to the early middle ages through the renaissance (volume 2 and volume 3) and collectively totaling more than 580 pages, there are 92 occurrences of the term “consciousness.” In the volume of just over 370 pages devoted to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (volume 4), the term occurs 548 times.

For an example of the perceived role of the view that consciousness is the mark of the mental in the early modern period and Descartes’s place in that narrative, see the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy article “Consciousness,” which states: “By the beginning of the early modern era in the seventeenth century, consciousness had come full center in thinking about the mind. Indeed from the mid-17th through the late

idea that “direction towards an object” (*Richtung auf ein Objekt*) is a feature that distinguishes mental states from physical states in his *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt*,<sup>3</sup> he identified direction towards an object with the concept of intentional inexistence that he found in “the scholastics” (*die Scholastiker*).<sup>4</sup>

But this perspective on the history of philosophy of mind faces a puzzling anomaly: the Cartesian Thomas Bonarte (1612/13–~1670) argues in his 1659 *magnum opus* that according to the Cartesian view of the mind, the distinguishing feature of thought and sensation is their direction (*directio*) towards objects, and that it is on *precisely this point* that Cartesians and scholastics disagree.<sup>5</sup> As a university-educated scholastic as well as a Cartesian, Bonarte was familiar with scholastic thought and knew Descartes’s works well. Either Bonarte was extraordinarily confused, or he saw something about the relationship between scholastic and Cartesian philosophy of mind that modern scholarship on the subject has not yet brought into view.

In this article, I will argue that Bonarte’s work does in fact yield new insights into the relationship between scholastic and early modern Cartesian views of the mind. In order to do so, it will be convenient to divide Bonarte’s views about the relationship between *directio* on the one hand and thought and sensation on the other into two claims. I call these claims the “Uniqueness Thesis” and the “Essence Thesis.” After introducing Bonarte and his *Concordia scientiae cum fide*, Section 1 will examine the Uniqueness Thesis. Section 2 will examine the Essence Thesis. In Section 1 and Section 2, I will argue that Bonarte’s commitments to the Uniqueness Thesis and the Essence Thesis,

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19th century, consciousness was widely regarded as essential or definitive of the mental. René Descartes defined the very notion of thought (*pensée*) in terms of reflexive consciousness or self-awareness” (Robert van Gulick, “Consciousness,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2022 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2022/entries/consciousness/>. Alison Simmons writes, “Descartes revolutionized our conception of the mind by identifying consciousness as a mark of the mental . . . Or so the story goes” (“Cartesian Consciousness Reconsidered,” *Philosophers’ Imprint* 12 (2012): 1–21, p. 1). On the widely held view that it would be anachronistic to see discussions of consciousness in medieval philosophy; see footnote 34 below.

<sup>3</sup> Franz Clemens Brentano, *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1874), vol. 1, book 2, ch. 1, p. 115

<sup>4</sup> Brentano, *Psychologie*, vol. 1, book 2, ch. 1, p. 115.

<sup>5</sup> Bonarte presents his view in an influential text so far unexamined by historians of philosophy: the *Concordia scientiae cum fide*. See the beginning of Section 1 for biographical information. The full title of the work is *The agreement of knowledge with faith, gathered from the most difficult questions of philosophy and theology, and brought back to a clarity and firmness not a little greater than that which could be hoped for from the obscure principles and uncertain platitudes of the scholastics* (“*Concordia scientiae cum fide e difficillimis philosophiae et theologiae scholasticae quaestionibus concinnata: atque ad claritatem firmitatemque haud paulo majorem, quam quae ab obscuris scholasticorum principiis, et incertis placitis sperari possit revocata*” (Thomas Bonarte, *Concordia scientiae cum fide* (Cologne: 1659), p. 1).

respectively, are motivated by commitments that Bonarte derived from Descartes's thought and *also* are in genuine conflict with Latin scholastic cognition theory. I will show that understanding Bonarte's motivations for these commitments and how they conflicted with scholastic thought yields new perspectives on the relationship between scholasticism and seventeenth-century Cartesianism.

### §1. Bonarte's Account of Thinking and Sensing as *Directio*: The Uniqueness Thesis

Bonarte subscribes to what I will call the Uniqueness Thesis: all and only thought and sensation possess the feature Bonarte calls *directio*. Bonarte's adherence to the Uniqueness Thesis is both inspired by his reading of Descartes and in genuine conflict with scholastic views of the mind. As a result of seeing the Cartesian inspirations and anti-scholastic nature of the Uniqueness Thesis, we gain a neglected perspective on the relationship between Cartesian and scholastic thought.

However, we need to begin a step further back with an introduction to Bonarte and his *Concordia*. Despite his current obscurity, Thomas Bonarte was a relatively well-known figure in the early modern period. Leibniz mentions Bonarte repeatedly in his notes and letters, discusses his views in the *Essais de Théodicée*, and owned and annotated a copy of the *Concordia*.<sup>6</sup> Bonarte's thesis that *cognitio* consists in direction found its way into Etienne Chauvin's widely read 1692 *Lexicon philosophicum*.<sup>7</sup> Bonarte's thesis about the nature of *cognitio* also shows up, without attribution, in a discussion of the nature of *cognitio* in the Cartesian Jesuit Antoine Le Grand.<sup>8</sup>

Bonarte was a member of the Jesuit order, but other biographical details are difficult to determine. This is partly due to his use of pseudonyms (a common practice amongst English Jesuits after the English Reformation), which has resulted in scholarly confusion about Bonarte's original name. It was probably not Bonarte. Leibniz reports that he was told by Bartholomew Des Bosses that Bonarte's real name was Thomas Barton.<sup>9</sup> The *Concordia* was published under the name Thomas

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<sup>6</sup> For Leibniz's annotations of the *Concordia* and a list of his other references to Bonarte, see Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Samtliche Schriften und Briefe* (Berlin, Darmstadt, Leipzig: Akademie-Verlag, 1923ff), Series 6, vol. 4, part 3, p. 2582ff. Leibniz underlined the words *in directione* where Bonarte introduces his account of *cognitio* as consisting in direction in Book 2, §25 of the *Concordia*. For Leibniz's references to Bonarte in the *Théodicée*, see Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Philosophische Schriften*, ed. C. I. Gerhardt, Reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1965, 7 vols. (Berlin: 1875), vol. 6, p. 34, 100.

<sup>7</sup> *Lexicon philosophicum* (Rotterdam: 1692), entry for *cognitio*. For modern scholarship on the *Lexicon*, see Giuliano Gasparri, *Etienne Chauvin (1640-1725) and His Lexicon Philosophicum*, Europaea Memoria. Reihe 1, Studien; Bd. 116 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2016).

<sup>8</sup> *Dissertatio de ratione cognoscendi* (London: 1698), p. 3–4. On Le Grand, see Patricia Easton, "Antoine Le Grand," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Spring 2018 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2018), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2018/entries/legrand/>.

<sup>9</sup> Leibniz, *Philosophische Schriften*, vol. 6, p. 100.

Bonarte Nordtanus. The antiquarian Thomas Hearne reported that Nordtanus was an anagram for Anderton. So Bonarte's original name may be Thomas Anderton.<sup>10</sup> For the sake of continuity with previous scholarly references to Bonarte, I will refer to Bonarte in this paper with the name by which he was known to Leibniz: Thomas Bonarte. Bonarte was born in 1612 or 1613.<sup>11</sup> There appears to be no surviving record of his activities beyond 1664-5.<sup>12</sup> He studied at the Jesuit college of St. Omer which was, along with Bruges and Liège, one of three colleges established after the English Reformation for the education of expatriate English Jesuits.<sup>13</sup>

Bonarte is known to have written two extant works, the *Concordia scientiae cum fide*, and a book titled *A Sovereign Remedy Against Atheism*.<sup>14</sup> The *Concordia* was placed on the *Index of Prohibited Books* in 1664.<sup>15</sup> Running to 371 pages in the 1559 edition, the *Concordia* is divided into five books: On Body (1), On the Incorporeal (2), On God (3), On Christ (4), and On Analysis (5). The work is Cartesian, but Bonarte also announces his intention to add to and develop Descartes's philosophy: at the end of Book 1, he offers a long list of topics that he claims Descartes never discussed fully.<sup>16</sup> Bonarte's attitude towards prior scholastic thought is far less sanguine, as the full title of the work indicates and as will become clear below.<sup>17</sup>

Since the text of the *Concordia* has not yet been discussed by historians of philosophy, I will begin by briefly summarizing the content of the work leading up to Bonarte's fullest statement of his views about the relationship between *cognitio* and *directio*.<sup>18</sup> (I hope that this will also indicate that the

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Hearne, *Remarks and Collections of Thomas Hearne*, Vol. 1 (July 4, 1705—March 19, 1707), ed. C.E. Doble (Oxford: 1885), p. 78.

<sup>11</sup> Geoffrey Holt, *St. Omers and Bruges Colleges, 1593-1773. Catholic Records Society Publications*, vol. 69 (1979), p. 18.

<sup>12</sup> Henry Foley, *Records of the English Society of the Province of Jesus*, vol. 7, part. 1 (1875), p. 39.

<sup>13</sup> Holt, *St. Omers and Bruges Colleges*, p. 18. An early and previously unnoticed source for information about Bonarte's life are the notes of the antiquarian Thomas Hearne (see footnote 10), who claims to have seen a letter from an acquaintance of Bonarte's, Charles Willoughby, to Bishop Thomas Barlow providing details about Bonarte's life (p. 78).

<sup>14</sup> The latter work is a polemic against English Protestantism. The preface to *A Sovereign Remedy* (1672) reports that a geometry which Bonarte intended to publish was found with it in Holland. If the work was published posthumously, as the tone of the preface would indicate, then we have a firm terminus ad quem for Bonarte's dates.

<sup>15</sup> *Index librorum prohibitorum* (Rome: 1664), p. 388.

<sup>16</sup> C II §48.

<sup>17</sup> See footnote 5.

<sup>18</sup> Bonarte is mentioned in just one out of four major volumes on Descartes and Cartesianism, and then only in a footnote: Roger Ariew, *Descartes and the First Cartesians* (Oxford University Press, 2014) (not mentioned); Stephen Gaukroger and Catherine Wilson, *Descartes and Cartesianism: Essays in Honour of Desmond Clarke* (Oxford University Press, 2017) (not mentioned); Steven Nadler, Tad M. Schmaltz, and Delphine Antoine-Mahut, *The Oxford Handbook of Descartes and Cartesianism* (Oxford University Press, 2019) (mentioned in

*Concordia* is a rich work that will repay much further study.) Book 1 of Bonarte’s *Concordia* is a Cartesian account of the nature of bodies. Bonarte begins, in §1, with a definition of the essence of body, which he takes to be extension. §§1-6 are devoted to defending this notion of body against alternatives and to showing that figure, motion, and rest are the only modes of body compatible with its essence. §§7-15 begin what is in effect a Cartesian discussion of the Aristotelian categories, with Bonarte arguing that there are no real qualities such as heat, light, dryness, heaviness, etc. In §§16-23, Bonarte continues the discussion of the categories, giving an account of motion, location, and contact between bodies. §§23-37, the final sections of this treatise on the categories, are devoted to a critique of scholastic views on the nature of action, causation and relations. §§37-45 form a treatise on various types of change recognized by medieval Aristotelians (change of place, change of quality, change of quantity, and substantial generation and corruption). Discussion of the fourth type of change leads naturally to a lengthy of the notions of form and matter, to which Bonarte is predictably hostile, in the final few sections of this treatise. §§46-51 are a long and partially autobiographical discussion of the relationship between scholastic and Cartesian philosophy.

Book 2 of the *Concordia*, *De incorporeo*, is devoted primarily to an account of the nature of the human mind and its connection to the body. But Bonarte does not get around to explicitly setting out the view that thought and sensation consist in direction until §25, more than twenty five pages into Book 2. §§1-2 argue that bodies are passive and that only minds are active. §§3-5 offer a set of arguments that the capacities for self-motion, reflexivity, and thought entail that the human soul is incorporeal. This naturally raises the question, which Bonarte takes up in §6, of whether the ability to sense entails incorporeality. In §§6-7, Bonarte concludes that the ability to sense does entail incorporeality. §8 argues that the power to create also entails incorporeality. §§9-12 are a discussion of how all the activities and passions of incorporeal things—moving, creating, sensing, and understanding—jointly constitute *perceptio*. §13 turns to the issue of whether animals can sense. Disagreeing with Descartes, Bonarte argues that animals can sense and that animal souls are therefore in some way incorporeal. §§14-15 are a discussion of method, in which Bonarte concludes that in discussing incorporeal things it is best to start with the type of incorporeal being most known to us, namely our own minds.

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footnote 25 of Sophie Roux, “The Condemnations of Cartesian Natural Philosophy under Louis XIV (1661–1691,” p. 755–779); Tad M. Schmaltz, *Early Modern Cartesianisms: Dutch and French Constructions* (Oxford University Press, 2016) (not mentioned).

This leads naturally to a discussion of the ways that incorporeal things (such as human souls) can be present to and united with corporeal things (such as human bodies), which will occupy §§16-26 and lead to a more systematic discussion of the nature of sensation. §§16-20 are about what it is for an incorporeal thing to be merely present to a corporeal thing. §21 begins a discussion of what it is for an incorporeal thing to be united to a corporeal thing. The discussions are closely linked, since Bonarte thinks that both presence and unity turn out to be founded in the action of incorporeal things on corporeal things. After a general discussion of the nature of the substantial union of soul and body, §23 introduces a discussion of the common functions of the substantial composite of soul and body, and of sensation in particular. In §§23-25, Bonarte accuses the standard scholastic account of *cognitio*, which characterize *cognitio* as a kind of *similitudo* or *repraesentatio*, of being unable to account for the bodily and material nature of sensation. And it is precisely because of this failure of scholastic accounts of *cognitio* that Bonarte offers, in §25, his own account of *cognitio* as direction and argues that this account gives him the resources to explain how sensation is a function of both soul and body, rather than the soul alone.<sup>19</sup>

In §25, after previous hints that he takes the essence of *cognitio* to be *directio* to an object, we find the passage on *directio* that would later be cited by Chauvin and Le Grand:

Therefore, let us offer something both obvious and familiar, belonging both to *cognitio* alone and to every *cognitio*. I find this not in a likeness (*similitudo*), a copy, or a representation, but in direction (*directio*). For every *cognitio*, both of sense as well as of the mind, whether human, angelic, or divine, directs the one cognizing. And all the varieties and many properties of *cognitio* are propagated from direction as if from a first shoot.

And all those things which are thought to lack *cognitio* lack that feature [sc., direction]. For bodies are not directed so as to pursue a particular location by their own heaviness or lightness, but by the impulse of another. Nor is impulse itself signified by the terminology of direction except in the way that the effects or signs of health are said to be healthy. For formal (*formalis*) direction belongs to *cognitio* alone. And indeed, anyone accustomed to clear

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<sup>19</sup> In particular, it may be clear from this survey that Bonarte's account of sensation, which accuses scholastic philosophers of being unable to account for the *materiality* of sensation, subverts a standard picture of the relationship between scholasticism and Cartesianism: As Bonarte sees it, scholastics have long struggled to explain how sensation is an essentially embodied state, whereas Cartesians have an easy way of explaining this fact.

concepts should not attribute [*directio*] to volition, which belongs more to inclination and propensity than to direction, indication, or showing.

Nor is a thought called an image of a flower from likeness, since nothing more unlike is able to be imagined, but rather because an image directs the one cognizing that they might recognize the flower. Indeed, *cognitio* is indicated no less by the terminology of “sign” and “mark,” even though signs are found to be most dissimilar to things. For fire is recognized by smell and smoke and sound, and wine is indicated by ivy.<sup>20</sup> And because light in transparent air guides us by an exterior and material direction, for that reason we extend [the terms] “clarity” and “transparency” to interior and formal direction.<sup>21</sup>

We will examine some parts of this passage here and some below. Before we try to understand Bonarte’s claim in this passage, two brief notes about terminology are in order: I have translated, and will continue to translate, *directio* as “direction” rather than “directedness.” The active connotation of the word *directio*, the sense in which it means something like “directing” as well as “direction,” is clearly on Bonarte’s mind. “Direction” better captures this active connotation than “directedness.” (We will see what this active connotation amounts to in a moment.) Second, Bonarte uses the term *cognitio* as a completely general term for all thought and sensation. Indeed, this is the standard late medieval use of the term.<sup>22</sup> Thus, *cognitio* does not mean what the English word ‘cognition’ means.

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<sup>20</sup> Bonarte refers to the use of an image of ivy to indicate a shop that sold wine (because of the ancient association between ivy and Dionysus and Bacchus). His examples of signs are carefully chosen: The smoke and smell and sound of fire are *natural* signs of fire, whereas ivy is a *conventional* sign of wine.

<sup>21</sup> “Proferamus igitur aliquid et notum, et obvium, tum omni et soli cognitioni conveniens. Eam igitur neque in similitudine, effigie, aut repraesentatione, sed in directione constituo. omnis enim cognitio tam sensus, quam mentis seu humanae, seu Angelicae, seu divinae cognoscentem dirigit, atque e directione velut e prima stirpe cognitionum omnis varietas, proprietatesque multiplices propagantur, eaque res omnes carent quae cognitionis expertes esse censentur. Neque enim corpora gravitate, aut levitate propria, sed impulsione aliena, ut loca certa capessant diriguntur, neque impulsio ipsa aliter directionis vocabulo significatur, quam sanitaris effecta, aut signa, sana dicuntur. Formalis enim directio cognitioni soli convenit, quam ne volitioni quidem, quae inclinationi potius, et propensione, quam directioni, indicationi, aut ostensioni convenit, quisquam notionibus claris assuetus tribuat. Neque intellectio ex similitudine vocatur imago floris, cum nihil magis dissimile fingi queat, sed quia imago cognoscentem dirigit, ut florem agnoscat. Cognitio quippe non minus signi et notae nominibus indicatur, licet signa rebus dissimilima reperiantur. Ignis enim et odore, et fumo, et fragore discernitur, hederaque vinum ostenditur. Et quia lux in aere perspicuo directione exteriori et materiali nos ducit, claritatem idcirco, et perspicuitatem directioni interiori, et formali largimur” (C II §25, p. 90).

<sup>22</sup> This is clear from the quoted passage, where Bonarte writes that he has in mind “every *cognitio*, both of sense and of the mind.” *Cognitio* does not refer only to mental states that involve some degree of cognitive processing or reasoning or perception, as the English word “cognition” does. Bonarte’s is the standard

That is, *cognitio* does not connote a level of mental processing over and above mere sensation. Since there is no English word that both has the scope of *cognitio* and can be used as a count noun, as *cognitio* can, I will often leave *cognitio* (plural: *cognitiones*) untranslated, sometimes using “thought and sensation” as an equivalent.

In the first sentence of this passage, Bonarte states what I will call the Uniqueness Thesis: all and only *cognitiones* have direction (direction is a feature “belonging both to *cognitio* alone and to every *cognitio*”). It also appears likely from this passage that Bonarte holds the stronger claim that the nature of *cognitio* consists in direction—that is the Essence Thesis, to which we will return in Section 2.

To understand the Uniqueness Thesis, we need to know what Bonarte means by *directio* or, as he sometimes calls it, *formalis directio*.<sup>23</sup> A useful *locus* for understanding what Bonarte means by direction is the second paragraph of Book 2, where Bonarte proposes a “very clear” argument for his claim that only living things have the ability to move themselves:

It belongs to ensouled things to cognize. *Cognitio* is formally direction, as we will see below. By motion, things are directed to a goal (*terminus*). Therefore, the power of moving involves direction or *cognitio*, which no one of sound mind would assign to stones and logs.<sup>24</sup>

Bonarte thinks that the ability to move bodies somehow entails the possession of direction. This is also clear from the second paragraph of the long passage from §25 quoted above, where Bonarte writes:

For bodies are not directed so as to pursue a particular location by their own heaviness or lightness, but by the impulse of another.

Everything that has the active power to move a body has direction.

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scholastic use of the term *cognitio*. See, for instance, Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet I*, ed. R. Macken, *Opera omnia* vol. 5 (1979), p. 92: “Sed cum in homine duplex sit cognitio, una sensitiva et altera intellectiva.”

<sup>23</sup> See footnote 21.

<sup>24</sup> “Animantium enim est, cognoscere, cognitio formaliter directio est uti postea videbimus, motu res, ad terminum diriguntur, vis igitur movendi directionem seu cognitionem involvit, quam saxi, et truncis nemo sanae mentis addixerit” (CI §2, p. 66).



Now, we can distinguish several levels of abstraction at which the notion of an active power seems to involve something like direction. At the most specific level, as it were, when an active power is manifested, it provides an impulse towards some goal (if there were an active power of *gravitas*, as the scholastics but not Bonarte thought there was, it would actively “push” a body toward the center of the earth). This “impelling” is itself a kind of direction, in the active sense that it is a “directing” of the body. At a slightly higher-level of generality, in order to impel a body in this way, an active power must have, as it were, an *inclination* to move a body toward a specific location or state. It seems to be part of the concept of an active power that it possesses this inclination even when it is not acting on anything (the active power to heat is, as it were, inclined to produce heat in a body even when the power is not being exercised). Finally, at the most abstract level, to even possess an inclination towards some goal or state, an active power must be, as it were, oriented towards or directed upon that goal or state. The active power to heat an object contains in its nature an essential reference to heat.

When Bonarte writes that “the power of moving involves direction,” which of these ways in which an active power has direction does he have in mind? If we consider the second paragraph in the long passage from *C I* §25, I think we can see that he must have in mind the third, most abstract, sense. In the second paragraph of the passage quoted above, Bonarte clarifies that he does not have in mind the first sense:

Nor is impulse itself signified by the terminology of direction except in the way that the effects or signs of health are said to be healthy.

An active power’s activity of “pushing” an object towards some location or state is not what Bonarte means by *directio*. *Directio* is not “directing” in the sense of “moving something in a direction” or “changing something towards a state.”

But Bonarte does not have the second sense in which an active power has direction in mind either. Just consider what he says about volition in the same paragraph:

And indeed, anyone accustomed to clear concepts should not attribute [*directio*] to volition, which belongs more to inclination and propensity than to direction, indication, or showing.

An active power's direction is not its *inclination* to bring about some result. In what sense, then, does the concept of an active power include direction if not in the sense that it brings about some goal or state or the sense that it is inclined to do so? The answer seems clear: an active power for bringing about some state or goal presupposes an *orientation toward* that state or goal. And the orientation in question is not an orientation in the sense of being an inclination, but an orientation in the thin sense of being *directed upon*, conceptually prior to any inclination towards or away from what the state is directed upon.

But why in that case, we might ask, does Bonarte speak of direction as if it were somehow active? After all, the meaning of *directio* seems closer to “directing” than to “directedness.” The first paragraph of the long passage quoted above hints at an answer:

For every *cognitio*, both of sense as well as of the mind, whether human, angelic, or divine, directs the one cognizing.

The direction possessed by *cognitio* is active in the sense that it *directs the mind towards objects*. But of course, particular *cognitiones*, which in Bonarte's Cartesian metaphysics are modes of the mind, do not push or impel or incline the mind towards objects in some efficient-causal way.<sup>25</sup> Instead, they are that *by which*, in a formal-causal sense, the mind is directed or oriented towards objects. That is why Bonarte writes that *cognitio* is *formalis directio*: Thoughts and sensations are modes by which the mind is directed at objects. Now that we know what Bonarte means by “direction,” the meaning of the Uniqueness Thesis is clear: according to the Uniqueness Thesis, all and only thoughts and sensations are modes by which the mind is directed upon objects.

With the a clearer grasp of the Uniqueness Thesis, we can now wonder what it was about Bonarte's Cartesianism that led him to adopt it. After all, Descartes does not seem to make any such claim about the nature and scope of directedness towards objects. In fact, however, it was Bonarte's understanding of Descartes's view of *body* that led him to adopt the Uniqueness Thesis. Bonarte opens the *Concordia* by accepting the Cartesian claim that the essence of body is extension:

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<sup>25</sup> See, e.g., *C II* §56, p. 127: *Nihil enim apud me est praeter rem, et modum; modus autem nullus incorporei praeter cognitionem et volitionem actualem.*” For the claim that a mode is that by a subject is characterized in a certain way, see *C I* §31, p. 41: *“Modus autem . . . non aliquid est, sed quo aliquid est.”*

Let me begin from a very widespread and ready to hand notion, by which we learn, from nature rather than teaching, and even from earliest childhood, to form in each of our souls the idea of a certain thing extended in every direction. Indeed, I mean this notion and the thing signified falling under it whenever I use the noun “body.” Therefore, if it is the case that anything is extended in every direction, I stipulate that it should be called by the appropriate term “body.” If, in turn, it happens that something is to be called by the term “body,” I will not deny that it is extended in every direction. In addition, I will never agree that something should be called body which either lacks this extension by its nature or would appear deprived of it in any way whatsoever by an external force.<sup>26</sup>

The view that the essence of body is extension is, of course, a recognizably Cartesian commitment.

In Book 1, it becomes clear that, like other early Cartesians, Bonarte takes this Cartesian account of the essence of body to rule out the scholastic view that bodies have active powers such as *gravitas* and *levitas* that direct their motion:

Perhaps you will ascribe heaviness and lightness to qualities by the commands of which bodies are carried upward or downward. What way of philosophizing is thus so upside down, that you flee what is clear and, constrained by no necessity, pursue what is alien to common sense and the opinion of the ancients? What is clearer than that bodies are inactive by an innate lack of power, and seek a particular place when pushed by an external force?<sup>27</sup>

In Book 2, Bonarte reminds the reader that the view of body set out in Book 1 entails that bodies, having only properties that can be understood through the attribute of extension, are essentially passive.

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<sup>26</sup> “Ordinar a notione facillima juxta ac frequentissima, qua rem quandam quoquoversus extensam animis informare singuli, natura non disciplina, jam tum a prima usque didicimus pueritia. Hanc equidem notionem, remque ei subiectam significatam volo, quotiescunque corporis nomen usurpo. Si quid igitur quoquoversus extensum esse constat, id ego corpus appellatione propria vocandum esse profiteor, neque si vicissim corporis appellatione quippiam nuncupandum occurrat, quoquoversus extensum diffitebor, hac insuper extensione quod vel natura sua carans, vel aliena virtute quomodolibet spoliatum appareat, illud ego nusquam corpus nominandum assentiar” (CI §1, p. 3).

<sup>27</sup> “Gravitatem fortasse, et levitatem qualitatibus adscribes quarum nutibus deorsum, aut sursum ferantur corpora. Quenam est ita tam praepostera philosophandi ratio, ut quod clarum est fugias; quod obscurum, quod a veterum, et communi sensu alienum, nullaque coactus necessitate secteris? Quid clarius quam corpus inertia nativa torpescere, aliena vi pulsum loca certa capessere?” (CI §15, p. 22–23).

We have shown above (not at all obscurely, unless I'm mistaken) that body and what is extended are the same. But nothing can be gathered either from the transparent notion of extension, or from the constant experience of extended things, by which it would be permissible to suspect that there is in them a power of moving themselves or of changing themselves into different figures.<sup>28</sup>

This, too, is a recognizably Cartesian move: bodies have only those properties that can be understood as modifications of extension. But it seems that active power is not such a property.<sup>29</sup>

Not only is Bonarte's view that bodies have only properties that can be conceived through the attribute of extension Cartesian, but the idea that the concept of active powers such as gravity includes a concept that is proper to the mind is also found in Descartes's writing. In the *Sixth Replies*, Descartes writes:

But what makes it especially clear that my idea of gravity was taken largely from the idea I had of the mind is the fact that I thought that gravity carried bodies towards the centre of the earth as if it had some knowledge of the centre within itself. For this surely could not happen without knowledge, and there can be no knowledge except in a mind (CSM II 298).<sup>30</sup>

Bonarte's claim that direction is a mark of thought and sensation is thus Cartesian in two ways. First, it is an apparent consequence (though perhaps one not accepted by Descartes himself) of the view

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<sup>28</sup> "Corpus et extensum idem esse supra haud obscure, ni fallor, declaravimus. Nihil autem vel ex perspicua extensionis notione, vel e continua extensorum experientia colligitur, quo suspicari liceat vim illis inesse semet movendi, vel in varias figuras transformandi" (C II §1, p. 65).

<sup>29</sup> See *Principia* I 53 (AT VIII 25). While this commitment clearly provides some pressure to adopt the view that bodies do not have active powers (because it seems that possessing and exercising active power is not a way of being extended), Descartes scholarship leans towards the view that he did think bodies act on other bodies and on the mind. Whatever Descartes's own view, the view that Cartesian commitments led to the view that bodies do not have active power was of course widespread among early Cartesians. For discussion, see Schmalz, *Early Modern Cartesianism*, Ch. 4. Bonarte's argument for the passivity of body from the attribute of extension is what Schmalz refers to as Malebranche's "Passive Nature" argument against body-body causation (*Early Modern Cartesianism*, p. 211). For discussion and analysis of Descartes's thesis that consciousness is the mark of the mental, see Simmons, "Cartesian Consciousness Reconsidered."

<sup>30</sup> "Sed ex eo praecipue apparet illam gravitatis ideam fuisse ex parte ab illa, quam habbam mentis, desumptam, quod putarem gravitatem deferre corpora versus centram terrae, tanquam si aliquam eius cognitionem in se contineret. Neque enim hoc profecto sine cognitione fieri, neque ulla cognitio nisi in mente esse potest" (AT VII 442). See also (AT III 667–68; CSMK III 219); (AT V 222–23; CSMK III 358).

that the essence of body is extension. Second, it develops Descartes's suggestion that the concept of a directed active power, such as gravity, makes use of the concept of thought.

But this Cartesian motivation for Bonarte's Uniqueness Thesis makes it easy to see why he also takes the Uniqueness Thesis to be anti-scholastic. It is only because Bonarte thinks that bodies do not have their own internal direction that he can claim thought and sensation *alone* have direction. But of course it is precisely this sort of internal direction that Bonarte rightly takes scholastic philosophers to ascribe to the active powers of bodies, such as heaviness and lightness.<sup>31</sup> In scholastic physics, a heavy object has a quality that contains an orientation towards the center of the earth. This orientation allows it to move the object in the direction of the goal.<sup>32</sup> Thus, no scholastic philosopher could endorse the Uniqueness Thesis. For the scholastics, *formalis directio* is ubiquitous—it is found in sticks and stones as well as in minds.

Bonarte makes precisely this point at the beginning of Book 2 of the *Concordia*:

And here it would not be difficult to have noticed how obstructed the path is to many seeking the incorporeal, who impute to body a power of directing itself to a certain goal by an inward motive force, and of giving existence to others by a productive force—both blind—and attribute to the forms of animals, even though [they take them to be] bodily, even a power of perceiving. And indeed they will find the only open path by which they might investigate incorporeal things that of choice and abstract understanding.<sup>33</sup>

The philosophers whose path to understanding the incorporeal is obstructed are the scholastics. According to Bonarte, the scholastics cannot understand the incorporeal precisely because they attribute active powers (“a power of directing itself”) to bodies. As a result, Bonarte thinks, the

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<sup>31</sup> On this point, see Jeffrey Brower, “First Principles: Hylomorphism and Causation,” in *The New Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, ed. Eleanore Stump and Thomas Joseph White, Cambridge University Press, 2022: 31–56, p. 50.

<sup>32</sup> See, for instance, William of Ockham, *Quaestiones in Librum Quartum Sententiarum (Reportatio)*, ed. Gedeon Gal and G. R. Green, *Opera Theologica* 7, 1984, q. 16 (p. 361): “Si quaeras per quid movetur grave effective quando est extra locum suum, respondeo: per gravitatem suam quae est qualitas distincta ab eius substantia, et ideo si separetur per potentiam Dei, adhuc moveret se ad centrum” (emphasis mine).

<sup>33</sup> “Atque hic etiam observasse non pigeat, quam obstructa sit via plerisque quaerentibus incorporeum, qui corpori semet ad certum terminum vi motrice intima dirigendi, vique productrice, utraque tamen caeca, existentiam aliis tribuendi, tum formis animalium tametsi corporeis etiam percipiendi facultatem adjudicant. Solam etenim eligendi et abstracte intelligendi viam qua incorporea rimentur apertam invenient” (C II §10, p. 71).

scholastics are left without a properly general concept of the incorporeal. Thus, they have to resort to the concepts of free will and intellectual thought to understand incorporeal things. For Bonarte, who does not think that bodies have direction, it is possible to identify mere orientation toward objects as distinctive of *cognitio*. In this fairly obvious way, then, Descartes's rejection of scholastic physics opened the way for Bonarte's claim that direction is unique to thought and sensation.

In the introduction, I noted that it is surprising to find a Cartesian expressing the view that direction towards an object is a mark of thought and sensation as both a development of Descartes's own thought and as an anti-scholastic thesis. But we can now see that Bonarte's commitment to the Uniqueness Thesis is both coherently motivated by his Cartesian commitments and in genuine conflict with scholastic thought. Bonarte is right that scholastic philosophers thought that bodies have built-in directedness. The idea that mere direction towards an object is unique to thought and sensation could only emerge in a scholar who rejects scholastic physics and its ubiquitous directedness. Surprisingly, then, the view that bare direction is a distinctive feature of the mental is a product of Descartes's picture of the physical world.

This is indeed a new perspective: in the introduction, I noted that that scholastic theorizing about thought and sensation is widely seen as concerned with offering a theory of intentionality. On the other hand, the concept of consciousness is often seen as emerging in the seventeenth century, with the result that applying it to earlier figures constitutes anachronism.<sup>34</sup> Ironically, Bonarte's adoption of the Uniqueness Thesis suggests that taking scholastic theorizing about thought and sensation to be concerned with the phenomenon of intentionality is *equally anachronistic*.<sup>35</sup> After all, scholastic philosophers saw the scope of direction as extending well beyond thought and sensation, and even beyond living things in general. Whatever scholastic philosophers are offering a theory in the discussions and debates that are sometimes identified as theorizing about intentionality, it is not the phenomenon of direction toward objects *simpliciter*. As I will suggest in Section 3, it is precisely

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<sup>34</sup> For instance, Jorgensen writes "A history of consciousness, in its modern sense, properly starts with Descartes" ("Seventeenth-Century Theories of Consciousness"). Peter King writes that "there does not seem to be any grounding in mediæval texts for the notion of 'what it is like'" ("Mediaeval Intentionality and Pseudo-Intentionality," p. 18). The concept of intentionality is treated rather differently; the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* article on medieval theories of mental representation states "it has been widely recognized that Franz Brentano was reviving a scholastic notion when he introduced intentionality as 'the mark of the mental'" (Henrik Lagerlund, "Mental Representation in Medieval Philosophy," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2023 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2023/entries/representation-medieval/>).

<sup>35</sup> Hence this article's title: the notion that directedness towards objects is uniquely mental seems originate in a Cartesian view of the physical.

the ubiquity of direction that led scholastic philosophers to adopt other ways of characterizing the nature of thought and sensation.

This tension between the view that active powers are found throughout nature and the notion that directedness is a mark of the mental reappears in the twentieth century. In late twentieth-century philosophy, the idea that direction towards an object is a mark of the mental was challenged by philosophers—first Martin and Pfieler, and then U.T. Place—who contended that physical dispositions are directed towards objects just as much as intentional mental states.<sup>36</sup> A magnet's disposition to attract metals is directed at metals just as much as a thought of magnets is directed at magnets. In Place's formulation, intentionality is "the mark of the dispositional" rather than the mark of the mental. Bonarte's *Concordia* suggests how such a situation might have arisen in the first place: in Bonarte's Cartesian universe, mere, literal direction really is restricted to mental states. In a metaphysics with irreducible non-mental dispositions, directionality is no more restricted to the mind than it was for scholastic philosophers.

In this section, we have seen that Bonarte's commitment to the Uniqueness Thesis is indeed inspired by Descartes's rejection of scholastic physics. On the other hand, Bonarte offers the Essence Thesis as a *replacement* for what he takes to be the scholastic view of the nature of *cognitio*. As we will see, in adopting the Essence Thesis, Bonarte once again provides a new and compelling perspective on the transition from scholastic to Cartesian philosophy of mind.

## §2. Bonarte's Rejection of *Similitudo* and *Repraesentatio*: The Essence Thesis

In Section 1, we saw that Bonarte adopts what I have called the Uniqueness Thesis: direction is a feature of all and only thoughts and sensations. But Bonarte not only thinks that direction is a feature of all and only thoughts and sensations, he also thinks that it is the *nature* of thought and sensation. That Bonarte endorses the Essence Thesis is already *suggested* by his endorsement of the Uniqueness Thesis in *C II* §25. Recall that in Book 1 Bonarte purports to offer a Cartesian account of the essence of *body* as extension. It is natural to expect, then, that in *C II* §25, when Bonarte introduces direction as an "obvious" feature applying of all and only *cognitiones*, he is offering an account of the essence of mind.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> C. B. Martin and Karl Pfieler, "Intentionality and the Non-Psychological," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 46, no. 4 (June 1986): 531–54. U. T. Place, "Intentionality as the Mark of the Dispositional," *Dialectica* 50, no. 2 (1996): 91–120.

<sup>37</sup> For such an account of the essence of the mental to be successful, Bonarte would have to show that *volitions* as well as thoughts and sensations are related to *directio* in the way that modes of extension are related to

But there are also locations where Bonarte directly endorses the Essence Thesis. On multiple occasions, he writes that he takes *cognitio* to be direction:

“*Cognitio* is formally direction” (C I §2, p. 66).

“. . . indeed, direction to an end is *cognitio*”<sup>38</sup>

“. . . to know, therefore, is not *repraesentatio* but direction.”<sup>39</sup>

And he claims that we can deduce all of the properties of *cognitio* from direction:

And all the many varieties and necessary features of *cognitio* are propagated from direction as if from a first shoot.<sup>40</sup>

This is, of course, exactly what we would expect if direction were the essence of *cognitio*. If *directio* were merely a *feature* that belonged to all and only thoughts and sensations, we would not expect Bonarte to think that all of the other necessary features of *cognitio* can be derived from it. I will call this the Essence Thesis: direction is the essence of thought and sensation.

At first glance, it might seem that Bonarte’s commitment to the Essence Thesis involves little that was not already entailed by his commitment to the Uniqueness Thesis. What does the view that direction is the essence of *cognitio* add to the view that it is a feature belonging to all and only *cognitiones*? However, if we consider two other views about the nature of thought and sensation on offer in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, we can see that Bonarte’s commitment to the Essence Thesis adds something quite substantive to his commitment to the Uniqueness Thesis.

Leibniz, in his notes *Quid est idea* (with which Bonarte would of course have been unfamiliar), writes that the nature of an idea consists in a kind of abstract similarity with what it represents:

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extension. Though I will not examine how Bonarte addresses this challenge here, it seems he has a view like this in mind; see C II §9, p. 71, where he writes “Et movere quidem cum sit mobile ad metam certam dirigere, directio vero ad finem sit cognitio, liquet vim moventem a cognoscente separari non potest.” See also C III §27, p. 176, as well as C III §31, p. 183, where Bonarte writes that direction is related to volition as figure is related to motion.

<sup>38</sup> “. . . directio vero ad finem sit cognitio” (C II §9, p. 71)

<sup>39</sup> “. . . scire igitur non repraesentatio sed directio est” (C II §28, p. 94).

<sup>40</sup> See footnote 21.



It is necessary that there is something in me, which not only leads to the thing [of which I have an idea], but also expresses that thing.

For that is said to express some thing, in which there are relations which correspond to the relations of the expressed thing. . . . And what is common to all of these expressions is that from the mere contemplation of the relationships of the expressing thing we are able to arrive at a knowledge of the corresponding properties of the expressed thing.<sup>41</sup>

Now, if the essence of an idea is that it has relations corresponding to the relations of its object (i.e., that it is somehow *isomorphic* to the object), it seems that the direction of ideas is grounded in this isomorphism. Therefore, on such a view, direction is not the essence of thought and sensation, but rather a feature (even if a feature unique to thought and sensation) that they have only in virtue of being expressions of their objects.

Bonarte ridicules this kind of view harshly in Book 2:

What sort of definition or explanation of a hidden nature is this, which only claims regarding the unknown thing that it is similar in a certain way to something else, although not a shadow of similarity appears? I guess you would correctly define a crocodile if you were to say that it is something similar to a mushroom! Nor do these things [crocodile and mushroom] differ as much among themselves as an act or accident that is active, incorporeal, non-extended, vital, and individual would differ from an object or substance that is corporeal, extended, divided, inanimate, and inactive.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Leibniz writes in the sentence following the quoted passage: “For this reason, it is clear that it is not necessary that what expresses is similar to the thing expressed, as long as a kind of analogy of relationships is maintained.” It seems, however, that Bonarte means to reject even the abstract kind of isomorphism between ideas and their objects that Leibniz does not want to call similarity. “Necesse est ergo esse aliquid in me, quod non tantum ad rem ducat, sed etiam eam exprimat. Exprimere aliquam rem dicitur illud, in quo habentur habitudines quae habitudinibus rei exprimendae respondent. Sed eae expressiones variae sunt . . . Et quod expressionibus istis commune est, ex sola contemplatione habitudinum exprimentis possumus venire in cognitionem proprietatum respondentium rei exprimendae. Unde patet non esse necessarium, ut id quod exprimit simile sit rei expressae, modo habitudinum quaedam analogia servetur” (*Die philosophischen Schriften*, vol. 7/7, ed. C. I. Gerhardt (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1890), p. 263–64). Leibniz’s view that representation consists in a kind of isomorphism between idea and object is well known. For discussion, see Alison Simmons, “Changing the Cartesian Mind: Leibniz on Sensation, Representation and Consciousness,” *The Philosophical Review* 110, no. 1 (2001): 31–75, p. 41–43, 67–68.

<sup>42</sup> Qualis autem est ista definitio seu occultae naturae explanatio, quae de re ignota id tantum exponit, quod alteri quodammodo similis sit, cum nec similitudinis umbra compareat? Crocodilum, opinor probe definias, si rem quandam fungo similem dixeris. Neque enim haec inter se tantum dissident, quantum actus sive occidens

And a bit later he writes:

The fact that some *cognitiones* direct in a determinate way, others indeterminately, is known and certain, and suited to explicating the properties of *cognitiones*. But that they are similar either to things or to words is not only unknown and uncertain and unsuited [to explicating their properties], but it is also so foreign to the notion of a mode of an incorporeal thing that it could be thought of as completely foreign.<sup>43</sup>

The view that thoughts and sensations are likenesses commits the mistake of applying a concept suited to explicating relations between bodies (picturing) to the mind. The notion of direction, Bonarte thinks, is clear, and thus fit to be a concept of the nature of the mental. The notion of likeness, on the other hand, is obscure.

Leibniz's is not the only view of the nature of thought and sensation that conflicts with Bonarte's commitment to the Essence Thesis; Descartes's own apparent views about the nature of thought and sensation also seem to be in conflict with the Essence Thesis. Descartes claims that all acts of *cogitatio* "fall under the common concept of thought or perception or consciousness" (AT VII 176/CSM II 124). And in the *Principles of Philosophy* Descartes explicitly adopts the view that something is a thought or a sensation only insofar as we have the special, immediate kind of awareness of it that he calls *conscientia*:

By the term "thought" I understand all those things that happens in us while we are aware (*consciis*), in so far as (*quatenus*) there is awareness of them in us. (CSM I 195; modified).<sup>44</sup>

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(*sic*) actuosum, incorporeum, inextensum, vitale, individuum, ab obiecto vel substantia corporea, extensa, dividua, inanimata, et interte discrepet" (C II §24, p. 89–90). *Occidens* is a mistake for *accidens* and is corrected in the 1665 Cologne edition (II §24, p. 88).

<sup>43</sup> "Quod cognitiones aliae indefinite, aliae definite dirigant, id notum est, certum est, atque ad earum proprietates explicandas aptum est, quod autem vel rebus, vel verbis similes sint, id vero non modo ignotum, incertum, et ineptum est, verum etiam a modi incorporei notione tam alienum est quam quod cogitari possit alienissimum" (C II §27, p. 93).

<sup>44</sup> "Cogitationis nomine, intelligo illa omnia, quae nobis consciis in nobis fiunt, quatenus eorum in nobis conscientia est" (AT VIII 7).

But notice that nothing about the concept of mental direction seems to require that in having such direction, the subject is also *experiences* her mental direction. The concept of unconscious mental directedness seems perfectly coherent.

In fact, this is precisely the view that Bonarte defends. That Bonarte thinks the human mind contains non-conscious direction is clear from Bonarte's discussion of non-conscious *cognitio* in *C II* §§38-39. Bonarte begins §38 by asserting that a mode produced in a subject remains unless it is destroyed by a contrary mode. He then points out the implications of this principle for the permanence of our thoughts and sensations:

But first, we must here take up again what was shown elsewhere: no modification or accidental feature of any thing is ever cast off until another contrary (*adversa*) one drives it out. On account of this, it is the case that the soul always retains the very information or, so to speak, impression which it acquires by sensing or thinking or willing, as long as it does not suffer a contrary (*contrariam*) one, and thus the soul never parts with [many of these impressions].<sup>45</sup>

Then, Bonarte opens §39 by asking whether his view entails that a sleeping geometer sees and thinks about figures. After distinguishing between a corporeal and incorporeal aspect of sensation, Bonarte argues that all of the modes of the soul, both universal (say, the concept of tree) and fully determinate (say, a tree of a fully determinate shape with a fully determinate shade of green) remain until driven out by contrary modes.<sup>46</sup> Bonarte then notes that it follows that we have *cognitiones*, and thus mental direction, even when these *cognitiones* are possessed unconsciously:

Therefore, even in sleep, and drowsiness, and at all times the soul retains the universal and singular notions of bodies, and certainly the universal notions of incorporeal things as well—unless it happens to be deprived of them by errors. . . . You know all of these things at all times, even if you do not know that you know, as Augustine says, because you never lose the

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<sup>45</sup> “Atque illud in primis hoc loco recolendum est quod alibi ostensum est, nullam rei cuiuspiam vel modificationem, seu proprietatem accidentariam, quoad eam alia adversa propellat, unquam extrudi. Quo fit ut informationem, vel, ut ita dicam, impressionem quam anima sentiendo, intelligendo, aut volendo obtinet, eam ipsam, quamdiu contrariam non patitur, semper retineat, plurimasque proinde nunquam amittat” (*C II* §38, p. 105).

<sup>46</sup> A fully determinate mode of thought directed at a sensory object is still not a sensation unless it is joined with a mode of body. See the discussion in *C II* §39.

knowledge which you formerly obtained. And this same knowledge is truly and properly called “actual,” because it is the very same knowledge that was formerly in act, not, on the contrary, a seed or remnant or offspring of it, or whatever name you should call that habit that is not so much left behind by acts as invented by writers.<sup>47</sup>

Bonarte thinks that acts of thought and seeing can remain even when we do not consciously experience them.

In fact, Bonarte claims, not only do our thoughts remain when we no longer experience them, but many thoughts and acts of imagination even begin to occur without our noticing:

Nor would it be fair to tear out this knowledge, which has been established by the strongest argumentation, just because it escapes attention. In fact, according to the opinion of everyone, many thoughts and volitions, and indeed even some imaginings, originate unknown to us while we are reflecting on other things.<sup>48</sup>

We only notice these hidden thoughts, Bonarte goes on to write, when we turn our attention to them.<sup>49</sup>

Thus, Bonarte’s commitment to the Essence Thesis leaves him with a “thinner” conception of the nature of thought and sensation than the conceptions of Leibniz and Descartes. Leibniz takes the essence of thought and sensation to be a kind of structural isomorphism to what they represent, whereas Bonarte takes direction to be primitive and ungrounded in relations of likeness. Descartes took consciousness to belong to the essence of thought and sensation, but Bonarte thinks that direction is not essentially conscious.

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<sup>47</sup> “Universales igitur corporum notiones, incorporeorum vero universales pariter, et singulares anima, nisi forte contrariis erroribus depravata, etiam in somno, et lethargo, et semper retinet. . . . Haec omni scis tempore, tametsi scire te nescias, ut Augustinus loquitur, cum horum scientiam quam nactus es olim, numquam amittas. Eademque scientia vere, et proprie actualis dicitur, quia eadem ipsa est quae olim actu fuerat, non autem illius semen, aut sedimentum, aut soboles, seu quocunque nomine habitum illum non tam ab actibus relictum, quam ab authoribus confictum appelles” (C II §39, p. 108).

<sup>48</sup> “Neque scientiam hanc argumentatione firmissima stabilitam, quod animadversionem effugiat, idcirco ex animis evellere aequum fuerit. Plurimae quippe intellectiones, et volitiones, et vero etiam nonnullae imaginationes, ex omnium sententia clam nobis et alia cogitantibus oriuntur” (C II §39, p. 108)

<sup>49</sup> See the sentences of §39 following the text quoted in the previous quotation. It seems that Bonarte is committed to some form of higher order theory of consciousness.

One further clarification about Bonarte's view of direction is in order here. It is clear from what we have said so far that Bonarte takes direction to be *primitive*—there is no deeper feature of thoughts and sensations (such as an isomorphism relation) in virtue of which their direction towards their objects is grounded. However, this leaves open the question of whether direction is *relational* or *monadic*.<sup>50</sup> At first, the concept of monadic direction might seem odd. When we say that a mental state is directed upon an oak tree, aren't we *ipso facto* describing a relation between the mental state and the oak tree? But a little reflection shows that there is nothing obviously incoherent in denying that there is a relation here. It seems plausible that paintings of oak trees would still be about oak trees even if no oak trees existed (and thus there were no oak trees to which the paintings were related). And on scholastic views of active powers, active powers are *directed towards* their manifestations even when those manifestations do not exist (and thus are not available for the powers to be related to). So also, it seems, it is coherent to conceive of primitive direction towards a non-existent, and thus towards an object to which there can be no relation.

Whatever its plausibility, this is clearly the view Bonarte holds. In *C I*, he attacks the view that relations exist, arguing that they are neither substances nor modes of substances (§§25-26, p. 35-38). Since thoughts and sensations are modes of substances, this entails that thoughts and sensations are not relations.<sup>51</sup> In fact, Bonarte mocks the view that *cognitiones* connect their subjects to their objects on the grounds that *cognitiones* often have non-existent objects.<sup>52</sup>

The contrast between Bonarte's view of the essence of thought and sensation and Descartes's own view raises the question of how Bonarte's commitment to the Essence Thesis could have been motivated by his Cartesianism. It is important not to overstate Bonarte's reliance on Descartes here. Bonarte does not obviously take Descartes himself to be committed to the Essence Thesis (on the other hand, he probably does think that Descartes is at least implicitly committed to the Uniqueness Thesis). And in Book 1, Bonarte tells the reader that he thinks Descartes's views about the nature of body are very well-developed, whereas he only credits Descartes with making a good start on the nature of mind:

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<sup>50</sup> The same question is considered with respect to Aquinas's theory of intentionality by Brower and Brower-Toland in "Aquinas on Mental Representation" (p. 231–233). They conclude that Aquinas thinks that intentionality is a monadic property of a subject rather than a relation.

<sup>51</sup> For Bonarte's view that thoughts and sensations are modes, see footnote 25.

<sup>52</sup> See *C II* §§50–53, p. 122–125, especially §50, p. 122 where Bonarte writes "quod autem terminet [e.g., the object of the *cognitio*] nullum habet." The entire discussion is a sustained attack on the scholastic view that there are objects for thoughts about non-existent entities, on which see below. See also *C II* §30, p. 310 ("non enim in rem cognitam cadit cognitio").

I found what was in [some of Descartes's works] regarding incorporeal things certainly not unsuccessfully begun (*inchoata*), but I found very many things regarding bodies explained in the most successful manner.<sup>53</sup>

There is thus no need to read Bonarte as taking Descartes to be explicitly or even implicitly committed to the Essence Thesis.

Nonetheless, Bonarte's way of introducing his view that *cognitio* is *directio* is highly suggestive of Cartesian inspiration. As we saw in Section 2, in *C* II §25 he notes that *directio* is an "obvious" concept, invoking the Cartesian goal of using only clear concepts to conceive of the nature of the mind. Indeed, this commitment to clarity is one way in which Bonarte's adoption of the Essence Thesis is inspired by Descartes: he takes the concept of direction to be *clear*, and thus to fit a key Cartesian criterion for a concept of the essence of mind.

There is another way in which Bonarte's commitment to the Essence Thesis seems to be inspired by Descartes. Like Bonarte, Descartes rejected the view that ideas are not like the things of which they are ideas. Descartes devotes Chapter 1 of *Le monde* to arguing that our ideas need not be likenesses of objects, writing in the first paragraph:

. . . the first point I want to draw to your attention is that there may be a difference between the sensation we have of light (i.e. the idea of light which is formed in our imagination by the mediation of our eyes) and what it is in the objects that produces this sensation within us (i.e. what it is in a flame or the sun that we call by the name "light"). For although everyone is commonly convinced that the ideas we have in our mind are wholly similar to the objects from which they proceed, nevertheless I cannot see any reason which assures us that this is so. On the contrary, I note many observations which should make us doubt it (*CSM* I 81).<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> "In his de incorporeis quidem nonnulla non infeliciter inchoate, de corporibus vero permulta felicissime explicate reperi" (*C* I §48, p. 60).

<sup>54</sup> "la premiere chose dont je veux vous avertir, eft, qu'il peut y avoir de la différence entre le sentiment que nous en avons, c'est à dire l'idée qui s'en forme en nostre imagination par l'entremise de nos yeux, et ce qui est dans les objets qui produit en nous ce sentiment, c'est à dire ce qui est dans la flâme ou dans le Soleil, qui s'appelle du nom de Lumière. Car encore que chacun se persuade communément, que les idées que nous avons en nostre pensée sont entièrement semblables aux objets dont elles procèdent, je ne vois point toutesfois de raison, qui nous assure que cela soit; mais je remarque, au contraire, plusieurs expériences qui nous en doivent faire douter" (*AT* XI 3–4)

The claim that our ideas need not be like their objects in order to be about them is a constant theme in Descartes's work.<sup>55</sup> The rejection of similarity demands an *alternative* account of what it is for an idea to be about an object. Descartes does not develop such an account explicitly. But, by positing that bare, ungrounded direction is the essence of thought and sensation, Bonarte does.

There is one other important way in which Bonarte's adoption of the Essence Thesis was inspired by a Cartesian commitment. Descartes takes everything in the mind to be a mode of thought, just as all of the features of body are modes of extension. And just like every mode of extension is a way that extension can be, so every mode of thought is a way thought can be. And since Descartes characterizes thought as consciousness, everything in the mind must be a form of consciousness.<sup>56</sup> The result is Descartes's famous view that everything in the mind is a conscious thought.<sup>57</sup>

As we have already seen, Bonarte rejects Descartes's view that every thought and sensation is conscious. But this makes it easy to overlook the fact that, like Descartes, Bonarte seems committed to giving an account of the nature of thought and sensation through which every mode of the mind (assuming that he can extend his account to volition<sup>58</sup>) can be understood through a single attribute—though in Bonarte's view this attribute is direction rather than consciousness.

Bonarte's way of developing Descartes's commitment to a "one-level" account of the mind even has advantages over Descartes's own way of doing so. It is *prima facie* implausible that everything in the mind is conscious. And thus Descartes's view that the contents of the mind include only conscious thoughts and sensations seems rather implausible.<sup>59</sup> But there is no corresponding difficulty in conceiving of the mind as containing unconscious direction.

Not only is Bonarte's endorsement of the Essence Thesis inspired by his Cartesianism, it also constitutes a break with *scholastic* views of the nature of thought and sensation. In fact, Bonarte develops his commitment to a "one-level" view of the mind in explicit opposition to scholastic thought. According to the standard scholastic view, there are two levels of *cognitiones*, namely what the scholastics call "actual" (*actualis*) thoughts and sensations and, in addition, acquired dispositions

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<sup>55</sup> See, for example, AT III 48/CSMK III 146; CSM I 165/AT VI 112.

<sup>56</sup> See *Principia* I 53 (AT VIII 25). On the definition of thought, see *Principia* I 9 (AT VIII 7).

<sup>57</sup> See footnote 2.

<sup>58</sup> See footnote 37.

<sup>59</sup> For discussion, see Simmons, "Cartesian Consciousness Reconsidered."

to have such thoughts and sensations, which dispositions scholastic philosophers call “habits” (*habitus*). Bonarte roundly rejects this scholastic view:

But the opinion of more recent philosophers is very different [from the opinion that there are unconscious thoughts and sensations]—they think that the mode of the soul by which it is made knowing or willing soon fades away. And they believe that another mode produced from the previous one replaces it, which they pretend is very dissimilar to the previous one. And in fact [this mode] does not make someone knowing or willing, but only makes them more prepared for willing and knowing. This they call a habit. And they believe that it persists in the soul as a sort of hidden seed of future acts.<sup>60</sup>

As Bonarte notes, the habits posited by the scholastics are not themselves thoughts or sensations, but rather merely dispositions to think or to sense. This “two-level” view of the mind takes the mind to have modes of two radically different kinds. Bonarte’s view, on the other hand, allows him to posit only one kind of mode in the mind to account for thought and sensation. It is because the scholastics distinguish between “actual” *cognitiones* and acquired dispositions to those *cognitiones* that Bonarte emphasizes in *C II* §39, p. 108 that, on his view, cognitive state is an actual *cognitio*:

And this same knowledge is truly and properly called “actual,” because it is the very same knowledge that was formerly in act, not, on the contrary, a seed or remnant or offspring of it, or whatever name you should call that habit that is not so much left behind by acts as invented by writers.

The “writers” in question are, of course, the scholastics.

More fundamentally, in adopting the Essence Thesis Bonarte also explicitly rejects scholastic accounts of the nature of thought and sensation. In Section 2, I noted that because scholastic philosophers held that direction is ubiquitous, they could not take mere intentionality or

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<sup>60</sup> “Caeterum longe diversa est recentium philosophorum sententia, qui ipsum animae modum quo sciens, aut volens redditur, mox evanescere, aliumque ab eo productum substitui arbitrantur, quem priori plane dissimilem comminiscuntur, quippe qui non scientem, aut volentem, sed tantum adsciendum (*sic*) et volendum paratiorem efficiat. Hunc appellant habitum, et actuum futurorum veluti semen arcanum in anima residere sentiunt” (*C II* §38, p. 105–106). The 1665 Cologne edition corrects *adsciendum* to *ad sciendum* (*II* §38, p. 104).



directedness to be distinctive of thought and sensation, nor of the mental in general. However, scholastic philosophers *did* have ways of specifying what they took to be the nature of thought and sensation. Inspired by Aristotle's characterization of sensory powers as receiving the form of an object without its matter, medieval scholastic philosophers, especially in the thirteenth century, sometimes characterize the essence of thought and sensation as involving the reception of the form or likeness (*similitudo*) of what is thought or sensed.<sup>61</sup> Scholars including Aquinas called these likenesses *species*.<sup>62</sup> But a problem that was already present in Aristotle quickly became central to the scholastic discussion. Scholastics took sensory *species* to exist not only in human and animal minds, but also in the non-cognitive physical world, e.g., in the air.<sup>63</sup> Thus, it seems that identifying *cognitio* with taking on a likeness would entail that even the air has *cognitio*.<sup>64</sup> If there are likenesses in nature, what is it that sets thinking and sensing apart from the mere (non-mental) possession of a likeness?

The early Thomist scholastic Thomas of Sutton responds to this problem in a way that would become characteristic of later scholastic thought. Thomas of Sutton considers the issue of why a species received in the mind is a sensation, whereas a species received in the air is not. Sutton responds by saying that a likeness in the mind “does not only perfect the sense as a form, that is, in the way it perfects the medium, *but also as an image representing the sensible to sense*” (my emphasis).<sup>65</sup> A mere species in the air is just a likeness; it does not represent anything to a subject, whereas a likeness in the sense does present something to a subject. And the next major scholar to follow Aquinas at the University of Paris, Henry of Ghent, argued in his *Quodlibet IV*, Question 7 that there are two kinds of *similitudo*. One is the kind of to which sensible species belong, which Henry called a *species/similitudo impressa*. This is a type of mental likeness that can exist without an occurrent thought or sensation—you can have it in a dreamless sleep, for instance. But Henry finds in Augustine the idea of a different kind of *similitudo*, a *similitudo expressa* that essentially manifests or shows something

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<sup>61</sup> Aristotle, *Aristotelis: De anima*, ed. D. Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, (1956)), 424a17–21.

<sup>62</sup> See Robert Pasnau, *Theories of Cognition in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 86–87.

<sup>63</sup> For a review of medieval views on *species*, see Leen Spruit, *Species Intelligibilis: From Perception to Knowledge*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1993).

<sup>64</sup> See Pasnau, *Theories of Cognition*, p. 47–60.

<sup>65</sup> “. . . non solum enim perficit sensum sub ratione formae, sicut perficit medium, sed sub ratione imaginis repraesentantis sensui illud sensible” (Thomas of Sutton, *Thomas von Sutton: Quodlibeta*, ed. Michael Schmaus and Maria Gonzalez-Haba (Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie, 1969), q. 2.13, p. 266.49–50). See also Thomas of Sutton, *Quaestiones Ordinariae*, ed. Johannes Schneider (München: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie, 1977), q. 23, p. 634.89–92

to a thinking or sensing subject.<sup>66</sup> The *similitudo expressa*, Henry argued, is involved only in occurrent thought and sensation.<sup>67</sup>

This characterization of thought and sensation became standard when Peter Auriol (fl. 1310s) argued that it is the nature of thought and sensation to an object “appear to” some subject. He identifies this appearing with the phenomenon of *repraesentatio*—that is, of an object being presented or manifested to the mind.<sup>68</sup> Auriol argues that we must posit both a real mental likeness (something like Henry’s *species impressa*) and a phenomenal kind of being or *esse apparens* (something like Henry’s *species expressa* which he also calls a *similitudo*) in order to account for the phenomenon of objects appearing to subjects.<sup>69</sup> From Auriol onward, this view of *cognitio* as that by which something appears to or is represented to a subject is standard. It is often paired with the view that the phenomenology of *cognitio* requires a mental likeness or image manifesting an object to the mind, thus combining the view that *cognitio* involves a *similitudo* with the view that it consists in *repraesentatio*.

Major scholastic figures from the second quarter of the fourteenth century onward characterize *cognitio* along such lines. The following passages from influential medieval scholastics provide an idea of just how common this way of characterizing *cognitio* was:

Peter Auriol (fl. 1310s): “Moreover, ‘to see’, ‘to think’, and ‘to comprehend’ are equivalent terms, on account of which the essence signified by each is the same, although perhaps it differs according to the more and less general. But it is clear that seeing consists in having

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<sup>66</sup> Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet IV*, ed. Gordon Wilson and Girard Etzkorn, *Opera Omnia 8* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2012), q. 7, p. 46, 48. Henry describes the *similitudo expressa* as “obiectum in cognitivo tamquam forma exemplaris expressiva sive repraesentativa, praesens et movens ad actum intelligendi” (*Quodlibet IV*, q. 7, p. 41).

<sup>67</sup> “Secundum hunc etiam modum intelligens et intellectum sibi assimilantur et hoc per actum intelligendi potius quam per aliquam informationem speciei impressivae. Illa enim assimilatio quae fit ex speciei informatione, inest secundum actum absque actuali consideratione, ut patet de assimilatione memoriae sensitivae per speciem impressam ad id cuius est, qualis non est in vi intellectiva. Memoria enim intellectiva, si tamen sit proprie loquendo ponere eam, assimilatur rei per notitiam habitualementem quam tenet et quae eam informat, etiam cum mens nihil actu intelligat. Unde est in potentia respectu illius notitiae quae actualiter informat intelligentiam, a qua proprie dicitur intellectus esse in actu” (*Quodlibet IV* q. 7, p. 43).

<sup>68</sup> “Actus enim cognitivus est ille quo universale repraesentatur vel praesentatur in esse apparenti. Hoc enim est intelligere rem, scilicet menti praesentialiter apparere” (Peter Auriol and Russell L. Friedman, “Scriptum Super Primum Sententiarum d. 35, Pars 1,” n.d., <http://www.peterauriol.net/auriol-pdf/SCR-35-1.pdf>, p. 8.611–613).

<sup>69</sup> See Russell L. Friedman, “Act, Species, and Appearance,” in *Intentionality, Cognition, and Mental Representation in Medieval Philosophy* (Fordham, 2015), 141–64 for Auriol’s account of *esse apparens*. For Auriol’s claim that *esse apparens* is a kind of *similitudo*, see Auriol’s *Scriptum*, d. 2, q. 10, a. 4 (Peter Auriol, *Scriptum Super Primum Sententiarum: Distinctions II–VIII*, ed. Eligius Buytaert, O.F.M., vol. 2, (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 1956), p. 548.23–24). I thank [redacted for review] for drawing my attention to this latter passage.

something present in the manner of something that appears. For to say that something is seen by someone is nothing other than to say that it appears to them.”<sup>70</sup>

Adam Wodeham (fl. 1330s): “Every apprehension shows and manifests that which is apprehended to the power in which [the apprehension] is.”<sup>71</sup>

Gregory of Rimini (fl. 1340s): “Not just any display of the presence of an object is sufficient [for a quality to be a *cognitio actualis*], but only a display through which the thing [cognized] is placed within the actual gaze of the mind.”<sup>72</sup>

John of Ripa (fl. 1350s): “Every actual perception of an object is a spiritual experience [of that object] . . . For every perception of an object is a certain intentional or intellectual sensation of that object. For anyone who perceives something vitally senses that thing.”<sup>73</sup>

Second scholastic philosophers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries also adopted this way of characterizing the nature of thought and sensation. In these centuries, it was standard to define *cognitio* as an act or likeness manifesting or representing something to the mind:

Gervasius Waim (1519): *A notitia* (i.e., *cognitio*) is a quality formally representing something or representing in some way to a cognitive power.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> “Praeterea, videre, intelligere, et comprehendere sunt aequipollentia nomina, propter quod formalis ratio significata per utrumque est eadem, forte differens secundum superius et inferius. Sed manifestum est quod videre consistit in habere aliquid sibi praesens per modum apparentis, nihil enim aliud est dicere aliquid videri alicui quam illud sibi apparere” (Peter Auriol, *Scriptum super primum Sententiarum*, ed. Russel Friedman, <http://www.peterauriol.net/auriol-pdf/SCR-35-1.pdf>, d. 35, Pars 1, a. 1, p. 7.351–56).

<sup>71</sup> “omnis apprehensio offert et exprimit potentiae, in qua est, illud quod apprehenditur” (Adam Wodeham, *Lectura Secunda*, ed. Rega Wood and Gedeon O.F.M. Gál, vol. 3 (St. Bonaventure: St. Bonaventure University, 1990), q. 23, a. 1, p. 316.56–57).

<sup>72</sup> “. . . non qualiscumque exhibitio praesentiae obiecti sufficit [for a quality to be a *notitia/cognitio actualis*], sed ea tantummodo per quam res in actuali conspectu mentis ponitur” (Gregory of Rimini, *Lectura Super Primum et Secundum Sententiarum*, ed. A. Damasus Trapp, vol. 5 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1979), l. 2, d. 7, q. 3, p. 157)).

<sup>73</sup> “. . . omnis perceptio actualis obiecti est aliqua experientia spiritualis . . . nam omnis perceptio obiecti est quaedam sensatio intentionalis vel intellectualis ipsius; quilibet enim qui percipit aliquid sentit illud vitaliter” (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, lat. 1082, f. 81rb).

<sup>74</sup> “Notitia est qualitas potentiae cognitivae aliquid vel aqualiter formaliter representans” (Gervasius Waim, *Tractatus noticiarum* (Paris, 1519), Ch. 1).

Giovanni Bellarini (1606): “*Cognitio* is the manifestation of some thing in something else together with awareness (*advertentia*) on the part of that thing.”<sup>75</sup>

*De anima* of the Collegium Complutense (1632): “Thought is nothing other than the actual manifestation through which a thing is manifested to the intellect.”<sup>76</sup>

Pedro Hurtado de Mendoza (1624): “For [mental] speech, only that likeness is required that suffices for displaying and manifesting the object. But in every created thought there is found a likeness sufficient for manifesting the object to the intellect.”<sup>77</sup>

Rodrigo de Arriaga (1632): “We only experience that through a *cognitio* some object is manifested to us.”<sup>78</sup>

From the fourteenth-century onward, mainstream scholastics characterized *cognitio* as that by which an object appears to or is represented to a subject (even if possessing a likeness was also a necessary condition for cognizing).

From this brief survey, it seems that this scholastic consensus about the nature of thought and sensation can be divided into two parts. First, there is what I will call the Presence Requirement: when a subject thinks or senses, that which is thought or sensed is “represented” (*repraesentatio* contains the Latin word for “making present,” *praesentatio*) or manifested to a subject. Sometimes (in Peter Auriol, for instance), this notion of presence is cashed out in terms of an object’s being before the mind in “objective” or “appearing” being. Second, there is what I will call the Subjectivity Requirement: the object thought or sensed is presented *to* or manifested *to* or appears *to* a subject. Both of these requirements may be fulfilled partly in virtue of the subject possessing a likeness of

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<sup>75</sup> “Cognitio est manifestatio alicuius rei facta in aliquo cum advertentia illius” (Giovanni Bellarini, *Praxis scientiarum* (1606), l. 1, d. 1, p. 19).

<sup>76</sup> “Intellectio nihil est aliud, quam actualis manifestatio per quam res intellectui manifestatur” (Collegium Complutense, *Disputationes in tres libros Aristotelis De anima* (Lyon, 1637), disp. 21, q. 2, p. 527b).

<sup>77</sup> “. . . ad loquendum non requiritur nisi ea similitudo, quae sufficiat ad explicandum, et manifestandum obiectum: sed in omni creata intellectione reperitur sufficiens similitudo ad manifestandum intellectui obiectum” (*Universa philosophia* (1624), trac. De anima, disp. 6, sec. 6, §167, p. 555).

<sup>78</sup> “Nos tantum experimur, per cognitionem nobis manifestari obiectum . . .” (Rodrigo de Arriaga, *Cursus Philosophicus* (1632), disp. 4, sec. 3, subsec. 5, p. 697b).

that which she cognizes, but the mere possession of a likeness is not sufficient for them to be jointly fulfilled.

It is clear that Bonarte has this scholastic way of characterizing the nature of thought and sensation in mind throughout Book II, and that he sees it as a foil for his own account of the nature of thought and sensation. Developing an argument that the corporeal cannot cognize at the beginning of *C II §5*, Bonarte says that a certain objection to his argument only applies to those who think that *cognitio* consists in *similitudo* and *repraesentatio*:

Indeed, this is by no means a weighty objection, but it does not lightly strike those who believe that *cognitio* must be defined as a certain likeness and representation or by conformity with the thing cognized.<sup>79</sup>

And after observing that, according to Aristotle, some ancient philosophers held a similar view, Bonarte notes:

It was not enough for the more recent philosophers to error with the ancients, unless they were also openly contradicting them. For they preserve a certain likeness (which, because they are not able to explain it, they call “intentional,” substituting a strange term for a customary one) of *cognitio* with the thing apprehended.<sup>80</sup>

Bonarte then notes that the argument under discussion does not affect him because he does not take *cognitio* to consist in *similitudo* or *repraesentatio*:

But the argument that was raised in no way impedes me, as I define *cognitio* not as any representation of a likeness, but as direction alone.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> “Est quidem haec haud gravis obiectio, sed non leviter eos tangit qui cognitionem in similitudine quadam, et repraesentatione, seu conformitate cum cognito statuendam putant” (*C II §5*, p. 68). The objection to the incorporeality of *cognitio* under discussion claims that if there can be an incorporeal image of a physical thing, then there could also be a physical image of an incorporeal thing.

<sup>80</sup> “Recentioribus autem philosophis non fuit satis cum antiquis errare, nisi etiam secum ipsi aperte pugnarent. Similitudinem enim quadam (quam quia explicare nequeunt, intentionalem, ignoto vocabulo pro more nuncupant) cognitionis cum cognito servant” (*C II §5*, p. 68).

<sup>81</sup> “Mihi vero, qui cognitionem in nullius similitudinis repraesentatione, sed in sola directione constituam, nil officit argumentum allatum” (*C II §5*, p. 68).

Then, in §24, preparing to develop his own account of *cognitio* as direction, Bonarte makes the same accusation against recent (scholastic) philosophers:

For many people define every *cognitio* as a certain quality that is a vital image, and an intentional (as they say) likeness of an object.<sup>82</sup>

And in introducing his account of *cognitio* in §25, Bonarte explicitly contrasts it with this scholastic account:

Therefore, let us offer something both obvious and familiar, belonging both to *cognitio* alone and to every *cognitio*. I find this not in a likeness (*similitudo*), a copy, or a representation, but in direction (*directio*).<sup>83</sup>

Bonarte is familiar with the scholastic view that thought and sensation consist in the manifestation of an object to a subject through a likeness of the object, and he presents his commitment to the Essence Thesis as an alternative to this scholastic view.

It is no surprise that Bonarte rejects these scholastic commitments about the nature of thought and sensation. We have already seen that the Essence Thesis commits him to rejecting the view that thought and sensation essentially involve a likeness of their objects. It also seems that Bonarte's commitment to the Essence Thesis leads him to reject the Subjectivity Requirement and the Presence Requirement. According to the Subjectivity Requirement, in every thought or sensation something appears to the subject sensing or thinking. But Bonarte thinks that the mind is full of *unconscious* direction. And it seems that in cases of unconscious direction (for instance, the dreamlessly sleeping geometer's thought directed at the Pythagorean Theorem), nothing appears to the subject whose mind is thus directed.

According to the Presence Requirement, the object that appears is present to the mind in a special way. But, as we saw above, Bonarte rejects the view that direction consists in a relation to the object of towards which it directs the mind. And in fact, in the passages his non-relational view

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<sup>82</sup> "Plerique enim cognitionem omnem in qualitate quadam statuunt quae sit vitalis imago, et similitudo, ut loquuntur, intentionalis obiecti" (C II §24, p. 89).

<sup>83</sup> See footnote 21.

comes out most clearly he is attacking the scholastic view that there in thought and sensation objects are made present in “appearing” or “objective being.”<sup>84</sup>

Bonarte’s commitment to the Essence Thesis is just what Bonarte took it to be: a view inspired by his commitment to Cartesian principles and a rejection of scholastic views about the nature of thought and sensation. And that fact provides us with another new perspective on the relationship between scholastic philosophy of mind and the early modern theorizing about the mind that was inspired by Descartes. In the introduction, I pointed to the scholarly view that consciousness was somehow central to early modern theorizing about the mind in a way that it was central to medieval theorizing about thought and sensation. It is sometimes thought that the Cartesian picture of the *physical* world is responsible for the importance of consciousness in early modern philosophy of mind: once the physical world is stripped of its rich variety of secondary qualities, those qualities find a home in the mind, thereby giving rise to the notion of an inner world populated by qualitative properties.<sup>85</sup>

Whatever the virtues of this picture as an account of Descartes’s view, I think we can see that it does not accurately portray what is happening in Bonarte’s *Concordia*. As I have argued in this section, it is precisely the *rich* view of the physical world as containing phenomena such as directedness, intentional likenesses, and secondary qualities that pushed scholastic philosophers to identify something like subjectivity, the phenomenon of objects appearing to subjects, as the nature of thought and sensation. And, on the other hand, it was precisely Bonarte’s *impoverished* conception of body as lacking such features that allowed him to adopt a much thinner conception of the mental, on which mere direction distinguishes mind from body.

Bonarte’s rejection of the scholastic picture of the mental is not the result of reducing bodies to extension and its modes, but nevertheless there *does* appear to be a general and recognizably Cartesian motivation behind this rejection of scholastic views of the nature of the mental: Bonarte thinks that scholastic notions of the nature of the mind are *obscure*, whereas the concept of direction is *clear*. In the *C II* §25 passage he claims that the concept of *directio* is “both obvious and familiar” (*et*

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<sup>84</sup> See the passages referenced in footnote 52. In *C II* §30, p. 310, Bonarte refers to the opinion that “irrupt in Scholas,” according to which the object is the “conceptum objectivum,” a clear reference to scholastic views that thought and sensation involve a relation to some object in objective or apparent being.

<sup>85</sup> For a concise statement of this narrative, see Peter King, “Why Isn’t the Mind-Body Problem Medieval?,” in *Forming the Mind*, vol. 5, *Studies in the History of Philosophy of Mind* (Springer, 2007), p. 204. For a discussion of how this narrative motivates a contemporary response to the mind-body problem, see Brian Cutter, “The Mind-Body Problem and the Color-Body Problem,” *Philosophical Studies* 180, no. 3 (2023): 725–44.

*notum et obvium*), where *obvium* has the sense of “lying open to view,” and is thus, like clarity, contrary to obscurity.<sup>86</sup> On the other hand, Bonarte finds the scholastic ways of conceiving of thought and sensation through the notions of likeness and representation obscure (in *C II* §25 he finds the clear notion of *cognitio* in direction and “not in a likeness, a copy, or a representation”). The very same commitment to using only clear concepts to conceive of the nature of substances that leads Cartesians to take secondary qualities not to belong to the nature of body also leads Bonarte take mere direction to be the essence of thought and sensation.

### Conclusion

A naïve picture of the transition from scholastic to Cartesian philosophy of mind might look something like the following: at the heart of the scholastic conception of the mental was intentionality—mental directedness. Descartes replaced this scholastic conception with a conception of the mind as a transparent space filled with *conscious* states. On this telling, the transition from scholastic to Cartesian views of the mind is a matter of which of two concepts, intentionality and consciousness, is taken to be fundamental in theorizing about the mental. And the temptation to tell the story in terms of these concepts is understandable: intentionality (the mind’s directedness towards objects) and consciousness (the experience we have of our own mental states) are often taken as *the* fundamental pre-theoretical concepts of the mental in contemporary theorizing about the mind.<sup>87</sup>

But our examination of Bonarte suggests an alternative to this naïve picture. For Bonarte, the problem with the concepts that scholastic philosophers use to delineate the mental—*similitudo* and *repraesentatio*—is that they are *obscure*. They are metaphorical. The concept of direction, Bonarte thinks, is clear and non-metaphorical. So, perhaps, is the concept of consciousness as understood by Descartes. But neither of these clear and distinct concepts (nor their conjunction) are equivalent to the scholastic concepts of *similitudo* and *repraesentatio*. As Bonarte saw, what was original about Cartesian philosophy of mind is not the relative weight it places on the concept of intentionality or consciousness in its conception of the mental. Rather, it was the Cartesian insistence on using those

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<sup>86</sup> For a location where Bonarte explicitly associates what is *notum* and *obvium* with what is clear (in this location, *perspicuum*) and what is not with what is *obscurum*, see *C II* §39, p. 107.

<sup>87</sup> See, for instance, Jeffrey Speaks, *The Phenomenal and the Representational* (Oxford: University Press, 2015), which begins with the sentence “It’s now standard to think about perception in terms of two sorts of properties: phenomenal properties, and representational properties” (p. 3).



concepts, and those concepts alone, to capture mental phenomena that marked a decisive break with scholastic philosophy of mind.