

SPECULUM ANIMAE:
RICHARD RUFUS ON PERCEPTION AND COGNITION

"Garrulus sum et loquax et expedire nescio. Diu te tenui in istis, sed de cetero procedam." These are the words of Richard Rufus of Cornwall, a thirteenth-century Scholastic and lecturer at the Universities of Paris and Oxford. Rufus is apologizing to his readers: "I am garrulous and loquacious, and I don't know how to be efficient. I have detained you with these things a long while, but let me now proceed to another topic." This apology introduces the third part of the *Speculum animae*, a preliminary modern edition of which we publish here. In this short treatise, Rufus presents a unique Aristotelian theory of perception, describes what is and is not intelligible, and finally proves to his own satisfaction the immortality of the rational soul. To us this would hardly seem the place to apologize for being long-winded; indeed, we might wonder how Rufus could accomplish such an ambitious task in such a short treatise. We would certainly not accuse him of excessive verbosity. But Rufus was a man of exceptional humility, who once referred to himself as the least of the lesser (Franciscan) thinkers of his time.¹

Despite Rufus's humility, he was no minor figure in the development of Scholastic philosophy. A teacher at the Universities of Paris and Oxford (fl. 1231–1256 A.D.),² he is the author of the earliest known, surviving lectures on several of Aristotle's major texts, including the *Metaphysics*, the *Phys-*

¹ *Sententia Oxoniensis* pr.: *Liceat in primis, prout meae infirmitati est possibile, in famosorum praedecessorum numerum et in me modernorum, immo minorum minimum, hanc historiam transfigurare* (Oxford, Balliol College 62, fol. 6ra).

² See Rega Wood, "Richard Rufus of Cornwall," *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, ed. J.J.E. Gracia and T.B. Noone (Malden: Blackwell, 2003): 579-87, for a general chronology of Rufus's life and works.

ics, *De generatione et corruptione*, and *De anima*³ (the last of which will be discussed at length in this introduction). In fact, Rufus was one of the very first lecturers to teach the *libri naturales* at Paris after a ban on such instruction was effectively lifted in 1231 A.D. His works were influential not only among his contemporaries, but also among later authors, particularly John Duns Scotus. Roger Bacon, though a harsh critic of Rufus, acknowledged Rufus's influence and fame decades after his death, albeit among what Bacon termed the "vulgar multitude."⁴

The *Speculum animae* is one of Rufus's later works. He begins the treatise by posing the following question: "In what way is the soul all things?" This refers, of course, to a familiar doctrine Aristotle establishes in the *De anima*—that the soul is, in some way, all things (430b20-21)—and Rufus is here seeking to clarify it. But this is, in fact, only the first of five questions addressed in the *Speculum*. The five questions Rufus posits and answers in this treatise are, in order:

1. In what manner is the soul all things?
2. In what manner do a sensible and the sense, or an intelligible and the possible intellect, become one?

³ Recently the attribution of these works to Richard Rufus (R. Wood, "Richard Rufus' *De anima* Commentary: The Earliest Known, Surviving, Western *De anima* Commentary," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 10 (2001): 119-56) has been disputed by S. Donati, "The Anonymous Commentary on the Physics in Erfurt Cod. Amplon. Q.312 and Richard Rufus of Cornwall," *Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales* 72 (2005): 341-59. Donati argues at some length that Wood is mistaken to claim that this work is cited in Rufus's Oxford Lectures. We defend these attributions; see R. Wood, "The Works of Richard Rufus of Cornwall: The State of the Question in 2009," *Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales* 76 (2009): 1-73. However, in what follows, we have taken care to distinguish the positions advocated by Rufus in the *De anima* commentary from his position in works whose attribution is generally accepted, namely *Contra Averroem*, *Scriptum in Metaphysicam Aristotelis*, *Speculum animae*, and *Sententia Oxoniensis*. Readers who reject the attribution of this *De anima* commentary to Rufus may wish to begin their consideration of the development of his views with the section of this paper dealing with *Contra Averroem*.

⁴ Roger Bacon, *Compendium of the Study of Theology*, ed. T. Maloney (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 86-87.

3. What is predicated and of what is it predicated?
4. What is intelligible?
5. What is the cause of the immortality of the soul?

In this short work, therefore, Rufus addresses apparently diverse topics including perception, understanding, logic, and the nature of the soul. But, in fact, the *Speculum* is principally a summary of Rufus's theory of human perception and understanding. Like other medieval theories of perception and understanding, Rufus's theory centers around the notion of *species*, a kind of form that is received in the soul when a person senses something or grasps something intellectually.⁵ In this, and in other aspects of the theory, Rufus was heavily dependent on Aristotle and St. Augustine. Rufus was working in a philosophical tradition based on Aristotle's categories that had been accepted for centuries in the West. But in his lifetime, the Aristotelian corpus was enlarged to include

⁵ Despite the fact that this is a basically a paper about Rufus's theory of intentional objects, we generally do not speak of intentions, since the term 'intention,' unlike 'species,' has no special significance for Rufus. Possibly he prefers to speak of species rather than intentions, since the former terminology is associated with Augustine, unlike the latter, which is associated with Avicenna, whom Rufus very seldom referenced. Nonetheless, Rufus fairly frequently used and noted the use of 'intention' as a synonym of 'species.' Use of the term '*intentio*' is rarest in the commentary on Aristotle's *De anima* (henceforth *In DAn*) and in the *Speculum animae* (henceforth *SAn*). In the *De anima* commentary Rufus uses it only twice to describe the objects of the sensitive and intellectual faculties, both in *In DAn* 1.4 at D1 and E3 (Madrid, Bibl. Nacional 3314.76va & 71ra) (henceforth M3314). In the *Speculum* he uses it just once (at *SAn* ad 2), and there only because the word is used in the translation of Aristotle's *De anima* that accompanied Averroës' commentary. The term occurs much more commonly in other works, and the reader can see examples of its use in the texts cited in the footnotes of this article (*Contra Averroem* 1 ad 3, *Sententia Oxoniensis* prologue). Rufus's mature *Metaphysics* commentary (*Scriptum in Metaphysicam Aristotelis*), too, contains similar uses, generally with an indication that the primary technical term is 'species' rather than 'intention.' See, e.g., *Scriptum in Metaphysicam* 11: *Ad istius autem maiorem explanationem sciendum quod Aristoteles appellat speciem rei receptam in intellectu, utpote speciem coloris, ut colorem. Et non est color nec aliud a colore. Et similiter quod recipitur in medio non est color sed ut color, et similiter in pupilla et in virtute visiva. Intentio igitur sive species coloris recipitur in medio, et ipsa secundum abstractionem non praedicatur de medio* (S2322, fol. 126ra-rb).

Aristotle's psychology and more generally his natural philosophy and metaphysics, together with the commentaries of Averroës (Ibn Rushd). As is well known, this philosophical tradition was respected and continued not just by Rufus but by many authors after his time.

So what makes Rufus's theory unique, and why does it deserve our special attention? His account has a number of subtleties, but the main feature that distinguishes it from other theories in the same tradition is the introduction of a mode of being neither substantial nor accidental, but rather wholly outside Aristotle's categories. Rufus claims that the proximate objects of perception and understanding belong to this novel ontological category of 'species-being' or species-forms. This might sound like a lot of obscure metaphysical hair-splitting to those not steeped in the Aristotelian worldview. But to Rufus and his contemporaries, this was a radical departure from received wisdom, and Rufus's distinction between 'nature-being' and (non-substantial, non-accidental) 'species-being' gives his theory a twist that is both unique and, for an author who took Aristotle's authority seriously, radical.

The *Speculum animae* is the fullest and clearest statement of this theory, but the actual philosophical work behind it took years to develop. Rufus's extant corpus gives us a rich, detailed picture of this development, because perception and understanding are central topics in many of Rufus's writings, not just the *Speculum*. These include his aforementioned commentaries on Aristotle's *De anima* and *Metaphysics* and his *Contra Averroem* (a series of sixteen questions directed against two dicta of Averroës), which date from the period before he became a Franciscan (1238 A.D.), as well as the *Speculum* itself (which may have been written at Oxford, after he became a Franciscan), and his commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, which postdates the *Speculum*. So far as we know, Rufus's epistemological views reached the height of their development in the well-reasoned overview we find in the *Speculum*, which is echoed in his Oxford *Sentences* commentary.

1. ARISTOTLE AND AUGUSTINE ON THE APPREHENSION OF FORMS

To understand Rufus's theory of cognition, one must begin with Aristotle, since Rufus accepted Aristotle's general account of cognition. According to Aristotle, to perceive or understand something involves taking on its form. But what does it mean to take on or receive a form in this context? Two of the perennial difficulties with Aristotle's account are especially relevant to Rufus's theory of cognition: first, there is a problem about how to describe the mode in which the form is received, and second, there is a question about whether cognition is the passive reception of a form or some kind of more active process.

First, let us consider the question of the mode in which the form is received. What is it about the soul, and about sensibles, that make them capable of being the subject and objects of perception, respectively? And since *perceiving* something green and *becoming* green both involve, in some sense, taking on a green form, how can we account for the difference between the two? In other words, how do we distinguish cognitive processes from other receptive and assimilative processes? In answering these questions, we must explain not only cases in which apprehension is possible, but cases in which it is not, and so we should be able to say not only why humans can perceive, but also why plants and inanimate objects cannot.

As we noted earlier, perception in Aristotle's view involves the soul somehow taking on the forms of external sensibles. For example, when one perceives a green object, one's sense organ (the eye-jelly, in the case of vision) takes on the form of green. We might say it is 'greenified' in some sense. But does that mean that a sense organ literally *turns green* during the process of perceiving some external green object? In other words, did Aristotle mean that the organ becomes green in the same way as the external object, or does it possess the form of greenness *in some different manner*? Here, as in so many places, Aristotle left us with a very difficult

interpretive puzzle, and the question of what Aristotle meant in these passages is still debated today. Among contemporary historians of philosophy, Richard Sorabji has argued that Aristotle did, in fact, believe that one's eye-jelly would literally become green if one perceived something green, whereas Myles Burnyeat has strongly disagreed, asserting that Aristotle believed that the eye would take on the form of green without undergoing a corresponding physical process.⁶

Rufus and other medieval thinkers often sought to resolve this cluster of problems by appealing to the notion of a spiritual mode of being. 'Spirituality' can be a confusing term, and it is sometimes difficult to discern exactly what the term meant for Rufus and other medieval thinkers in the context of perception and understanding. This is, it would seem, largely because they tend to assume that its meaning will be obvious to their (contemporary) readers. For the modern reader, however, the use of the term 'spirituality' in reference to senses or sense organs is puzzling. We would expect spirituality to describe otherworldly or supernatural things, or perhaps at most the human mind—not the basic biology (e.g., sense organs) underlying human or animal sensation.

However, this was not true for thinkers in the Middle Ages, so it is important to understand the medieval definition of spirituality if one is to get a good handle on medieval theories of perception such as Rufus's. At the outset we should acknowledge that 'spirituality' is an ambiguous term, and was often used to do a fair bit of argumentative "heavy lifting" without due clarification of its meaning.⁷ That said,

⁶ See Richard Sorabji, "Intentionality and Physiological Processes: Aristotle's Theory of Sense-Perception," in *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*, ed. M.C. Nussbaum and A. Rorty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 209-20; Myles Burnyeat, "How Much Happens When Aristotle Sees Red and Hears Middle C? Remarks on *De Anima* 2.7-8," in *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*, ed. M.C. Nussbaum and A. Rorty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 421-34.

⁷ Myles Burnyeat has commented on Aquinas's similar tendency to make heavy use of the potentially troublesome 'spiritual' designation without providing any gloss on the term. Burnyeat even warns that knowledge of the previous history of a term like 'spiritual' can do more harm than good, at least if it leads us to throw up our hands and conclude that the concept, as used by any one particular author, is an "incoherent amalgam of irreconcilable philosophical traditions." See Myles Burnyeat, "Aquinas

the term ‘spiritual’ has a long history of being applied to biological processes, especially in medical texts. Thus, unclear as it is, the term would be much less troubling to contemporary readers of Rufus and other medieval thinkers than it is to the modern reader. Though volumes could be written about the meaning and history of this term, even a very quick examination of its uses (particularly in medieval medical texts) can be illuminating.

‘Spirituality’ was not used by medieval authors to refer solely to otherworldly things, or even unambiguously non-physical things. Augustine refers in *De Genesi ad litteram* both to air or wind and to human and non-human souls as spiritual, possibly because the Greek word for wind, ‘*animos*’, is a cognate of the Latin words for soul, ‘*anima*’ and ‘*animus*’.⁸ Similarly, Averroës described water and air as being somewhere between the spiritual and the corporeal.⁹ This last description is certainly puzzling to modern ears, but for medieval thinkers, it was not uncommon to frame the contrast between corporeal and spiritual as a matter of degree, rather than a sharp division; as we discuss below, this is evident in the anonymous *De potenciis animae et obiectis*, and the idea of *degrees* of spirituality is very important to parts of Rufus’s theory as well, as is clear from his fairly frequent use of the phrase “*magis spiritualis*” (“more spiritual”) in the *De anima* commentary.¹⁰

on ‘Spiritual Change’ in Perception,” in *Ancient and Medieval Theories of Intentionality*, ed. D. Perler (Leiden: Brill, 2001) [henceforth Burnyeat, “Spiritual Change”], 140-41, 141 n. 26. On that note, it is important to be clear that our comments on the history of the term here are not meant to provide a precise definition of what Rufus had in mind by ‘spiritual,’ but rather to give readers new to medieval philosophy a flavor of what the term’s connotations would have been for Rufus’ contemporaries.

⁸ Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram imperfectus liber*, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum 28 (Prague: Bibliopola Academiae Litterarum Caesareae Vindobonensis, 1894) [henceforth Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram imperfectus liber*], 389. Of course, the link between the words for soul and wind is true not only for Greek, but also Hebrew and Aramaic.

⁹ Averroës, *Commentaria magna in libros octo Aristotelis de Physico auditu* 8.82, ed. Thomas Iuntina (apud Iuntas) (Venice, 1550), 4:195v.

¹⁰ Here Rufus adopts the concept of spirituality outlined in Averroës’ *De anima* commentary, which also refers to degrees of spirituality. Aver-

Spirit was also widely seen as playing a critical role in biological functions, as the medical literature makes clear. Avicenna's *Canon* identifies a spirit, 'life force' or 'natural heat', as the driver of the faculties of the brain and liver,¹¹ refers to spirit as the "vehicle of corporeal animal forces,"¹² and further identifies so-called 'subtle blood' in the heart as the origin and generator of at least some spirits.¹³ Avicenna even gives animal spirits a role in the operation of certain mental faculties, e.g., when he says that wakefulness results from the proper animal spirits "flowing to the instruments of sense."¹⁴ Constantine the African's *Pantegni*, also a highly influential medical text in the West, classifies spirits into three kinds: natural, vital, and animal. The first, we are told, originates in the liver and moves through the veins; the second originates in the heart and moves through the arteries; and the third originates in the brain and moves through the nerves. Each of these spirits directs and powers a corresponding (homonymous) faculty.¹⁵ The animal spirit, distrib-

roës, *Comm. in De anima* 2.97: *Sed tamen apparet quod esse coloris magis est spirituale quam esse odoris* (ed. F. S. Crawford, 1953, p. 278).}

¹¹ Avicenna, *Liber Canonis* I, fen 1, doctrina 5: *In cerebro namque et hepate omnes convenerunt medici quod unumquodque eorum virtutem vitae suscipit et calorem naturalem et spiritum a corde* (Venice 1555, fol. 9r).

¹² Avicenna, *Liber de anima seu Sextus de naturalibus* 5.8, ed. S. Van Riet (Leiden: Brill, 1968), *Primo igitur dicemus quod virtutum animalium corporalium vehiculum est corpus subtile, spirituale, diffusum in concavitatibus quod est spiritus* (II: 175).

¹³ Avicenna, *Liber Canonis* III, fen 11, tr. 1, c. 1: *Et in ipso sunt tres ventres, scilicet duo ventres magni et venter medius, quem Galen nominavit dhelizi aut meatum non ventrem ut sit receptaculum nutrimenti quo nutritur; spissum forte, simile substantiae ipsius et minera spiritus in qua ipsi generantur ex sanguine subtili* (Venice 1555, fol. 275v).

¹⁴ Avicenna, *Liber Canonis* III, fen 1, tr. 4, c. 4: *Vigilia quidem est dispositio animalis cum effunditur spiritus animalis ad instrumenta sensus et motus ut eis utatur* (Venice 1555, fol. 9r). The importance of spirit not only to theories of the sensory faculties, but of the objects of sensation, predates Rufus as well; for example, the anonymous *De anima et de potenciis eius* speaks of 'odorous spirits' going into the organ of smell. (Anonymous, *De potenciis animae et obiectis*, in D. Callus, "The powers of the soul: An early unpublished text," in *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 19 (1952): 39).

¹⁵ Constantinus Africanus, *Pantegni, Theorica, IV.19, De spiritibus*, in C. Burnett, "The Chapter on the Spirits in the *Pantegni* of Constantine the

uted in different parts of the brain, gives rise to memories, sense, fantasy, intellect and reason.¹⁶ As the *instruments* of the soul,¹⁷ spirits explain the action of the immaterial soul on corporeal bodies. That is, they appear to enable contact between body and soul, and they allow the soul to control the major biological functions, including mental functions like wakefulness and sense.

Many medieval writers were familiar with Avicenna's works, which were translated into Latin in the late twelfth century, and could have relied on Avicenna's authority for the claim that spirituality is significant to the operation of the senses. Indeed, Rufus's assertions in his *De anima* commentary that "sense is brought about through animal spirits," and that natural heat always accompanies these spirits,¹⁸ bear a strong resemblance to Avicenna's descriptions. Further support for the suggestion that spirits were seen as facilitators of sensation comes from the usage of Rufus's contemporaries in describing sensory and other biological processes. For example, the author of an anonymous commentary on the *De anima*, voicing ideas similar to those advocated by Ru-

African," in *Constantine the African and Ali ibn al-Abbas al-Magusi: The Pantegni and Related Texts*, ed. C. Burnett and D. Jacquart (Leiden: Brill, 1994): *Omnis ergo spiritus est tripartitus. Est enim naturalis, est vitalis vel spiritualis, est et animalis. Naturalis nascitur in epate, unde per venas ad tocius corporis vadit membra, virtutem naturalem regit et augmentat, actiones eius custodiens. [...] Spiritualis qui et vitalis spiritus dicitur in corde nascitur, vadens per arterias ad tocius corporis membra, spiritualem virtutem seu vitalem augmentans atque regens actionesque eius custodiens. Spiritus animalis in cerebris nascitur ventriculis, per nervos tendens ad membra tocius corporis, unde animalis virtus regitur et augmentatur actionesque eius custodiuntur* (114).

¹⁶ Constantinus, *Pantegni, Theorica, IV.19, De spiritibus: Spiritus autem qui ad puppim pertransiit motum ibi et memoriam facit; in prora immorans, sensum creat et fantasiam; spiritus medii ventriculi intellectus sive ratio fit* (ed. C. Burnett and D. Jacquart, p. 115).

¹⁷ See, e.g., Roger Bacon, *Liber primus communium naturalium I*, pars 4: [S]piritus in animali est quoddam simile vapori qui fluit a corde in omnes partes animalis quod est instrumentum anime. Et cor continue [...] emittit vapores subtiles ad confortacionem tocius corporis, qui vapores sunt spiritus subtiles generati ex sanguine puro (ed. R. Steele, *Opera hactenus inedita* 3: 279).

¹⁸ Rufus, *In DAN 2.11.E4: Et hoc est quia sensus fit per spiritus animales, cum quibus semper simul est calor naturalis* (M3314.77ra).

fus, held that it is on account of the organs' spiritual nature that they are susceptible to sensible species existing without matter.¹⁹ While this tradition hardly makes the concept of 'spirit' crystal clear, it does give us some hint as to what Rufus might mean when he says, for example, that an organ is a mediate proportion of contrary sensibles "existing spiritually." That is, the organ is composed in such a way as to be sensitive to the spiritual species that are received in sensing and the spirits that "power" sense.

A second difficulty especially relevant to a discussion of Rufus's theory of cognition is the problem of whether and to what degree perception and understanding are active or passive processes. This difficulty arises in part from Aristotle's own works. He makes the soul responsible for sensation, but his *De anima* includes both passages in which Aristotle characterizes the soul as unmoved (408a34-b18) and ones in which he describes sensation as the soul being moved—that is, being acted on (in the Latin, being 'altered'). For example, one passage in which Aristotle defines sensation as being a sort of change of state, consisting of being moved and acted upon (416b32-34), is taken to show that sensation is a passive power for Aristotle (see also *De anima* 2.12.424a18 and 3.12.434a30).

Even if we accept Aristotle's authority and further assume that he holds that sensation is a receptive process—as Rufus did—still other problems arise. For the problem of how to resolve the active/passive process problem was further complicated in the Middle Ages by the authority of St. Augustine's philosophical writings, which challenged many of Aristotle's views. And many important elements of Rufus's theory, including his terminology, come from Augustine's discussion of perception and understanding.

St. Augustine's views on the subject of perception and knowledge are stated principally in *De Trinitate* book 11 and

¹⁹ Anon., *Quaest. in Aristotelis De Anima: Quod vero sit idem organum non solum secundum substantiam, sed etiam secundum naturam, patet. Eadem enim natura spirituali qua organum materiale susceptivum est speciei sensibilis sine materia* (Assisi, Sacro convento di San Francesco 138.257va). Henceforth *Quaest. in Aristotelis De anima*, A138.

De Genesi ad litteram 12. Like Rufus, Augustine refers to the objects of perception and thought as ‘species.’ In *De Trinitate*, Augustine describes four kinds of species: the corporeal, external species in the perceived object, and the species that exist in the perceiver’s sense, memory, and thought, respectively (*De Trinitate* 11.9). While different from Rufus’s theory in many ways, this Augustinian “chain” of species bears more than a passing resemblance to the procession of species from medium to organ to soul that Rufus would later outline. Following Augustine (*De Trinitate* 11.3-4), Rufus, like his contemporaries, identified mental species as similitudes or likenesses of the corresponding external, corporeal forms that give rise to them.²⁰

Also important for the subsequent medieval tradition was Augustine’s acceptance of the Neoplatonic dictum that sensible objects apprehended by the soul were less noble than the soul itself, and hence could not act upon it directly.²¹ Augustine, therefore, introduced an active role for the soul in perception. He held that the soul is not affected by the body, but rather “pays attention” to the “passions of the body” (that is, the sense organs) during perception.²² The soul, in other words, directs itself toward changes in the body. It acts instead of being acted upon. But this explanation is difficult to reconcile with an Aristotelian psychology if we accept that, for Aristotle, perception and understanding are passive processes. As we will see, Rufus struggled mightily to resolve this tension between highly respected authorities, considering Augustine’s solution and accepting it at first, but ultimately rejecting it in favor of other solutions he found less problematic.²³ Of course, Rufus was not alone in facing these

²⁰ Of course, the medieval concept of ‘similitude’ did not necessarily carry any visual or pictorial implications as it may today.

²¹ Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram imperfectus liber*, 402.

²² See Ronald H. Nash, *The Light of the Mind: St. Augustine’s Theory of Knowledge* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1969) [henceforth Nash], 58. See also J. Rohmer, “L’intentionnalité des sensations chez Augustin,” in *Augustinus Magister* (Paris: Congrès International Augustinien, 1954), 491-98.

²³ A final similarity between Augustine and Rufus concerns the role of divine ideas—the eternal forms in the mind of God that serve as immu-

problems, and so we now turn to a discussion of other scholastic attempts to integrate the new Aristotelian with the patristic tradition.

2. THE ARISTOTELIAN THEORY OF PERCEPTION IN THE MEDIEVAL WORLD

From the earliest reception of peripatetic theories of perception, thinkers grappled with the task of developing a workable Aristotelian theory of perception consistent with the dicta of accepted authorities like St. Augustine. A good example is the anonymous *De potenciis animae et obiectis*, a work produced in about 1225 A.D. Like Rufus and Augustine, the author of this work holds that the soul cannot be moved by a body. To meet this problem, he posits an extra medium between the organ and the soul.²⁴ This solution to the Neoplatonic problem did not appeal to Rufus.

The author of *De potenciis animae et obiectis* also shared with Augustine, Rufus, and his contemporaries²⁵ the notion of a “chain” of being from the external object, to the object in the organ, and on to the soul. And, like Rufus in his *De anima* commentary, this author held that sensibles assume differ-

table prototypes for the natural forms around us—in human knowledge. According to Augustine, these divine ideas, or *rationes aeternae* in his terminology, are indispensable to human knowledge and ensure our access to eternal truth. See Nash, 6-7. Rufus, too, incorporated divine ideas into his theory of knowledge, as we will see. Very unusually, indeed, he postulates the existence of such ideas in human minds.

²⁴ Anon., *De potenciis animae: Preterea, quia sensibilis est motiva et cognoscitiva, et non potest a corporibus moveri, corpus autem in utroque deficit, indiget corpus alia substantia media que sit motiva, et non moveatur a corpore, et non sit cognoscitiva, ut sic habeat cum utroque extremorum convenientiam. Cognoscitiva autem non posset esse nisi esset motiva, quia cognitio boni est causa motus coniuncta. Ideo ex parte incorporearum remansit unum medium in esse. Et similiter est in compositione sensibilis cum corpore: habet unam substantiam incorpoream mediam, scilicet, vegetabilem, et habet duo corpora, vel duo ex duplici natura corporali accepta pro mediis, scilicet, spiritum et virtutem elementarem* (ed. D. Callus, pp. 149-150.)

²⁵ Cf. R. Gauthier, “Le Traité *De anima et de potenciis eius* d’un Maître és arts (vers 1225),” *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 66 (1982) [henceforth *De anima et de potenciis eius*], 35-36.

ing degrees of spirituality as they move from the external object to the organ, and then into the soul.²⁶ Furthermore, this author, like most scholastics, used the notion of spirituality to resolve key problems in the theory of perception. Thus, his solution to the question of why plants (and presumably also inanimate objects) do not sense is basically the same as Rufus': the plant receives forms materially, rather than spiritually without matter, and a form must be received without matter in order to be sensed.²⁷ Nonetheless, there were major differences between this author's theories and Rufus's, among them the former's belief that some cognition is the result of divine illumination, and not the result of sensation followed by abstraction²⁸—a view absent from Rufus's picture.

Robert Grosseteste also contributed to this tradition, writing extensively about the apprehension of sensible and intellectual species in his *Hexaëmeron* and his commentary on Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*. Once again we see the Augustinian notion of a chain of species passing in stages from the external object into the sense organ and finally into memory. According to Grosseteste, the species at each stage begets its successor species in the subsequent faculty of the apprehending soul, with the intention of the soul posited by Augustine connecting the latter to the former.²⁹

²⁶ Anon., *De potenciis animae: Primum autem esse est in aere sive in alio medio secundum quod debet reduci forma in esse spirituale; secundum in organo; tertium in spiritu; quartum in anima sensibili; quintum in anima rationali [...] et sic manifestum est de gradibus spiritualibus in forma* (ed. D. Callus, 150).

²⁷ Anon., *De potenciis animae: Habent autem plante materialem naturam tactus secundum quod in eis est vis attrahendi in consimili qualitate rem eis ex qua componuntur; sed non habent formalem naturam que consistit in susceptione specierum tangibilium sine materia ei propria, quod non faciunt plante* (ed. D. Callus, 153).

²⁸ Anon., *De potenciis animae: Pars vero intellectus agentis que pertinet ad cognitionem veri dividitur per duas partes. Nam quedam est operatio eius respectu specierum intelligibilium, que recipiuntur in phantasmate ministerio sensus; quedam vero respectu specierum que fit per illustrationem superiorem* (ed. D. Callus, 157).

²⁹ Grosseteste, *Hexaëmeron* 8.4.7-9, ed. R. C. Dales and S. Gieben (London: Oxford University Press, 1982): *Color enim rei colorate gignit de se speciem sibi similem in oculo videntis; et intencio animi videntis coniungit*

Grosseteste also took from Augustine the idea that the soul plays an active role in perception and understanding. He describes an active role for the senses, which “act through the many meetings of the sense with sensibles,” at which point reason is awakened or excited, and sorts and distinguishes the confused sense data, thereby cognizing universals.³⁰ His account emphasizes activity and wakefulness over passive reception.

Yet one of the most important aspects of Grosseteste’s theory is how much he deviates from Augustinian roots in accounting for everyday human understanding. Grosseteste embraces a theory of Augustinian divine illumination in which Platonic ideas constitute “the principles of being and knowing.” But he also asserts that knowledge gained through irradiation from the light of God, and by divine ideas, is not readily available to mere mortals. For those of us burdened by corrupt physical bodies, the only way of understanding universals is through abstraction by reason, a process that must start with sense perception. Sense-independent, divinely illuminated knowledge is available to higher intelligences (and to human souls liberated from the mortal coil, it would seem), but not to the rest of us.³¹ Here we see the beginnings of a trend away from an Augustinian focus on

speciem coloris genitam in oculo cum colore gignente exterius; et sic unit gignens et genitum quod apprehensio visus non distinguit inter speciem genitam et colorem gignentem; fitque una visio ex gignente et genito et intencione copulante genitum cum gignente. [...] Consequentur, species genita in sensu particulari gignit de se speciem sibi similem in sensu communi; et est iterum intencio anime coniungens et uniens hanc speciem genitam cum specie gignente in unam imaginacionem [...] Tercio, species genita in fantasia sensus communis gignit de se speciem sibi similem in memoria; et est intencio animi coniungens speciem genitam cum gignente (223-24).

³⁰ Grosseteste, *In Posteriorum Analyticorum Libros I.14*, ed. P. Rossi (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1981) [henceforth Grosseteste, *In Posteriorum Analyticorum*], 214-16.

³¹ Grosseteste, *In Posteriorum Analyticorum I.14*, 203-216. See Christina Van Dyke, “An Aristotelian Theory of Illumination: Robert Grosseteste’s *Commentary on the Posterior Analytics*,” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 17 (2009) [henceforth Van Dyke], 688; see also Lawrence E. Lynch, “The Doctrine of Divine Ideas and Illumination in Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln,” *Mediaeval Studies* 3 (1941) [henceforth Lynch], 168.

divine illumination through Platonic ideas, and toward the Aristotelian emphasis on earthly, sense-dependent reasoning.³² This appears to be a sort of intellectual stepping stone between earlier theories that embrace sense-independent knowledge without reservation, and Rufus, who ignores the possibility of sense-independent knowledge almost entirely, even while identifying intelligible species with divine ideas.

By Thomas Aquinas's time, the species theory was so prevalent that he seems almost to take its general outline for granted,³³ and Aquinas's writings kept up the trend toward ever more Aristotelian versions of the species theory. Aquinas held that perception via received spiritual species was, at the initial stage, a wholly passive process producing spiritual change in the subject (*Quodlibet* 8.2.1). And though he did posit an active role for the soul in higher cognition, notably in making complex judgments, he held that the initial reception of intelligible species in the possible intellect was a passive process—the impression of intelligible species on the soul.³⁴ In other respects, Aquinas's species theory strongly resembled those of his predecessors, including Rufus: the fact that received species exist spiritually or intentionally explains for Aquinas how we can receive the forms of external sensibles without taking on those sensibles' physical characteristics (*ST* 1a 78.3 Resp.). Even when a corresponding natural change occurs in the sense organ, it is the spiritual change that is relevant to the act of perception or understanding. Indeed, it is the fact that our souls are capable of receiving forms in this manner that allows us to perceive and understand, unlike plants and inanimate objects.

Aquinas also shared Rufus's belief that received species were not the proper objects of perception. Aquinas made it

³² For an outstanding and much more complete discussion of the interplay of Augustinian and Aristotelian elements in Grosseteste's *Posterior Analytics* commentary, see Van Dyke, 685-704.

³³ See R. Pasnau, *Theories of Cognition in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) [henceforth Pasnau], 182. See also Thomas Cajetan, *Commentaria in partem primam Summae theologiae* 84.3 (Venice: Apud Iuntas, 1588), 279rb.

³⁴ Aquinas, *I Sent.* 35.1.1 ad 3: *Scientia nihil aliud est quam impressio vel coniunctio sciti ad scientem*. See Pasnau, 126-130.

quite clear that sensible and intelligible species are not *what* is perceived or understood, but that *by which* we perceive and understand (*ST* 1a 85.2, Resp.). In other words, species are not the proper objects of cognition, but play an instrumental role in cognitive processes.³⁵ Rufus too held that species were instrumental, and that the proper objects of cognition were the external objects from which species are abstracted. His *De anima* commentary clearly distinguishes between the thing known and its species as received in the soul,³⁶ though in his *Speculum animae*, Rufus allows that the proximate object of cognition, immediately touching the intellect, is the species.³⁷

On the question of self-perception, Rufus' account and Aquinas' account are similar in some ways and different in others. Rufus repeatedly and consistently asserts that the soul understands itself through a species abstracted from it. This apparently applies both to knowing one's own particular soul and to abstract knowledge about the nature of souls generally. Aquinas' account, on the other hand, is far more complex. He distinguishes between two types of self-understanding: singular, as when Socrates understands that he has a soul, and universal, as when we consider *generally* the nature of the human mind (*ST* 1a 87.1, Resp.). We understand ourselves (the first kind of self-understanding) in

³⁵ Robert Pasnau has described this view as an “act-object account of perception,” in which external objects are perceived through, or by means of, the apprehension of a mental object. See Pasnau, 197. Strictly speaking, this stands in opposition to representationalism, since species (mental objects) are not the objects of perception—external objects are.

³⁶ Rufus, *In DAn* 1.Q1: *Species enim rei scibilis recepta in anima sive scientia, prout est aliquid absolutum sive imago rei scibilis, nunquam esset principium cognoscendi ipsam rem. [...] Et iuxta iam dicta potest patere differentia apprehensionis ad receptionem, cum apprehensio addat comparationem speciei ad id cuius est species tamquam suae imaginis. Aer enim recipit speciem coloris sed non ut imaginem sed ut aliquid absolutum, et hoc est quia aer non potest comparare* (Universitätsbibliothek Erfurt, Dep. Erf., CA Quarto 312, fol. 19rb). Henceforth *In DAn*, Q312.

³⁷ Rufus, *Speculum animae* 4: *[I]ntelligibile dupliciter dicitur[: p]rimum, scilicet remotum forinsecum; ultimum, proximum et immediate tangens ipsum intellectum recipientem—species, scilicet* (Universitätsbibliothek Erfurt, Dep. Erf., CA Quarto 312, fol. 109va). Henceforth *SA*, Q312.

virtue of the soul's very presence to the mind: we reflect on our own acts of cognition, and thus understand our soul's existence and its acts. Apprehending the human soul more generally, however, is a more demanding task—i.e., it requires more than just the presence of the mind—and this explains why many are ignorant of the human soul's nature (*ST* 1a 87.1 Resp.) even though they know that they themselves have souls. We apprehend the nature of the soul through abstracted species, but in a certain roundabout way, for we can only apprehend it by means of some intelligible species it has received (just as we only sense external matter by means of the forms it has taken on). Yet when *judging* what we have apprehended about the soul, we do so by looking toward “inviolable truth,” and so are able to define what the mind *ought* to be (*De veritate* 10.8). One reason for these complex distinctions was Aquinas' concern for reconciling the conflicting statements of different authorities: he cites Aristotle and Averroës for the claim that the soul understands itself in the same way as other things, i.e., through a species (*De veritate* 10.8), while citing Augustine for the claim that the soul understands itself through itself and nothing else, and as authority for his doctrine of judgment in light of inviolable truth (*ST* 1a 87.1). In this regard, therefore, Aquinas appears to have been *more* concerned with Augustine's authority and less purely Aristotelian than Rufus.

Rufus fits quite comfortably into the species-theory tradition. His theory does not emphasize divine illumination or a superior intellectual faculty for apprehending higher things, though, as we will see, the divine does play a role in his epistemology. Compared with his predecessors, he puts more emphasis on the passivity of sensation, but he does not go as far in this regard as Aquinas, or for that matter Aquinas's teacher, Albertus Magnus. He shared with his contemporaries a reliance on ‘spirituality’ to explain cognitive processes and distinguish them from natural changes. Yet he also went further than other medieval authors in asserting not only that species exist spiritually, but that they are neither substances nor accidents. Other authors generally did not address the

question of species' ontological status at all,³⁸ or if they did, considered it obvious that sensible and intelligible species were accidental forms, as Albert stated explicitly,³⁹ and as his pupil Thomas Aquinas seems to have taken for granted.

3. RUFUS' THEORY: AN OVERVIEW

Thus far we have given a preview of what Rufus' theory has in store for us, introduced the problems Aristotle's theory presented to medieval commentators, and provided a quick overview of how medieval 'species' theories of cognition developed. We can now introduce Rufus's theory with this historical context in mind.

In no literal sense, according to Rufus, does the sense organ become green when it perceives green. (Hence, given a choice between the theories of Richard Sorabji and Myles Burnyeat, which we briefly contrasted above, Rufus would certainly have joined with Burnyeat—as, for that matter, would the vast majority of Rufus's contemporaries.) The organ takes on the form of the sensible object, but the form so assumed is not the same in the organ as it is in the physical, external object. For the form exists spiritually in the organ, rather than materially. As Aristotle states, the form is received *sine materia*, without matter. For Rufus, this phrase means that the form has spiritual being in the organ.⁴⁰

In his commentary on the *De anima*, Rufus explains that because the sensible form in the organ has spiritual rather than material being, it is thus able to act on the soul, but without causing a physical change. Rather, there is some manner of change in the incorporeal substance of the soul, insofar as it is united with the organ. Rufus states that the

³⁸ See Leen Spruit, *Species Intelligibilis: From Perception to Knowledge* 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 6.

³⁹ Albertus Magnus, *Metaphysica* 5.3.4, *Opera Omnia* 16, ed. B. Geyer (Münster in W.: Aschendorff, 1960), 262.

⁴⁰ As Burnyeat has discussed, the use of the term 'spiritual' was a characteristic way for medieval authors to distinguish from processes involving material change. See Burnyeat, "Spiritual Change," 140-42.

species of the sensible object is received in the organ (existing spiritually, of course), and that this change in the organ in some way alters the sensitive soul, which is united with and rooted in the sense organs.⁴¹

Here we have the most critical concept in Rufus's theory of cognition: species. We have already gone through a brief discussion of this term's history in theories of perception. But Rufus uses the term in a somewhat more restricted sense than, for example, St. Augustine. So just what does Rufus think a species-form is, and how does he think such a form differs from the regular "garden variety" form of an external sensible object?

Rufus has in mind something like the Augustinian notion of an express image, likeness, or similitude (*De Trinitate* 11.3-4) that serves as the proximate object of apprehension.⁴² Indeed, we owe to Augustine the phrase 'intelligible species' (*De civitate Dei* 8.6). Along similar lines, in James of Venice's Latin translation of *De anima*,⁴³ 'species' translates the Greek word '\textit{eidosis}' (424a18), a term for "something that is seen"⁴⁴ from which we get the English word 'eidolon,' which refers either to an apparition or to an unsubstantial image. But if a sensible or intelligible species received in the intellect is a similitude of the external, perceived thing, just what differentiates the species from the form that shapes

⁴¹ Rufus, *In DAN* 2.11.Q2: *Et quia sensibile est in esse spirituali in organo et non materialiter, ex hoc potest immutare aliquo modo substantiam incorpoream, non quia aliquid corporis <coloris M> transmutatur in animam, sed species sensibilis in organo recepti aliquo modo alterat animam secundum quod unitur organo* (M3314.76va).

⁴² Rufus, *In DAN* 2.11.E1: *Sensus particularis recipit speciem sui sensibilis, et non subiectum sive materiam ipsius sensibilis, sed secundum quod est species et similitudo sensibilis in materia* (M3314.76ra). See also Rufus, *SAN* 2: *Speciem igitur dico similitudinem expressissimam ipsius formae quae est in obiecto, et hoc similiter dico in sensibili et in intelligibili* (Q312.108rb).

⁴³ Aristotle, *De anima*, trans. James of Venice, ed. R. Gauthier in Anon., *Lectura in librum De anima a quodam discipulo reportata* (Grottaferrata/Rome: Collegium S. Bonaventure ad Claras Aquas, 1985), 400.

⁴⁴ See Joseph Novak, "A Sense of Eidos," *EIDOS: The Canadian Graduate Journal of Philosophy*, University of Waterloo, <http://www.eidos.uwaterloo.ca/pdfs/novak-eidos.pdf> (20 May 2010).

the external sensible object? For Rufus, the short answer is its mode of being. A species exists spiritually and immaterially, and this distinguishes it from an otherwise identical natural form. This explains the difference between an eye turning green and an eye seeing green. In one case the form is received physically, materially, as a natural form; in the other case, the form is received as a spiritual species. The spirituality of the species, as well as its being the same as the object apprehended, and yet numerically non-identical with the sensible as material being,⁴⁵ are critical aspects of Rufus's theory.

So cognition requires the reception of a form having a special mode of being, namely a species. Rufus was not the first thinker to posit a separate mode of mental being or existence. Strands of this idea can be found in Augustine, and it is described more explicitly in the eleventh-century writings of Avicenna (Ibn Sina).⁴⁶ And, as we have already seen, Rufus was neither the first nor the last to make use of a distinction between spiritual being and material being in answering tough questions about human cognition. But this was not all there was to Rufus's theory. There are many important details we have yet to discuss—and unlike the broad outline we have just painted, these details do not always remain consistent across Rufus's works. Rather, a chronological tour of his extant texts reveals a winding path of changes and additions, some of them quite significant. It is in exploring these details that we get a sense of what made Rufus's theory different from others in the same tradition: The works leading up to the *Speculum*, namely Rufus's *In De anima*, *Contra Averroem*, and *Scriptum in Metaphysicam Aristotelis*, witness Rufus working (and sometimes struggling) toward a full articulation of the ideas behind his theory. In the *Speculum*

45 Rufus, *SAn 2: Maior est identitas similitudinis albedinis ad A albedinem quam B albedinis ad A albedinem. Non est tamen absoluta identitas numeralis* (Q312.108rb).

⁴⁶ See Deborah Black, "Mental Existence in Thomas Aquinas and Avicenna," *Mediaeval Studies* 61 (Toronto, 1999): 45-79; Victor Caston, "Connecting Traditions: Augustine and the Greeks on Intentionality," in *Ancient and Medieval Theories of Intentionality*, ed. D. Perler (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 23-48.

animae, Rufus's theory seems to have taken its final (as well as its clearest, boldest, and most philosophically intriguing) form, though a few additional insights are to be found in his Oxford *Sentences* commentary.

In examining the development of Rufus's theory across these works, it is useful to analyze Rufus's answers to a few key questions. First, what are the preconditions for apprehension according to Rufus? That is, what allows us—or what might prevent us—from perceiving or understanding something by reception of its species? (Here particular attention is to be paid to the notion of spiritual existence and the Neoplatonic problem concerning the action of the less noble on the more noble.) Second, how does Rufus describe received species and their unique ontological status, and how does this affect the theory? Third, how does Rufus address the problem of self-perception? Fourth and finally, what guarantee does Rufus's theory provide for the accuracy or truth of our knowledge?

Rufus remained quite consistent on the answers to some of these questions—for example, the issue of self-perception. Yet his theory about what guarantees our knowledge, and to some degree his account of the precise ontological status of received species, changed in remarkable ways over the course of his philosophical career.

4. THE PRECONDITIONS OF PERCEPTION IN RUFUS'S *IN DE ANIMA*

Let us begin with a look at the earliest of the works we will investigate, namely Rufus's commentary on Aristotle's *De anima*, considering first his answer to this important question: what are the conditions that must obtain in order for perception to be possible?

Rufus's answer to this question in the *De anima* commentary is complex and detailed. Broadly speaking, there are three kinds of conditions that might be required for perception: conditions of the subject (perceiver), conditions of the

object (perceived), and conditions that must hold in the intervening medium or process, and Rufus generally presents each such condition in the negative. That is to say, he tells us what would *prevent* or *interfere with* perception, rather than what allows it.

Many of the preconditions Rufus outlines in his *De anima* commentary arise directly from Aristotle. The sense organ must be a mediate proportion of contraries, as one would expect in an Aristotelian theory of perception.⁴⁷ As Aristotle says, every sense is concerned with a proportion of contraries (*De anima*, 2.11.422b24-25). This is necessary so that the organ has the potential to perceive (that is, take on the forms of) the whole range of a certain type of sensible—from sweet to bitter, from hot to cold, etc. Rufus also singles out touch as being a mediate proportion in a different way (*alio modo*) than the other senses. Rather than being reducible to a midpoint between a single pair of contraries, like the other senses, touch is a mediate proportion of contraries in that it is a mediate mixture of elements. This is intended to explain the wide variety of objects to which the organ of touch is sensitive. Rufus appeals to the distinctive composition of the sense of touch to explain why it only perceives extremes, a strategy he borrows from Averroës.⁴⁸

In addition to being a mediate proportion, the organ must be in proximate (second) potential, rather than remote (first) potential, with respect to perception, or in Averroistic language (which Rufus adopts), accidental rather than essential potential. That is, the organ must be fully developed and capable of sensing, unlike the eyes of an unborn fetus, which

⁴⁷ Rufus, *In DAn* 2.4.Q1: *Dicendum quod omne organum virtutis sensitivae est quaedam media proportio omnium suorum sensibilium spiritualiter existentium* (M3314.70vb).

⁴⁸ Rufus, *In DAn* 2.10.Q3: *Et dicit Commentator quod ex hoc habetur solutio huius quaestionis, quare scilicet visus sentit omnes colores, tactus autem non omnia calida; non enim sentit calidum eiusdem complexionis cum ipso, sed solum extrema. Hoc autem est, ut dicit, quia visus est alio modo visibilium medietas quam tactus tangibilium. Et ex hoc patet quod medietas in aliis sensibus non ponit mixtionem; in tactu autem ponit* (M3314.75va).

are in first or essential potential⁴⁹ (which is to say they have the potential to develop a perceptive capacity, but do not yet have the ability to perceive).

The absence of the appropriate medium would also prevent perception; for example, sound requires the medium of air.⁵⁰ This is also a requirement taken directly from the *De anima* itself; Aristotle states it explicitly at the end of the second book (2.11.423b5-10). There can be temporary problems with the organ or internal medium, as well—if the tongue is too dry, too wet, or has too recently undergone a violent sensation, then the organ of taste may be unable to sense some gustable.⁵¹ This is because the tongue must be non-liquid, but capable of liquefaction—“*in potentia humidum et non actu humiditate*” as Rufus puts it—in order to perceive gustables, which are liquid. This condition will not obtain if the tongue is too dry, and thus incapable of being liquified, or too wet, and thus already liquid, according to Aristotle (2.10.422b1-10). This, too, is a standard Aristotelian

⁴⁹ Rufus, *In DAn* 2.4.E2: *Dicit igitur quod, cum potentia dicatur duobus modis, mutatio sensitivi existentis in potentia primo modo in actum est <etiam M> a generante sensitivum, cuiusmodi sensitivum vel sensus in potentia est visus in infante existente in utero et in catulo ante tempus determinatum videndi [...] Sensitivum autem complete generatum a natura, non tamen actu sentiens, est in potentia secundo modo dicta, scilicet in potentia accidentali tantum* (M3314.71ra).

⁵⁰ Rufus, *In DAn* 2.7.E2: *Dicit igitur quod, si auris ponatur in aqua, non audimus, et hoc quia aqua interposita prohibet aerem motum pervenire ad auditum, eo quod discontinuatur aer, sicut nec videt aliquis cum pellis velat <vellat M> pupillam, eo quod prohiberet aerem immutatum contingere et contiguari pupillae* (M3314.72va).

⁵¹ Rufus, *In DAn* 2.9.E1: *Dicit igitur quod, quia gustabile est humidum humiditate sapida, necesse est medium quo sentimus huiusmodi gustabile non esse de se humidum humiditate sapida, nec esse ita non humidum quod non sit possibile ipsum fieri humidum. Sed oportet ipsum esse in potentia humidum humiditate sapida et non in actu de se. [...] Dicit igitur quod signum ad hoc quod oportet esse medium in potentia humidum et non actu humiditate sapida est quod nec contingit sentire gustabile cum lingua fuerit penitus sicca, quia tunc non potest recipere sive immutari a gustabili [...] nec etiam cum lingua fuerit multum humida humiditate sapida. [...] Hic adiungit aliud signum [...], quia si alicuius lingua immutetur a valde forti sapore, si statim apponatur alius sapor, non immutabit linguam, quia nondum cessavit prior immutatio* (M3314.74ra).

requirement that Rufus accepts without qualification in his commentary.

Since Aristotle's *De anima* serves as the groundwork for Rufus' theory of perception, it is not surprising that Aristotelian doctrines are foundational to it. But in spelling out his own theory, Rufus builds upon Aristotle's account in significant and controversial ways, and the resulting account of perception offers a surprising picture when compared to Aristotle's, as we will soon see.

5. SPECIES AND SPIRITUALITY IN THE *DE ANIMA* COMMENTARY

As we have already said, the most crucial aspect of Rufus' theory of perception is the concept of species with a unique ontological status. Rufus himself first introduces this concept in his *De anima* commentary. He tells us that a sensible *in act* is in fact the species of an external sensible object. Moreover, it is a species having a special mode of being. In the *De anima* commentary, Rufus for the most part uses the language of spirituality or (im)materiality to differentiate the sensible species from the external sensible object; he identifies the former's mode of being as *esse immaterialis*, or "immaterial being."⁵²

What does Rufus mean by immaterial being? Clearly he means being without matter. But more precisely he means to distinguish between two different modes of being: the 'material' or 'corporeal' mode and the 'immaterial,' 'incorporeal,' or 'spiritual' mode. (We saw basically the same distinction, used for the same purpose, in the anonymous *De potentiis animae et obiectis*.) Rufus draws this distinction directly from the Latin text of Averroës' own *De anima* commentary. In this text, Averroës describes the two modes of being color can have; in one passage he identifies them as spiritual and ma-

⁵² Rufus, *In DAn* 2.12.Q1: *Et intelligendum quod 'sensibile secundum actum' vocat speciem sensibilis in esse immateriali* (M3314.78va).

terial, respectively,⁵³ in another he identifies them as spiritual and corporeal, respectively.⁵⁴

The concept of spirituality plays an essential explanatory role in Rufus's theory as presented in his *De anima* commentary. The spirituality of the soul would be assumed by any medieval philosopher, but Rufus also requires that the organs of perception be spiritual. For Rufus, both the organs and the sensibles received by the organs must be spiritual. Following Aristotle, Rufus holds that the reception of sensibles without matter ("*sine materia*") is what distinguishes the mundane reception of a form from the special case of perception in humans and non-human animals. This makes spirituality or species-being the key to Rufus's explanation of both how and why we perceive and understand.

According to Rufus, spirituality explains why we are capable of perceiving, but plants, which have only vegetative souls, are not. He argues that every organ is a mediate proportion of contrary sensibles existing spiritually, not materially, and that accordingly the organ can be affected by sensibles existing under a spiritual mode of being; indeed,

⁵³ Averroës Cordubensis, *Commentarium magnum in Aristotelis De anima libros 2.67*, ed. F. S. Crawford (Cambridge: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1953): *Et ista est propositio manifesta per se, et Aristoteles ea multotiens utitur; et indifferenter sive moveri et recipere fuerint spiritualia, sicut aer recipit colorem, aut materialia, sicut corpus admixtum ex lucido et diaffono obscuro recipit colorem* (232). See also Averroës Cordubensis *Compendia librorum Aristotelis qui Parva Naturalia Vocantur*, "De Sensu," ed. A. Shield and H. Blumberg (Cambridge: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1949), 29-31.

⁵⁴ Averroës, *Comm. in De anima 2.97: Color habet duplex esse, scilicet esse in corpore colorato (et hoc est esse corporale) et esse in diaffono (et hoc est esse spirituale)* (ed. F. S. Crawford, 1953, p. 277). That materiality and corporeality should be synonymous may seem trivial from a modern perspective, but the situation is not so simple in the context of medieval thought. For example, if we accept the existence of spiritual matter, something corporeal would be defined as having extension and dimension, but something material would instead be defined by its potential for change. Angels, for example, are spiritual, rather than corporeal, beings—they do not have physical extension and dimension—but under this view they would also be material since they can undergo change, unlike other incorporeal entities like geometrical concepts and abstract ideas. Nevertheless, Rufus, following Averroës, uses the terms 'corporeal' and 'material' interchangeably in his *De anima* commentary, at least in this context.

such sensibles exist spiritually in the medium even before they reach the organ. But the vegetative soul is a mediate proportion of contraries existing *materially*, and thus alterations in the vegetative soul do not produce perception.⁵⁵ This does, of course, provide a distinction that can account for why the sensitive soul perceives, but the vegetative soul does not. But why *this* distinction? Just what about the soul's (or the organ's) spirituality makes it capable of perception? Rufus provides no satisfying answer to this question, though he may have thought it unnecessary to do so, granted the assumptions about 'spirituality' found in the biological/medical literature of the time.

The spirituality of species also helps explain how corporeal things can affect our incorporeal senses. To explain how this happens, Rufus relies on an axiom drawn from the *Liber de causis*,⁵⁶ namely that whatever is received exists in the receiver in the mode of the receiver.⁵⁷ It follows from this axiom that the sense organ, as a mediate proportion of sensibles existing spiritually, receives sensible species "*sine materia*," without matter, or spiritually. But how do sensible species that previously informed air or water manage to inform a spiritually existing subject? Wouldn't that violate the aforementioned Neoplatonic axiom that the less noble cannot act on the more noble?

To solve this problem, Rufus goes on to argue that the sensitive soul is not immediately moved by something less noble than it, but is only altered mediately in virtue of a change in the organ in which the sensitive soul is rooted (*in*

⁵⁵ Rufus, *In DAn* 2.4.Q1: *Dicendum quod omne organum virtutis sensitivae est quaedam media proportio omnium suorum sensibilium spiritualiter existentium, et propterea immutatur organum per sensibile iam spiritualiter existens. Et propterea, cum anima sit spiritus, hanc immutationem potest percipere. Sed organum sive subiectum virtutis vegetativae est aliqua proportio contrariorum materialiter existentium. [...] Et propterea istam immutationem non percipit anima* (M3314.70vb).

⁵⁶ Anon., *Liber de causis* IX (X) 98-99, ed. A. Pattin, in "Le Liber de causis," *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* 28 (1966): 160.

⁵⁷ Rufus, *In DAn* 2.11.Q2: *[O]mne receptum est in recipiente per modum recipientis* (M3314.76rb).

quo radicatur ipsa anima).⁵⁸ Here the organ seems to be filling a mediating role between the spiritual and the corporeal not entirely unlike that which Descartes later ascribed to the pineal gland.⁵⁹ The alteration of the organ by a species, then, “excites” the sensitive soul, which in turn produces the required change in itself.⁶⁰ This account calls to mind Augustine and Grossteste’s solutions to the same problem, which we mentioned earlier. Here Rufus accepts this received wisdom; later, as we will see, he would not be happy with this solution to the nobility problem.

As we mentioned at the outset, Rufus’s radical belief that species have a unique mode of being that is neither substantial nor accidental is expressed as a distinction between nature (substance and accident) and species. But even though the characterization of species as existing *spiritually* is immensely important to Rufus’s theory of perception as presented in the *De anima* commentary, he almost never, if at all, mentions the distinction between *nature* and *species* in that early work. That said, there is some evidence that Rufus already drew an implicit distinction between nature and species in the *De anima* commentary. In one passage on intellection, Rufus, paraphrasing Aristotle, tells us that the intellect, like a “*tabula nuda*,” has no “nature or species of any intelligibles” until it actually understands those intelligibles.⁶¹ This passage draws a distinction between nature and spe-

⁵⁸ Rufus, *In DAN* 2.4.Q1: *Verum est quod immediate non agit, sed mediante organo in quo radicatur ipsa anima, quo alterato per consequens alteratur et anima, quia omne receptum est in recipiente etc.* (M3314.70vb).

⁵⁹ See Gary Hatfield, “Descartes’ Physiology and Its Relation to His Psychology,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Descartes*, ed. J. Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 344-50.

⁶⁰ Rufus, *In DAN* 2.11.Q3: *Et quia sensibile est in esse spirituali in organo et non materialiter, ex hoc potest immutare aliquo modo substantiam incorpoream, non quia aliquid corporis <coloris M> transmutatur in animam, sed species sensibilis in organo recepti aliquo modo alterat animam secundum quod unitur organo. Et alterando ipsam excitat ipsam ut convertat se supra se ipsam ut est eius similitudo* (M3314.76va).

⁶¹ Rufus, *In DAN* 3.3.E4: *Sed nullam naturam vel speciem alicuius ipsorum intelligibilium habet intellectus antequam actu intelligat aliquod illorum, quia oportet ea quae recipiuntur recipi in intellectu, sicut in tabula nuda ubi nihil est depictionis recipitur aliqua depictio* (M3314.82ra).

cies, albeit only in passing. The same distinction also seems to appear in a different passage, in which Rufus describes differences between apprehensive faculties. Rufus says here that “there is not diversity of natures in the organs unless according to a diversity of received species,”⁶² presupposing a distinction between receiving natures and the sensible species they receive.

Of course, the relevance of these passages to the development of Rufus’s distinction between nature and species is debatable. In the former passage, it is impossible to be sure that the phrase “*vel speciem*” makes a sharp distinction between nature and species. And while in the latter passage Rufus assumes a distinction between nature and species, he does not explain what the distinction comes to. This evidence is therefore inadequate on its own to motivate any strong claims about Rufus’s early views on the ontological status of species. The strongest evidence supporting the claim that Rufus already considered species non-natural at this early stage comes, rather, from his discussion of self-perception in the *De anima* commentary, in which he explicitly identifies the species of the intellect itself as neither corporeal nor natural.⁶³ Of course, this is not proof that Rufus thought *all* received species were non-natural, but it is evidence as strong as we could reasonably expect, short of the extremely precise and explicit statements of the nature/species distinction found in the *Speculum animae*.

6. SELF-PERCEPTION IN RUFUS’S *DE ANIMA* COMMENTARY

As stated earlier, Rufus’s notion of species with spiritual being is helpful for resolving a number of philosophical questions. It explains why our eye-jelly does not change colors

⁶² Rufus, *In DAn* 3.2.Q2: *Item, differt sentire ab imaginari in hoc quod sentire est apprehendere speciem ipsius sensibilis sensibili tantum praesente, et imaginari est ipsam eandem speciem a corpore absente sensibili; ergo species ipsius sensibilis utrobique eadem manet. Sed diversitas naturarum in organis non est nisi secundum diversitatem specierum acceptarum* (M3314.80vb).

⁶³ See Part 6, “Self-Perception in Rufus’ *De anima* Commentary,” *infra*.

when we see a colored object, and why our sensitive soul perceives but the vegetative soul of a plant cannot. As we will now see, it even provides an elegant solution for the problem of self-perception.

Firstly, Rufus argues that it seems, *prima facie*, that if the intellect is capable of understanding everything, then it must have no form.⁶⁴ This seems necessary in order for it to be able to take on the form of any and all intelligibles—including, of course, itself. Since understanding entails the realization of some form that exists potentially in the intellect, and Aristotle himself states that the soul understands itself in the same way it understands other things (*De anima*, 3.4.430a2-3), self-understanding must involve the intellect taking on *some* form. But if the soul has no form, then what form would it take on during self-perception? This sets up the classic problem of Aristotelian self-perception. In the *De anima* commentary, Rufus tells us that the intellect does have something formal in it, namely that by which it is what it is (*quo est id-quod-est*),⁶⁵ though this “something formal” is not a natural or corporeal form.⁶⁶ So even the intellectual soul, which is itself a form, includes something formlike as an essential part. Nevertheless, we are left wondering how the intellect could understand itself, since it already possesses any form by which it might be apprehended. What change could it undergo when it comes to understand itself?

The answer comes from Rufus’s concept of received species with a special ontological status. Rufus states that the intellect understands itself just as it understands other intelligibles, namely through a species: in this case, its *own*

⁶⁴ Rufus, *In DAN 3.3.Q1: Patet igitur quod si omnia intelligit, nullam huiusmodi formam habet, scilicet quae sit communicans in natura aliqua cum formis quas recipit ab imaginatione* (M3314.81va).

⁶⁵ Cf. Boethius. “Quomodo substantiae in eo quod sint bonae cum non sint substantia bona,” in *De consolatione philosophiae: Opuscula theologica*, ed. C. Moreschini (Leipzig: K. G. Saur, 2000), 188.

⁶⁶ Rufus, *In DAN 3.3.Q1: Intellectus tamen habet in se aliquid formale, quo est id-quod-est, quod differt ab eo quod est. Illud tamen quo-est non est aliqua forma naturalis sive corporea* (M3314.81va).

species.⁶⁷ Thus, it is possible for the intellect to understand itself as it does any number of other things that do not have natural matter and are unextended. That is, the intellect is able to understand itself through its form, in that it takes on the species of itself during self-perception. Since there is no reason to believe that the *species* of the intellect is in the intellect in the absence of self-perception, the problem is elegantly solved. The intellect is able to understand itself in exactly the same way it understands anything else—by means of a species maximally similar to, but not numerically identical with, the intelligible's nature. This answer was clever and controversial. It was considered contrary to Averroës, and was rejected by most slightly later commentators, who held that the intellect understands itself by itself, not in virtue of its species.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Rufus, *In DAN* 3.3.E4: *Dicit igitur primo quod ipse, scilicet intellectus, est intellectus, id est intelligitur, sive est intelligibilis sicut alia intelligibilia, id est intelligitur per speciem aliquam in ipso. [...P] otest intellectus intelligere se per suam formam* (M3314.82ra). *Ergo illud quod intelligit et illud quo intelligit sunt idem in ipso intellectu. Hoc autem in omni intellectu intelligente impossibile est, praeterquam solum intelligente primo; ergo intellectus non intelligitur per se ipsum. Et patet quod per aliquam formam sive speciem in eo intelligitur* (M3314.82ra).

⁶⁸ Pseudo-Buckfield mentions and later rejects Rufus's position in his own commentary. See Ps. Buckfield, *In DAN* 3: *Iste modus legendi satis videtur consonus naturae, translationi et etiam veritati Commentatoris. Et quidam famosi manifeste consentiunt in partem aliam, scilicet quod intelligit se per speciem* (Merton College 272.19ra) (citation found by Dr. Jennifer Ottman). Cf. also Anon., *Quaest. in Aristotelis De anima: Hoc modo quaero quid sit proprium obiectum virtutis intellectivae. Et dico communiter virtutem intellectivam in homine et intelligentia creata. Quod non sit hoc universale probatio: virtus intellectiva et sensitiva in hoc conveniunt quod utraque est apprehensiva speciei. Sed in hoc quod virtus sensitiva apprehendit speciem materialem ut in materia, virtus vero intellectiva apprehendit speciem non ut in materia—et dico materiam situalem. Si ergo ad intellectum formae nulla exigitur comparatio eius ad materiam situalem, cum ipsa de se sit intelligibilis, circumscripta omni materia situali erit forma actu intelligibilis. Cum ergo intelligentiae creatae habeant formam in materia sed non situali, nihil prohibet eas intelligi sine abstractione qualiter abstractio est in formis materialibus situabilibus* (A138.258va-vb).

7. CONTRA AVERROEM AND THE ONTOLOGICAL STATUS OF RECEIVED SPECIES

In a later treatise, the *Contra Averroem*, Rufus developed his theory of perception further. Unlike the *De anima* commentary, the *Contra Averroem* is mainly concerned with the intellect and the understanding, rather than sense perception. Nonetheless, the basic framework of the theory remains the same: Rufus once again posits species as the proximate object of sensation and understanding. Furthermore, immateriality or spirituality remains critical to the theory. (Rufus argues for the immateriality of the received species using the humorous example of a bathtub, derived from Averroës' use of the same example in a different context.⁶⁹ Since we do not have a bathtub in our soul when we perceive or think of a bathtub, Rufus explains, it is not the composite substance of the intelligible object that we receive, but something without matter.⁷⁰)

The key distinction in the *Contra Averroem* seems to be the same as in the *De anima* commentary, namely between species with matter (*cum materia*) and species without matter (*sine materia*). The species without matter is what Rufus means when he refers to 'species' without qualification in this text.⁷¹ The species with matter, however, is what constitutes

⁶⁹ Cf. Averroës, *Commentaria in libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis* 12.36, ed. Iuntina (apud Iuntas) (Venice: 1553), 8:149v.

⁷⁰ Rufus, *Contra Averroem* 1.7: [O]mne sic intelligibile vel ipsum se ipso immediate est receptum et unitum cum ipso intellectu recipiente <om. E>, vel habet speciem aliquam quae sic recipiatur. Et substantia materiae ibi per se ipsam recipi non potest; si enim posset, possent et omnes naturae omnino. Et ideo forte dixit Philosophus si non esset materia, esset vere balneum in anima (Universitätsbibliothek Erfurt, Dep. Erf., CA Quarto 312, fol. 82va). Henceforth CAv, Q312. Here Rufus is claiming that if it were not for matter (and the fact that the received species does not have it, whereas external corporeal substances like bathtubs do), the bathtub we imagine would be no different from the bathtub in the bathroom—that is, the species of the bathtub would be just as truly a tub as the external object it images for us.

⁷¹ Rufus, CAv 1 ad 3: *Quid ergo recipit sensu? Species rerum sensibilium [...] Et hoc dico 'sine materia', ita quod haec determinatio 'sine materia' determinet hoc quod dico 'species'* (Q312.84vb).

the sensible quality with its proper name and definition,⁷² and this is what prime matter receives, according to Rufus. Prime matter does not, however, receive the species (that is, species without matter, existing spiritually) or the intention of the sensible quality.⁷³

There is a striking difference, however, between the *De anima* commentary and the *Contra Averroem* on species: in the *Contra Averroem*, Rufus identifies an object's intelligible species with its *idea*.⁷⁴ The use of the term 'idea' appears to be related to Augustine's use of the term, referencing Plato's ideas, which were generally identified as ideas in the mind of God as the medievals understood him.⁷⁵ Thus, in the *Contra Averroem* Rufus identifies the species in our intellect with those 'exemplars' by which objects in the world are caused

⁷² Rufus, *CAv* 1.6: [A]liquid est immediate receptum quod non convenit cum ipso in nomine et definitione, et est necessario eius species vel idea (Q312.82va). For Bacon's different take on the species received in our apprehensive powers, see Roger Bacon, "De multiplicatione specierum," in *Roger Bacon's Philosophy of Nature*, ed. D. C. Lindberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983): *Quapropter insania est dicere quod species non habet esse materiale. Item est simile agenti nomine et diffinitione; ergo habet esse materiale sicut illud. Item est idem in essentia cum effectu completo, quod habet esse materiale. Item propter nobilitatem generantis respectu generati, sequeretur quod aliquid spirituale daret esse spirituale speciei; sed non potest hoc dici* (190).

⁷³ Rufus, *CAv* 1 ad 3: *Species autem qualitatis sensibilis cum materia vel in materia est ipsa qualitas sensibilis in suo nomine et definitione. Et hoc est illud quod materia prima recipit, et non recipit speciem vel intentionem illius qualitatis sensibilis. Et ideo materia non sentit [...E]adem sit essentia qualitatis sensibilis in materia et sensu, esse autem diversum; solum hinc inde habens extra, scilicet esse materiale, in sensu esse quoddammodo spirituale* (Q312.84vb).

⁷⁴ See Rufus, *CAv* 1.6: *eius species vel idea* (Q312.82va), cited above.

⁷⁵ Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus* 83, q. 46, n. 2, *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*, ed. B. Dombart and A. Kalb (Henceforth CCSL), 44A:70-71, *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Latina*, ed. J. Migne (Henceforth PL), 40: 30-31; *De civitate Dei* 7.28, CCSL 47:210-211; 8.4-9, CCSL 47:219-226 (PL 41:227-234). Alexander de Hales, *Glossa in IV lib. Sententiarum* 36.4, *Biblioteca Franciscana Scholastica* 12 (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1951), 357. See also Jean Pépin, "Saint Augustin et l'inhabitation des idées en Dieu," in *Agonistes: Essays in honour of Denis O'Brien*, ed. J. Dillon and M. Dixsaut (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005) [henceforth Pepin], 243-57.

and created.⁷⁶ This is a rather shocking doctrine. Most scholastic authors reserved the term ‘ideas’—at least insofar as the term refers to the exemplar causes of natural objects—for forms in the mind of God. Apart from a few somewhat unusual cases,⁷⁷ the term was not employed for ideas in the minds of mortal beings. (Though Aquinas and others also referred to the likenesses of artificial things in the minds of their mortal creators as ideas, since the function they serve in mortals’ creative activities is analogous to the function of divine ideas in God’s creation [*ST* 1a 15.1 Resp.].⁷⁸) But Rufus clearly holds, at least in the *Contra Averroem*, that divine ideas—the exemplars or templates of everyday natural objects and creatures—can be received by the human intellect.

According to Rufus, every caused entity has a nature and an idea. It is a *quod-est* (“what-it-is”) according to its nature, but it is a *quo-est* (“by-which-it-is”) according to its idea⁷⁹—recall that an idea serves as a template, of sorts, for God’s creation. The key difference between the nature and the idea appears to lie in their respective modes of being: according to Rufus, an object’s nature and its abstracted species are basically two versions of the same form, except that the former has natural or material being, and the latter spiritual be-

⁷⁶ Rufus, *CAv* 1.11: *Sed dupliciter dicitur forma. Aut enim natura et est quae cum materia constituit compositum, aut idea et est forma exemplar et causa quodammodo eadem rei; sic enim dividitur causa alibi* (Q312.83VA). For a discussion of divine ideas as exemplars in Grosseteste, see Lynch, 163.

⁷⁷ See, for example, Rufus’s contemporary, Roger Bacon, *Questiones supra librum de causis*, ed. R. Steele and F. Delorme, *Opera hactenus inedita* 12 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935), 47.

⁷⁸ See also Pépin, 246 (discussing Cicero’s similar use of the term in a passage that influenced Augustine); Gregory T. Doolan, *Aquinas on the Divine Ideas as Exemplar Causes* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 2008), 1-43. For background on the sources medieval thinkers used in developing their theories of ideas, including Augustine, see Vivian Boland, *Ideas in God According to Saint Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 5-48.

⁷⁹ Rufus, *CAv* 1.7: *[O]mnis talis natura vel tale ens ideam habet et naturam, et est quod-est per suam naturam, quo-est per suam ideam* (Q312.82vb).

ing.⁸⁰ In another passage, Rufus describes the idea as being a “true similitude” of the object from which it is abstracted, going on to assert that ideas exist in the intellect, not in matter⁸¹ (where nature-forms are to be found⁸²).

The situation is complicated somewhat by a troubling passage late in the text. In his response to the third question posed in the treatise, Rufus states that the species of an object, when received in a sense organ, is a species or intention, but that it is a nature and *not* an idea. Thus, the sense organ receives a nature (albeit an immaterial nature), not an idea.⁸³ The intellect, however, most certainly *does* receive ideas; as already discussed, Rufus elsewhere identifies the species received by the intellect with ideas or exemplars. This makes a certain amount of intuitive sense: the intellect, not a sense, seems the proper place for ideas. Still, it complicates his theory and seems to confuse his otherwise clear distinction between *idea/species/quo-est* and *nature/quod-est*.

It thus seems that there is quite a rich hierarchy of species at this stage in the development of Rufus’s theory. A species with matter constitutes the object in its name and definition, and is a nature. Then there is the species as received by the sense organ, which is spiritual (a critical prerequisite for perception in Rufus’s theory), but still a nature. Finally, we have the species as divine idea abstracted from the external object, which is apparently received only by the intellect.⁸⁴ This kind of species is not only spiritual, but also non-

⁸⁰ Rufus, *CAv* 1.7: [*I*]d idem est sed alio modo se habens natura obiecta et propria idea abstracta, esse scilicet aliquo modo spirituale et esse naturale vel materiale habens (Q312.82vb).

⁸¹ Rufus, *CAv* 1.7: *Probatio: idea est vera similitudo obiecti, idea est forma existens in intellectu et non est in materia secundum quod huiusmodi* (Q312.82vb).

⁸² Rufus, *CAv* 1.7: [*F*]orma-natura [...] autem non est ipsa nisi quia in materia (Q312.82vb).

⁸³ Rufus, *CAv* 1 ad 3: *Dictum est enim <om. E> prius <om. E> quod species obiecti sensibilis recepta in organo et sensu, licet sit species vel intentio, est tamen natura et non idea. Quod ergo recipit sensus natura est, et tamen sensit* (Q312.84vb).

⁸⁴ Rufus also indicates that a species in the medium exists without matter, though he spends less time on species in the medium than on species in the sensitive and intellective souls. Rufus, *CAv* 1 ad 3: *Quid ergo*

natural. The intricacy of these distinctions is unique to the *Contra Averroem* among Rufus's known texts on the subject.

The *Contra Averroem* therefore stands as a kind of transitional text between the *De anima* commentary and Rufus' later *Speculum animae* and *Sententia Oxoniensis*. The *Contra Averroem*'s dichotomy between two modes of being, one for species and one for nature, anticipates the account provided in the *Speculum animae* and *Sententia Oxoniensis*. But the *Contra Averroem* version of the theory also makes a somewhat confusing distinction between those received species that are natures (though spiritual) and those that are non-natural and identical to divine ideas, a complication that is absent from the later works. This may indicate that Rufus was still struggling, at this point, to establish the sharp nature/species distinction that he failed to draw explicitly in the *De anima* commentary, but would eventually state with certainty and clarity in the later works.

Of course, not everything about the *Contra Averroem*'s account of the ontology of received species is merely a mid-point between Rufus's earlier and later works. Indeed, the *Contra Averroem*'s most radical contribution to the theory is absent from both the earlier *De anima* commentary and the later *Speculum animae*: namely, the very clear and repeated identification of at least some received species with ideas. It is worth pointing out, on this note, that the version of Rufus's theory put forth in the *Contra Averroem* offers a particularly robust guarantee of the certainty of our knowledge. According to Aristotle, knowledge of the causes of things is the key to the truest and best scientific understanding. So what better way to explain our access to true scientific knowledge than the doctrine that our intellect receives the ideas or exemplar forms used by God to create the objects in the external world? This certainly ought to eliminate any doubts we might have about the potential for accuracy and complete-

species caloris sine sua materia? Hoc quod nos solemus dicere: species caloris receptam in medio et intentionem in sensu (Q312.84vb). Whether or not the species in the medium differs from the species in the organ is less clear.

ness in human understanding. Indeed, the difficulty would be in accounting for error, not true knowledge.

8. SELF-PERCEPTION AND THE PRECONDITIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING IN *CONTRA AVERROEM*

We now know what Rufus's account of received species in the *Contra Averroem* looks like. But how does this account of species answer the important questions Rufus' theory is meant to answer?

As to the question of why prime matter does not perceive, the answer in the *Contra Averroem*, as in the *De anima* commentary, is its lack of spirituality. The intellect, Rufus explains, is receptive of the idea abstracted from intelligible objects in virtue of its spiritual matter—otherwise, it would be unable to receive such forms.⁸⁵ The species or idea is spiritual, and it is only a spiritual subject like the human intellect that can receive it. This answer is essentially identical to that which Rufus gives in the earlier *De anima* commentary. Note, however, that Rufus now uses the language of spiritual matter, a posit on which he did not rely in the corresponding discussion in the commentary.

Another important question, as we noted above, is how to account for self-perception. Rufus also addresses this classic problem in the *Contra Averroem*, giving an answer that is also very similar—in fact, nearly identical—to that given in the *De anima* commentary. In the *Contra Averroem*, Rufus couches his explanation in the metaphor of a mirror (*speculum*). The intellect, Rufus explains, understands itself through its idea or exemplar-form, in the manner of a mirror.⁸⁶ The metaphor here is clear: just as a mirror takes on

⁸⁵ Rufus, *CAv* 1.12: *Est enim ipse intellectus natura vel ens causatum. Unde et obiectum esse potest ad quo irradietur idolum, et est ipse idem etiam speculum. Unde et idoli vel idea susceptivum, et tamen ipse non est receptivus ideae abstractae nisi per naturam suae materiae spiritualis* (Q312.83vb).

⁸⁶ Rufus, *CAv* 1.12: *Et ita videretur idem speculum per suum idolum receptum in se ipso speculo* (Q312.83vb). *CAv* 1.12: *Tibi bene placet quod ipse intellectus in te vero speculo vera eius idea et forma exemplari se intel-*

the precise appearance or image of many sensible objects without receiving their matter and without undergoing any change to its corporeal being or physical structure, so too the intellect can receive the idea (analogous to the image, in this metaphor) of many intelligibles without receiving matter or undergoing physical change. Similarly, a mirror can reflect (take on) its own image, given the right setup, and so can the intellect.

Neither scenario—physical mirror or intellect—involves a contradiction so long as we distinguish between a material form and a species, image, or idea. Of course, the fact that the mirror requires another mirror or some other reflective surface to reflect its own image differentiates the mirror scenario from that of the intellect, so the metaphor is imperfect in that respect. Still, it is a helpful metaphor that helps illustrate how Rufus thinks about both understanding generally and self-understanding in particular. The overall explanation is, of course, essentially the same as that given in the *De anima* commentary. The intellect receives not its natural form, but its species (in the *Contra Averroem*, its idea). Because the species is not identical to the material form, this reception meets the ‘barrenness condition’, as set forth by Averroës,⁸⁷ that nothing can receive a form it already has.

9. NOBILITY IN THE CONTRA AVERROEM

The last topic from the *Contra Averroem* that we will address is the nobility problem described earlier, i.e., how something apparently less noble (a sensible species) can act upon something apparently more noble (the soul). We might

ligat (Q312.83vb). Cf. Avicenna, *Liber de Anima* vol. 4-5, ed. S. Van Reit (Louvain and Leiden: Brill, 1972), 146-147. Note that Rufus’s view here contrasts with that of Philoponus, who emphasized the differences between human apprehension and the reception of an image in a mirror. See J. Owens, “Aristotelian Soul as Cognitive of Sensibles, Intelligibles, and Self,” in *Aristotle: The Collected Papers of Joseph Owens*, ed. J.R. Catan (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), 88-89.

⁸⁷ Averroës, *Comm. in De anima* 3.4: [O]mne recipiens aliquid necesse est ut sit denudatum a natura recepti (ed. F. S. Crawford, 1953, 385).

expect that Rufus would no longer worry about such questions in the *Contra Averroem*, at least as far as intelligible species are concerned. After all, once intelligible species are identified with nothing short of divine ideas, we might think such ‘nobility’ concerns would be thoroughly quelled. Nonetheless, the *Contra Averroem* finds Rufus still discussing this problem extensively, ruminating over a number of unsatisfactory answers before finally settling on a resolution—a resolution which, though it references the *De anima* commentary solution, differs from it.

Humbly (or perhaps playfully) chastising himself for excessive curiosity and verbosity, Rufus asks: “Memory most potent, Intelligence most wise, Love most sweet, will not this most tiresome curiosity of my mind cease?”⁸⁸ In the final question of the first part of the *Contra Averroem*, Rufus’s curiosity leads him to ask whether sensible or intelligible objects are able to move the soul, given that the less noble cannot move the more noble.⁸⁹ The first solution he considers, which he attributes to St. Augustine, is the doctrine we saw in the *De anima* commentary. On this account the sensible does not immediately move the soul, but rather “excites” it, and the soul, so excited, moves itself.⁹⁰ In the *Contra Averroem*, however, Rufus finds this doctrine unsatisfactory, and moves on to explore other possibilities.

Perhaps, Rufus suggests, it is neither the sensitive faculty nor the living body of the organ itself that comprehends the sensible, but the conjunction of the sensitive faculty and the organ, and this conjunction receives the sensible species

⁸⁸ Rufus, *CAv* 1.15: *Memoria potentissima, intelligentia sapientissima, dilectio dulcissima, numquid non cessabit haec mentis meae curiositas taediocissima?* (Q312.84ra, in a second hand).

⁸⁹ Rufus, *CAv* 1.15: [*Utrum possint haec obiecta sensibilia et intelligibilia non comprehendentia movere animam sensitivam [vel] animam intellectivam comprehensionem habentes, cum minus nobile non possit movere magis nobile*] (Q312.84ra).

⁹⁰ Rufus, *CAv* 1.15: *Nec ipsam virtutem sensitivam movet sicut efficiens [movet] motum, sed solum excitat eam per eius praesentiam, et ipsa anima sensitiva excitata movet se ipsam* (Q312.84ra).

only through the nature of its matter, namely the organ.⁹¹ Rufus posits a similar solution in the case of the intellect: the intellect receives only through the nature of its *spiritual* matter, which is a nature and a created entity, and therefore less noble and spiritual than the ideas it receives.⁹² Hence he settles on a different solution to the problem of nobility than in the *De anima* commentary, where he opted for Augustine's 'excitation' account.

10. THE *SCRIPTUM IN METAPHYSICAM*

Rufus's *Scriptum in Metaphysicam Aristotelis*, a very long commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, can be placed chronologically between the *Contra Averroem*, which it references as *Quaestiones de ideis*, and the *Speculum animae*. The text of the *Scriptum in Metaphysicam* has not been fully edited, so we will only discuss it briefly. Still, it is useful to pause and observe how this text fits into the overall development of Rufus's views.

The *Scriptum in Metaphysicam* stands as an interesting stepping stone between the *Contra Averroem* and the *Speculum animae*. It contains an account of the nobility problem clearly influenced by the *Contra Averroem*, as well as a discussion of self-perception that actually references the *Contra Averroem* itself. The *Scriptum* also repeatedly tells us that ideas are received in the intellect, a doctrine also found in the *Contra Averroem*, but not in Rufus's later works.

In the *Scriptum*, Rufus again rejects the Augustinian 'indirect excitation' solution to the nobility problem—i.e., the

⁹¹ Rufus, *CAv* 1.15: *Fortē respondebit quod virtus sensitiva quae est actus organi per se ipsam non comprehendit sensibile, nec materia eius quae est corpus organicum etiam per se ipsum comprehendit sensibile, sed coniunctum ex virtute sensitiva et organo sentit. Unde coniuncti est haec operatio sentire, et ideo hoc coniunctum est recipiens speciem apprehensi, et hoc solum per naturam materiae, scilicet organi* (Q312.84ra).

⁹² Rufus, *CAv* 1.15: [*I*]ntellectus creatus recipiens est solum per naturam suae materiae spiritualis quae materia est haec et natura et ens creatum et obiectum habens sui ideam, ut dictum est, et ideo res minus nobilis et minus spiritualis quam idea (Q312.84ra).

problem of how a sensible or intelligible can move the soul. This time his rejection of the Augustinian solution apparently comes from a desire to avoid contradicting Aristotle, who (in Rufus' words) tells us that sensibles move the living being or the soul.⁹³ Rufus, thereafter, offers a third solution unique to the *Scriptum in Metaphysicam*. First, he gives an account of the intellect. As in the *De anima* commentary and the *Contra Averroem*, he starts with the assumption that the intellect has a *quod-est* and a *quo-est*. Because it is composite in this way, it can abstract an idea of itself, which it can then receive insofar as it is a *quod-est*, entity, or nature. He once again offers the example of a mirror, but he merely refers us to the *Contra Averroem* instead of giving another full account of the metaphor.⁹⁴ More importantly, he tells us that this abstracted idea, and the idea of any nature, is in a way more noble than the soul.⁹⁵ Why is that? According to Rufus, an idea is not more noble than the soul insofar as the soul is a nature in itself, but an idea is more noble than the soul insofar as ideas inform, perfect, or complete the soul.⁹⁶ The intellect's potentiality explains the fact that ideas can complete it.⁹⁷ We

⁹³ Rufus, *Scriptum in Metaphysicam Aristotelis 4: Ad hoc dicit beatus Augustinus quod nec anima sensitiva nec intellectiva movetur ab istis sensibilibus non apprehendentibus; ista tamen excitant eam, et ipsa excitata movet se ipsam. Et in his verbis videtur concordare cum Platone dicente animam movere se ipsam. Sed si hoc est verum, videtur quod Aristoteles mentiatur cum dicat ista sensibilia movere animata vel animam. Et ideo ut possimus salvare Aristotelem, dicamus alio modo* (Universitätsbibliothek Erfurt, Dep. Erf., CA Quarto 312, fol. 8vb.) Henceforth *SMet*, Q312.

⁹⁴ Rufus, *SMet* 4.11.Q1: *Intellectus enim possibilis est substantia sive anima rationalis et habet quod-est et quo-est, ratione quo (!) est potest ipsa ideam abstrahere a se ipsa et ipsa idea abstracta potest anima in ratione in qua est ens et natura sui ipsius recipere ideam, et similiter potest recipere cuiusvis ideam. [...] Et exemplum huius potest esse in speculo. Sed quia dictum est in quaestionibus de ideis alibi de isto exemplo, ideo praetermitto* (Q290.8vb).

⁹⁵ Rufus, *SMet* 4.11.Q1: *Et cuiusvis naturae idea recepta in anima disponens et informans ipsam nobilior est ipsa anima in quantum est ens et natura receptiva* (Q290.8vb).

⁹⁶ For a similar treatment, see *SMet* 6.4.Q2 (V4538.44ra-rb), in which Rufus discusses the different senses in which species are, or are not, caused by the soul.

⁹⁷ *SMet* 4.11.Q1: *Ad ista autem possumus dicere quod anima potest considerari et in se in quantum natura causata, et potest considerari in-*

might call this the ‘potentiality’ solution to the nobility problem in the case of the intellect, noting how different it is from the *Contra Averroem*’s suggestion that the soul is less noble than an idea because it is a created nature that has matter, albeit spiritual matter.

Rufus then moves on to the case of sensation. First, he offers a solution similar to the one he gave in the *Contra Averroem*. The sensitive faculty itself is not moved by the species and does not receive the species of a sensible nature. Rather, it is the *composite* of the faculty and the organ that receives and perceives. The sensitive faculty *per se* does not receive the species of a sensible nature. Though the sensitive faculty on its own is more noble than the species, the organ (which is the actual recipient of the species) is not, and thus the species is more noble than its composite recipient.⁹⁸ It may be objected, Rufus notes, that since the recipient is a living and apprehending thing, it must be more noble than a non-living and non-apprehending species. To this he replies that, although the composite recipient is living and apprehending, it is living and apprehending only through the sensitive faculty. But it is not through this faculty that the composite receives the species, but rather through the embodied organ.⁹⁹ Thus, the problem is avoided.

quantum recipit, et in ista consideratione est ipsa anima natura ens in potentia ad formam quam recipit et potens habere ipsam, actu non habens, et informari ab eo, actu non informata. Idea autem cuiusvis sensibilis forma extra etsi non sit dignior ipsa anima inquantum ipsa anima est natura in se considerata, tamen dignior est ea inquantum anima est in potentia ut ipsam ideam recipiat (Q290.9ra).

⁹⁸ *SMet 4.11.Q1: Ex parte autem sensus dicendum quod illud quod recipitur species est naturae sensibilis, et recipitur non in virtute sensitiva sed in composito ex virtute et organo; hoc enim est sentiens; compositum enim est sentiens et non sensus. Species autem cuiusvis naturae sensibilis extra nobilior est recipiente; recipiens enim est corpus; anima enim sensitiva per se non recipit (Q290.8vb).*

⁹⁹ *SMet 4.11.Q1: Sed modo videtur contra: Recipiens est compositum, et est res vivens et apprehendens; igitur ipsum est nobilior specie non-vivente nec apprehendente. Ad hoc dicendum quod quamvis illud compositum sit apprehendens et vivens, et hoc per virtutem, tamen non est recipiens per virtutem sed per naturam corporis sive materiae, unde species nobilior est ipso inquantum est recipiens (Q290.8vb).*

Though Rufus does give the ‘composite’ solution from *Contra Averroem* a favorable hearing (even going so far as to defend it from possible objections), it is not the final account he gives in this passage. The last solution he presents, and the only one he gives without objection or counterargument, is analogous to the new ‘potentiality’ solution, described above in the case of the intellect. In the case of sensation, the account goes as follows: although the received species is not more dignified than the sensitive faculty considered in itself, nonetheless it is more dignified insofar as the sensitive faculty is a being in potential to the received form.¹⁰⁰ Puzzlingly, Rufus here refers to *ideas* being received in sensation as well as understanding, though he explicitly told us earlier, in the *Contra Averroem*, that the received species are ideas only in the case of understanding, not sensation. Why he speaks of ideas rather than immaterial species more generally here is not clear, so we should approach the passage with a measure of caution. Still, the gist of his solution is perfectly clear: the receiver is less noble than the received not in itself, but insofar as it is in potential to the received species. This elegant and intuitively appealing solution applies to both sensation and understanding. Since it is given last and without objection, it would appear to be Rufus’s preferred solution at this point in his philosophical career. (As mentioned before, however, he is not wholly unfavorable toward the ‘composite’ solution he formerly embraced.) This apparently constitutes Rufus’s final step toward a satisfactory resolution of the nobility problem—a problem that clearly troubled him deeply for some time, given the diversity of solutions he endorsed, often with visible hesitation, along the way.

¹⁰⁰ Rufus, *SMet* 4.11.Q1: *Eodem modo respondendum est de virtute sensitiva quod quamvis idea formae naturae non-apprehendens non sit dignior ipsa virtute in quantum in se consideratur, tamen dignior est ipsa virtute in quantum ipsa virtus habet esse, scilicet quod est ens in potentia respectu ideae* (Q290.8vb).

11. THE *SPECULUM ANIMAE*

This brings us to the *Speculum animae*, Rufus's discussion of Aristotle's claim that the soul is in some way all things. It is an ambitious and exciting text, but in many ways it is more minimalistic than the earlier works. The distinction between species and nature is central to the theory as always. Rufus does not, however, touch on questions about the preconditions for perception, and does not consider what it is about our constitution that allows us to perceive and understand. Spiritual ideas are described as intellectual species,¹⁰¹ which probably implies that the ideas that perfect our senses are not spiritual, or at least they are less spiritual than the ideas or species in the intellect. Both sorts of species, sensible and intelligible, are abstracted, and intellectual species can be abstracted either from corporeal or incorporeal natures. When species are abstracted from corporeal natures, they are less material and more spiritual than the natures from which they are abstracted. But when they are abstracted from incorporeal beings such as angels or souls, they are more material and *less* spiritual the natures from which they are abstracted.¹⁰² They are more material because they cannot exist without matter, albeit unextended matter. So here since the soul is more spiritual and hence more noble than the ideas it understands, Rufus gives up the idea that the less noble cannot act on the more noble; he can do this only because he has earlier distinguished a limited sense in which the species is more spiritual—namely, as it actualizes or perfects the soul. At the same time Rufus adds

¹⁰¹ Rufus, *SAn* 5: *Immo species intelligibiles, spirituales ideas secundum quod huiusmodi recipit—quomodo ergo species materiales?* (Q312.110ra).

¹⁰² Rufus, *SAn* 5: *Vides ergo qualiter istae formae-species receptae in ipso intellectu, etsi immateriales dicantur, magis tamen materiales sunt quam anima vel angelus a quibus abstrahuntur; eo quod per se ipsas existere non possunt, secundum esse istud abstractionis, sed necessario exigunt materiam, sibi tamen congruentem, scilicet non situalem, in qua et recipiantur. Istae autem species abstractae, quando a corporalibus naturis abstrahuntur, minus sunt materiales et magis spirituales quam naturae a quibus abstrahuntur; aliquo modo tamen et hae et illae, sicut audisti, materiales [sunt] et materia solum non situali indigentes* (Q312.110ra).

a characteristic to the concept of spirituality to explain why: *viz.*, independence. Angels, which are presumably composed of natural ideas and spiritual matter, can exist by themselves and hence are more spiritual than spiritual ideas that cannot exist by themselves. So the point seems to be the greatest degree of spirituality requires completeness or the capacity for independent existence, as well as activity and unextend-
edness.¹⁰³ Rufus seems largely to have backtracked on the most radical aspect of the *Contra Averroem*, i.e., the notion of divine ideas being received in mortal intellects. Gone, too, are complex distinctions between species in the intellect and species in the sense organ: in the *Speculum*, Rufus's accounts of sensible and intelligible species and their reception are quite parallel.

What, then, is Rufus's account of species in the *Speculum animae*? The received species is not a substance, he reasons, because the (external) objects of sensation and understanding, such as color and sound, are accidents, not substances—and what is once an accident, and is in itself an accident, is never a substance. But the received species cannot be an accident either, since accidents inhere in their subjects and do not extend beyond them (and hence could not reach the sense organs or intellective soul). So received species are neither substances nor accidents, but they are also not nothing altogether.¹⁰⁴ Thus, they have neither the being of a substance

¹⁰³ Still despite Rufus's attempts at disambiguation, it appears that the twin concepts of spirituality and materiality retain the power to confuse, and one wonders why Rufus continued to employ them. Perhaps the answer is simply that the terminology was common currency. Still, degrees of abstraction could presumably have performed the same function with less danger of confusion.

¹⁰⁴ Rufus, *SAn 2: Ipsum enim sensibile receptum sive species, constat quod forma aliqua est. Aut ergo substantia vel accidens. Quod si substantia, ex ipsa et ipso sensu, cum utrumque sit substantia, si fiat vere unum, erit vere una substantia et una natura—individuum, scilicet, compositum ex materia et forma—quod non potest dici, nec in sensu quidem et sensibili [...] quia sensibilia accidentia sunt, et quod semel et in se est accidens, ad nihil est substantia. In intellectu et intelligibili non, quia indifferenter intellecta sunt substantiae et accidentia; unde et eorum species receptae. [...] Quod si accidens, nequaquam, quia non egreditur, nascitur ex principiis eius in quo recipitur. Eius ergo accidens non erit. Alterius vero, si esset,*

nor the being of an accident, but an entirely different mode of being: species-being.

Here Rufus tells us that there is a major division between forms with nature-being and forms with species-being. He describes this as a very useful and necessary distinction, which one must understand or else be led astray in one's thinking. Forms with natural being can be divided into substantial forms and accidental forms. Those with species-being, on the other hand, are species or 'habit-forms', and these are the forms that the soul receives in either sense or understanding.¹⁰⁵ This straightforward account of the ontological status of received species contrasts with the more complex situation presented in the *Contra Averroem* (in which some received species *are* natures, and some are not). Once adopted in the *Speculum animae*, however, this new ontological claim is consistently maintained through that work and the later *Sententia Oxoniensis*. It is a fascinating contribution to the species tradition, since it posits a distinction between nature-being and species-being that places species-being wholly apart from the entire realm of substance and accident. Recall how radical this move was at the time: it implies that Aristotle's basic and widely accepted scheme of ten categories (substance and nine accidents), into which all objects of human apprehension were said to fall, was inadequate.

Having told us that received species have a unique, non-natural mode of being, Rufus goes on to explain in more detail just what "the being of a species" means. According to Rufus, a species is a most express similitude of the external nature

nequaquam ab illo et extra istud exiret; esse enim accidentis est inesse. Iam ergo videtur quod nec hoc receptum in sensu, nec illud in intellectu, substantia sit vel accidens, [nec] etiam nihil omnino (Q312.108ra).

¹⁰⁵ Rufus, *SAn* 2: *Nec accidentis nec substantiae, quia iterum aliter distinguimus esse, scilicet naturae et speciei. Et haec est distinctio perutilis et necessaria. Esse naturae est illud duplex esse: substantiae et accidentis, quod prius notatum est. Esse speciei patebit, si pateat quid dico speciem [...] Debes enim tripliciter distinguere formam: forma quae est substantia, forma quae est accidens, et forma quae est species et habitus. Et illa duo prima membra, simul in unum complectendo, potes dividere contra esse speciei sive habitus (Q312.108rb).*

from which it is abstracted.¹⁰⁶ In this, of course, he was following Augustine's account. But what did Rufus take this notion of "most express similitude" to mean, exactly? Rufus tells us the difference between a natural sensible's form (the everyday, garden variety form that shapes external, physical objects) and its species is *less than the difference between two individual objects of the same most specific species*. And yet he also states that the similarity between them is less than numerical identity.¹⁰⁷ So while an object's nature and its species are not one and the same, they are more similar than two individuals of the same most specific kind.

This is a difficult concept at first, but makes sense upon further reflection. The key difference between a sensible nature and a sensible species, as Rufus tells us, is a difference in mode of being. Indeed, any further difference might cause troubles for the theory. If the received form differed from the external form in ways other than its mode of being, then it would be difficult to claim for ourselves accurate, unfiltered knowledge of natural objects in the external world. And if two forms are the same except in their mode of being, then we can make sense of the concept of being "more similar than any two natures, but not numerically identical." If they were numerically identical, there could be no difference in being, and they could be expected to produce the same effects in the soul as in the external world—leaving us with the aforementioned absurdity of bathtubs in the soul.

According to Rufus, because sensible and intelligible species have a special mode of being, the mind is not literally "humanified" (*humanatur*) if it understands humanity, but it is "quasi-humanified" (*ut humanatur*)—since it takes on the species-form, instead of the nature-form, of what it

¹⁰⁶ Rufus, *SAn 2: Speciem igitur dico similitudinem expressissimam ipsius formae quae est in obiecto, et hoc similiter dico in sensibili et intelligibili* (Q312.108rb).

¹⁰⁷ Rufus, *SAn 2: Unde colligere potes quod speciei naturae sensibilis ad ipsam formam sensibilem in obiecto existentem minor est diversitas quam sit diversorum individuorum sub una specie specialissima, et maior diversitas vel minor identitas quam numeralis identitas omnino* (Q312.108rb).

perceives.¹⁰⁸ The *ut* here is justified by the mode of being of the received form: the change is parallel to, but not identical with, taking on the nature of humanity. As mentioned previously, in the *Speculum animae* Rufus also identifies species received in the sense or intellect with ‘habit-forms.’ Species should be characterized as habits because, according to Rufus, a species has a privation as its opposite, some absence in the subject.¹⁰⁹

So a species is the most express similitude of the nature-form of the object from which it originates; furthermore, its opposite is a privation. The term ‘idea,’ however, is used to refer to species only once,¹¹⁰ and interest in the divine is muted. This stands in rather stark contrast to the *Contra Averroem*, of course. Given that the authenticity of both these texts is well-established,¹¹¹ this leaves us with two possibilities: either Rufus gradually ceased to identify received species with ideas, or he simply chose not to be nearly as explicit about this identification in the *Speculum*. On the one hand, Rufus may simply have found it unnecessary to comment extensively on the divine when explicating a strictly philosophical claim, namely Aristotle’s suggestion that the soul is in some manner all things. On the other hand, all references to ideas in Rufus’s later Oxford *Sentences* commentary appear to be references to ideas in God’s mind, rather than ideas received

¹⁰⁸ Rufus, *SAn* 3: [*P*]ossis scilicet dicere quod intellectus possibilis, cum intelligit lapidem, vere ut lapideitatur; cum hominem, vere ut humanatur. Hoc est dicere vere perficitur et formatur, non forma hominis, sed ut forma hominis (Q312.109ra).

¹⁰⁹ Rufus, *SAn* 2: *Et vere dico habitus; nam et privationem habet oppositam, tenebram scilicet possibilem exsistere in eodem subiecto* (Q312.108va).

¹¹⁰ Rufus, *SAn* 5: [*I*]ste intellectus [...] species intelligibiles, spirituales ideas secundum quod huiusmodi recipit (Q312.110ra).

¹¹¹ As to the *Speculum animae*, Peter Raedts identifies the text in question as coming from Rufus, though he sees it as part of a larger work: “The third question in [Assisi 138] which is from the hand of Richard Rufus beyond any doubt is a small treatise on ff. 227c-285A.” P. Raedts, *Richard Rufus of Cornwall and the Tradition of Oxford Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 68. The authenticity of the *Contra Averroem* can in turn be established by references to it in the *Speculum*. Rufus, *SAn* 5: *Quomodo autem ipsa sui ipsius speciem, et a se ipsa abstractam, intelligat et recipiat, quaere alias, scilicet in quaestionibus illis* 16 (Q312.110rb). It is also referenced in the *Scriptum in Metaphysicam*, as the reader will recall.

by the human intellect, so perhaps his views did change. Still, an absence of evidence that Rufus continued to identify species with ideas is not positive evidence for the contrary. Thus, there remain unanswered questions concerning how, whether, and why Rufus's views on the relationship between ideas and received species changed over time.

12. SELF-PERCEPTION IN THE *SPECULUM ANIMAE*

By contrast, the response to the problem of self-understanding in the *Speculum animae* is virtually identical to that seen in both the *De anima* commentary and the *Contra Averroem*. In the fifth of five questions given in the treatise, while ostensibly discussing the immortality of the soul, Rufus turns to a digression on self-understanding. He explains that the intellect only receives abstracted species-forms, *not* natures, whether it perceives itself, angels, or normal, mundane objects. But the intellect itself is, Rufus claims, an immaterial nature.¹¹² Because it is a nature, the intellect can abstract a species from itself, which it then receives, and this is how it can understand itself without violating any of the basic precepts of Aristotelian metaphysics. Just as in the *Contra Averroem* (which is referenced in this passage as the “sixteen questions”), Rufus once again uses the metaphor of a mirror to explain his point; like the soul, a corporeal mirror can reflect or represent its own image.¹¹³ Indeed, the solution to the problem of self-perception is one of the most consistent corollaries to Rufus's theory of perception by species, remain-

¹¹² Rufus, *SAn* 5: *Sive ergo se ipsam intelligat sive angelum sive naturas corporales, non recipit nisi formas-species abstractas, et non formas-naturas. Unde ipsa est forma immaterialis—verum est—scilicet, forma-natura. Recipit autem omnes formas immateriales—verum est—formas-species, non autem naturas* (Q312.110rb).

¹¹³ Rufus, *SAn* 5: *Quomodo autem ipsa sui ipsius speciem, et a se ipsa abstractam, intelligat et recipiat, quaere alias, scilicet in quaestionibus illis 16 praedictis, et exemplum huius rei conveniens [habes] in speculo corporali—qualiter scilicet eiusdem speculi corporalis simulacrum in ipso eodem speculo corporali representari potest, et non tantum semel sed multotiens et iterato* (Q312.110rb).

ing the same throughout the five works under consideration, despite being far from uncontroversial.

13. SPECIES AND PERCEPTION IN THE *SENTENTIA OXONIENSIS*

Rufus's Oxford commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences* is the fifth and final work we will consider. Rufus's view of species and their unique ontological status in this text is most similar to that presented in the *Speculum animae*, from which the *Sententia Oxoniensis* borrows. He once again tells us that we understand external objects by means of a species received in the intellect.¹¹⁴ As before, the species in the intellect has the same essence as the external material form, but differs in that it has spiritual, rather than material, being.¹¹⁵ As in all of Rufus's works, the key difference is the spiritual being of the received species, but the account presented in the *Sententia Oxoniensis* preserves and emphasizes the distinction between nature-being and species-being, as presented in the *Speculum*.¹¹⁶

Yet more features of Rufus's earlier works appear again in the *Sentences* commentary. Rufus once again emphasizes that the difference between a species and the nature from

¹¹⁴ Rufus, *Sententia Oxoniensis* pr.: [*P*er speciem cognoscamus obiectum (Oxford, Balliol College 62, fol. 6ra). Henceforth SOx, B62.]

¹¹⁵ Rufus, SOx pr.: *Ergo videtur quod haec species et forma materialis extra non differant secundum essentiam, sed secundum esse spirituale et materiale. Ergo secundum hanc differentiam erit verum nobilius ente. Dicunt etiam aperte philosophi quod eadem est essentia formae in materia et in anima—quod etiam ratione videtur posse probari* (B62.11ra).

¹¹⁶ Rufus, SOx pr.: *Intelligendum ergo forte quod esse veri est esse speciei et similitudinis, et non esse naturae, quae quidem natura et sub esse naturae dividitur proprie per substantiam et accidens. Unde talis speciei proprie loquendo nec est substantia nec accidens, sed est species substantiae vel accidentis, et non est nihil, sicut species coloris in medio et sensu non est proprie loquendo color; propter esse enim diversum amisit nomen et definitionem coloris. Unde cum dicitur quidquid est, est substantia vel accidens, aut divisio non est sufficiens, aut li 'quidquid' distribuet solum pro eo quod est natura et quod esse naturae habet secundum quod huiusmodi, et voco naturam contra speciem sive similitudinem genitam ex natura* (B62.10ra).

which it is abstracted is less than the difference between two natures of the most specific species. He also repeats his claim that, despite this complete similarity, the nature and the abstracted species are not entirely the same. This discussion is almost identical to the parallel passage in the *Speculum*, and Rufus uses the same example (white and the species of white) to illustrate this point in both texts.¹¹⁷ Rufus also returns to the idea of differing degrees of spirituality at this point in the text, in a passage that hearkens back to his similar discussions in the *De anima* commentary. Specifically, he tells us that the species of white, which is distinguished by its spiritual mode of being, is more spiritual in the organ and sense than it is in the medium.¹¹⁸

Finally, Rufus yet again provides the same solution to the problem of self-perception, still using the metaphor of a mirror as his main explanatory tool. He tells us that the soul can abstract a species from itself, and understand itself by means of this species, just as a corporeal mirror can reflect its own image. As in the above discussion of the similarity and numerical non-identity of nature and abstracted species, the text here is extremely similar to the parallel passage in the *Speculum animae* (and, in this case, it also bears a strong resemblance to the parallel discussion in the *Contra Averroem*).¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Rufus, *SOx* 2.13: *Haec species albedinis non est res alterius speciei specialissimae quam sit haec albedo a qua gignitur. Non est individuum sub specie specialissima albedinis; non sunt co-individua eiusdem speciei: haec species proles et illa albedo parens. Magis tamen sibi approximant in convenientia naturae quam una albedo et alia albedo. Unde magis conveniunt quam unitate in specie et minus differunt quam differentia simpliciter numero; et tamen non sunt omnino idem numero* (B62.132ra).

¹¹⁸ Rufus, *SOx* 2.13: *Haec species nomen et definitionem amisit albedinis, scilicet parentis, propter esse alterum, scilicet spirituale, quod comparative habet in medio, et adhuc magis spirituale in organo et sensu* (B62.132ra-rb).

¹¹⁹ Rufus, *SOx* pr.: *Quod autem anima a se ipsa etiam speciem possit abstrahere, intelligi potest, ut videtur, in quodam exemplo corporali. Verbi gratia idolum speculi corporalis in aliquo alio speculo corporali receptum, si illinc reflectatur in primum, videbitur idem speculum primum per sui idolum receptum in se ipso speculo primo. Anima speculum est et natura obiecta est si speciem sic habet. Exprimat igitur ipsa de se natura in se speculum sui speciem vel idolum, et sic se intelligat* (B62.11va).

The *Sententia Oxoniensis* also contains interesting contributions to Rufus's overall project, including the most complete known presentation of Rufus's views on truth. Here, Rufus identifies the truth as a species with spiritual being.¹²⁰ The spiritual species in the intellect is the truly true thing, Rufus explains; external corporeal forms are true things "only by imitation."¹²¹ (Rufus's mention of truth by imitation is apparently an allusion to Augustine, who, in his *Soliloquies*, contrasts immortal truths in the mind of God with the perishable, corporeal truths of external objects created in accordance with the divine exemplars. Unlike the truly true, such truths by imitation can be merely apparent or false, inadequate to the divine truth they copy.¹²²) In a passage paralleling Rufus's discussion of the unique ontological status of species in the *Speculum*, Rufus refutes an argument claiming to show that, because truth is neither a substance nor an

¹²⁰ Rufus, *SOx* pr.: *Nihil ergo magis proprium, nihil propinquius, nihil congruentius in nomine veri video quam quod verum proprissime acceptum sit species et falsum apparens species, quemadmodum illi saeculares philosophi volunt ubi distinctissime significationes quorundam vocabulorum distinguunt. Et si quaeras verum cuius sit species, dico naturae existentis extra animam. Et est verum incomplexum idem quod species sive intentio in intellectu, de quo dicunt philosophi saeculares quod eadem est forma per essentiam in materia et in anima vel [in] intellectu, sed differt per esse spirituale et abstractionis a materia et natura seu forma existente extra in materia* (B62.9vb). Rufus makes similar remarks in the *Scriptum in Metaphysicam*, explaining that we gain scientific knowledge through a species received in the soul. He adds that science, described in this way, is truth, and truth is an idea received in the intellect: *Sed scientia dicitur aequivoce: Uno modo dicitur operatio, et sic non est veritas scientia. Alio modo dicitur habitus quem habet anima per speciem receptam in ipsa. Scientia autem hoc modo dicta veritas est, hoc est idea recepta in intellectum* (*SMet* 1, Q290.2vb); see also *SMet* 6.4.Q2. Rufus's description of truth as species in the *Scriptum* anticipates the *Sententia Oxoniensis* discussion, and repeats, rather interestingly, the identification of species with ideas found in the *Contra Averroem*.

¹²¹ Rufus, *SOx* pr.: *Vere verum est species intellecta, et hoc verum est solum in cognitione; verum imitatione, quod est et falsum, est extra in materia et non in intellectu et cognitione. Patet igitur secundum quod corpus et omnis forma corporalis existens in materia est verum solum imitatione* (B62.8ra).

¹²² Augustine, *Soliloquiorum libri duo* 2.18, PL 32: 901.

accident, it does not exist: it does exist, Rufus explains, but as a species or similitude, not a nature.¹²³

Once the *Sententiae Oxoniensis* has been fully edited and given due attention, no doubt a wealth of additional, philosophically interesting refinements to Rufus' theory of sense and understanding will emerge. For present purposes, however, it is enough to observe that at this late stage Rufus seems to have remained satisfied with the outline of his theory as it is put forth in the *Speculum*. Along with the confidence and clarity of the *Speculum animae* itself, the strong parallels between the *Speculum* and the *Sententia Oxoniensis* gives us another reason to think that the *Speculum* represents a culmination of many of the ideas with which Rufus grappled throughout his philosophical career.

14. CONCLUSION

As we have seen, the development of Rufus's epistemological thought took many twists and turns, some of which can be seen as steps on the path between the view of his predecessor Robert Grosseteste and his successor Thomas Aquinas. This is most notably the case with Rufus's gradual adjustment from a more active/Augustinian to a more passive/Aristotelian depiction of the cognitive process. Thus Rufus originally espoused a compromise very similar to that proposed by Robert Grosseteste, according to which the rational soul does not directly receive intelligible species but rather, when excited by the presence of sensation, sorts and distinguishes the confused products of sensation, thereby cognizing universals. Prompted by the Neoplatonic ban on ignoble agents affecting noble agents, Rufus initially claimed the intellect acts on the products of sensation, rather than their acting on it.

Though Rufus came to reject this view at an early stage, he found it difficult to devise a solution that would not violate the Neoplatonic dictum that what acts must always be more

¹²³ See note 116 *supra*.

noble than what is acted upon. In response, he employed two strategies. First, he claimed that species are always received in matter, *viz.* the corporeal matter of the sense organ or the spiritual matter of the intellect. Also, more importantly, he came to see that the problem could be resolved by distinguishing carefully in what way species were and were not more noble than the souls they acted upon. They were noble in that they actualized a power of the soul, but not otherwise.

Central to his resolution of this problem and others was the distinction Rufus drew between nature and species or idea, where an idea is an exemplar form by which we know a nature, and a nature is a form which, with matter, constitutes an external world composite.¹²⁴ Thus the species-idea inheres in the matter of the nature that comprehends it, and is more noble than that nature in so far as it perfects it by actualizing a potential of that nature, but less noble in that it is incomplete and cannot exist separately.

At the outset, when commenting on Aristotle's *De anima*, Rufus primarily distinguishes *not* between nature and species, but rather between spiritual and material. In this regard he was probably influenced by Averroës and Aristotle's characterization of the objects of apprehension simply as being without matter. But he did not mean by 'spirit' what we would mean. As we have seen, 'spirit' was a broad concept in the scholastic world, characterizing things that are active but invisible such as heat and odors, things that are unextended (including our rational souls), and things that are sacred. That being the case, it is not surprising that the use of the term to characterize intentional objects could be a cause of confusion.

In his *Contra Averroem*, Rufus distinguishes between natures and ideas, where nature seems to refer to any ex-

¹²⁴ The distinction is stated most clearly in a comparatively early work. See Rufus, *CAv* 7: *Quid autem nomine ideae praecise intelligam facile est videre, scilicet formam <forma E> rei quae res se ipsa et immediate in intellect recipi non potest—formam, dico, per quam cognoscitur ipsa res extra, non ex qua cum materia constituitur compositum extra, sed forma dicta ratio exemplaris rei extrinsecae* (Q312.82va). *CAv* 11: *Sed dupliciter dicitur forma: Aut enim natura est quae cum materia constituit compositum aut idea et est forma exemplar et causa quodammodo eadem rei* (Q312.83va).

ternal world object, *even* the species received by the senses, and idea describes only the species received by the intellect. Indeed he solves the nobility problem by claiming that ideas are more noble than the intellect. But shortly thereafter, in his *Scriptum in Metaphysicam*, Rufus changed his mind: what perfects our sensitive faculty so that it apprehends nature-forms are ideas, and ideas are more noble than the soul—only?—insofar as it is a being in potential. By this point, Rufus is distinguishing between the functions of natures and ideas. Species, when they inform the soul, effect apprehension rather producing the natural effects of the corresponding natureform—that is, instead of turning the eye jelly green, they make us see green.

In the *Speculum* there is further clarification of the distinctions between the confusing concepts of spirit, immateriality, abstraction, and absence of extension. Here ‘spirit’ refers both to what animates and what produces apprehension. By this time, Rufus generally speaks of species-being rather than spiritual being. And some natures, including the nature of the soul are more noble than the species they receive in most respects. As they are apprehended, natures generate a species that corresponds to their essence but differs from them in name and definition because their being is different. Since species are essentially the same as those natures, they can cause apprehension of those same natures; since they are different in being they do not shape them as those natures shape matter.

Despite the increased emphasis on species in later works, reference to ‘spirit’ and its derivatives as contrasted with natural or material beings does not entirely drop out, however.

Possibly, this is because spiritual being like material being comes in degrees, whereas species-being does not, and since species become increasing immaterial as they move through the medium of the air and the sense to the intellect, Rufus employs a concept that admits of degrees.

However, that Rufus continued to use old-fashioned terminology was not a sign that he was timid. Indeed, in the

Speculum Rufus boldly claims that the species we apprehend do not belong to the Aristotelian categories—that is, they neither are substances nor do they belong to one of the nine classes of Aristotelian accidents. They cannot be substances since they cannot exist independently; they cannot be accidents since they migrate from the objects we apprehend to our apprehensive powers, and accidents can exist apart from the subjects that support their existence. Rufus characterizes species positively as habits, by contrast with privations, and ordinarily one would suppose that this meant that species were dispositions, a standard category of Aristotelian accident. However, these particular habits cannot be Aristotelian accidents, since they naturally exist separately from the substances that causes them.

This argument relies on a philosophically orthodox understanding of what it means to be an Aristotelian accident, one which many later scholastics were to abandon for theological reasons. Albertus Magnus, for example, claimed that the existence of eucharistic accidents apart from a subject precisely paralleled the separate existence of the spiritual accidents as they move through the medium to the senses.¹²⁵ Rufus rejected this claim when he encountered it.¹²⁶ Instead he defended the claim that because part of what it means to be an accident is to inhere in a substance, it is only miraculously possible, and never naturally possible, for accidents to exist separately from a subject.¹²⁷

Controversial as Rufus's distinction between nature and species was, it allowed him a neat answer to the problem of self-perception. Being a nature, albeit an unextended and spiritual nature, the intellect could perceive anything, including itself, by means of the corresponding species. Regardless of what intelligible species informed the intellect, it would produce understanding of the object it imaged for the intellect. Since the intellect's own formal nature which animates it was distinct from its intelligible species, the act

¹²⁵ Albertus Magnus, *De corpore dom.* 6.2.1, *Opera Omnia* 38, ed. A. Borgnet (Paris, 1896), 384.

¹²⁶ Rufus, *Sententia Parisiensis* 4.12, cod. Assisi 176.110rb-va.

¹²⁷ *SOx* 2.3A, B62.108va.

of self-understanding could be characterized as the reception of an intellectual species like any other, and there was no difficulty about the intellect retaining its natural form in the process. Rufus could affirm with Aristotle that self-understanding was achieved in just the same way as any other act of apprehension.

Unlike the other elements of his theory, Rufus's theory of self-understanding, though very different from those of his contemporaries, was, as we have seen, maintained consistently throughout his works. Though it depends, in its fully developed form, on the distinction between nature and species that developed slowly across Rufus's works, the basic idea was present from the beginning. Moreover, the appealing simplicity of Rufus's solution contrasts sharply with the views of such scholastics as Thomas Aquinas, as well as being more in harmony with Aristotle's views. That the harmony Rufus achieved was not the result of slavish imitation but a thorough understanding of Aristotelian is clear from his attack on the adequacy of the Aristotelian categories. Thus responding to those who sought to make the Eucharistic miracle intelligible as just another instance of the existence of accidents separated from the substances that caused them, Rufus suggested that the Eucharistic miracle might exceed human understanding¹²⁸ and argued that the Aristotelian categories must be supplemented to account for dispositions (habits) that migrated away from the substances that caused them and perfected not sensible matter, but apprehending subjects. Thus Rufus was in some sense a more thoroughgoing Aristotelian than his contemporaries. And even when

¹²⁸ Rufus, *Sententia Parisiensis* 4.12: *Sed haec omnia ficta videntur esse et contra philosophiam recte intellectam. Dicit enim in principio VII Metaphysicae [7.1.1028a33--35]: nullum, scilicet accidentium, est eorum existens per se, nec potest separari a substantia. Et in principio XI: 'nullum aliorum est abstractum' [12.1.1069a24]. Ex his sequitur quod nec secundum esse nec secundum intellectum potest accidens separari a substantiae, nec est abstractio huius ab illa, sicut non est intelligere simum sine naso. [...] Quid igitur in his dicetur. Dicunt aliqui quod in hoc sacramento aliquid est est secundum naturam sicut color in superficie, proprio scilicet suo subiecto; aliquid est supra naturam et non supra intellectum; aliquid supra naturam et supra intellectum (Assisi, Sacro Convento 176, fol. 110ra).*

he boldly rejected Aristotle he did so on good Aristotelian grounds—namely, that by definition an accident cannot exist apart from its substantial cause. So his *Speculum animae* presents a major alternative scholastic account of cognition which amply repays study if only because it vividly shows the possibilities of a path not taken.¹²⁹

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¹²⁹ An English translation of the *Speculum animae* is available online at <http://rrp.stanford.edu>. We owe a debt of gratitude to Calvin Normore for his considerable support and input, and to John Perry and Christopher Bobonich for their perspectives on early drafts of the introduction. Victor Caston, Robert Pasnau, and Jennifer Ottman also provided valuable comments, critique, and suggestions.

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