

TRUTH, TIME AND SACRED TEXT: RESPONSES TO MEDIEVAL
NOMINALISM IN JOHN WYCLIF'S *SUMMA DE ENTE* AND
DE VERITATE SACRAE SCRIPTURAE

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ABSTRACT

This study examines responses to medieval nominalist philosophy in the Latin hermeneutic writings of the Oxford theologian John Wyclif (d. 1384). It has long been the tendency in intellectual histories of the later Middle Ages to portray Wyclif as a staunch defender of philosophical realism, and as a tireless critic of contemporary nominalist methods. Though recent research has done much to clarify our understanding of the relationship between nominalists and realists in the medieval period, no comprehensive account of Wyclif's response to nominalist teaching has yet been produced. The objective of the present study is to trace the development of Wyclif's anti-nominalism from his early philosophical writings (the *Summa de Ente* and the logical works) to his principal work on exegetical theory, the *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*. The focal points of enquiry are the broad hermeneutic problems of truth, time and textuality, each of which conspicuously divided Wyclif from his anti-realist opponents.

Chapter 1 examines Wyclif's place in the history of the hermeneutic sciences, and his status as an opponent of medieval nominalist teaching. It traces the development of medieval nominalism from its origins in the twelfth century to the debates of fourteenth-century Oxford and Europe. Recent revisions to contemporary understanding of nominalism and realism are considered, and related to the debate between Wyclif and his hermeneutic opponents. The case is made, in the concluding section, for a broader, more inclusive conception of 'nominalist' thought. In Chapter 2, the concept of analogy – as it is presented in the *Summa de Ente*, *De Logica* and *Logicae Continuatio* – is introduced. Analogy served as the guiding principle in Wyclif's hermeneutic project, both at a practical (exegetical) level, and (in the *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*) at the level of textual theory. Wyclif believed that both exegetical and theological errors would arise out of a failure to apply the principles of analogy. Chapter 3 surveys Wyclif's theories of predication and time, again within the context of the philosophical and logical writings. These together provided the theoretical framework for Wyclif's controversial claim that all parts of Scripture were literally true. The fourth chapter analyses the objections to Wyclif's philosophical and hermeneutic teaching raised by John Kenningham, who opposed Wyclif in a series of academic *determinaciones*. Kenningham's philosophy, which was broadly consistent with the basic metaphysical assumptions of

Ockham's system, posed a serious challenge to Wyclif's conception of the sacred text. Kenningham was particularly critical of Wyclif's literalism, and of the theories of truth and time on which it depended. In Chapter 5, the exegetical theory of the *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* is analysed in detail, in relation both to the hermeneutic concepts introduced in Chapters 2 and 3, and to the objections raised by Kenningham (introduced in Chapter 4). The concepts of the *Summa de Ente* are shown to play a fundamental rôle in Wyclif's conception of textual authority and authorship (which is described in detail in the *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*), as well as in his defence of the basic hermeneutic principles challenged by Kenningham. The strong degree of continuity between the earlier and the later texts, we argue, betrays an acute awareness of the threats posed by anti-realist interpretative paradigms.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- BGPM* *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters*. Münster: Aschendorff.
- CCSL* *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina*.
- DMA* *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. Joseph M. Strayer. 13 volumes. New York: Scribner, 1982-1989.
- DTC* *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*. Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1909.
- ELL* *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*, ed. R. E. Asher. 10 volumes. London and New York: Pergamon Press, 1994.
- FZ* *Fasciculi Zizaniorum magistri Johannis Wyclif cum tritico*, ed. W. W. Shirley. London: Rolls Series, 1858.
- GL* *Grammatici Latini*, ed. Heinrich Keil. 7 volumes. Leipzig: Teubner, 1855-1864.
- MLW* *Medieval Latin Word List*, ed. R. E. Latham. London: Oxford University Press, 1965.
- NCE* *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*. 18 volumes. Palatine: Jack Heraty and Associates, 1967-1989.
- PL* *Patrologia Cursus Completus Series Latina*, ed. J. P. Migne. Paris: Garnier, 1844-1864.
- REP* *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, gen. ed. Edward Craig. 10 volumes. London and New York: Routledge, 1998.
- WS* Wyclif Society. London: Trübner

NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS

Translations of biblical passages (with a small number of exceptions) are taken from the Douay-Rheims edition. Wyclif occasionally departs from the text of the Latin Vulgate, and I have noted all of those cases which have come to my attention. Translations of the *De Universalibus* are from Anthony Kenny's translation, published as *On Universals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985). The translation contains line references to Ivan Müller's edition of the text (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), and it has therefore been possible to supply single references for both translation and text. All other translations, where unattributed, are my own, though I should record my gratitude to Dr Jim Binns for his advice on the translation of certain passages.

INTRODUCTION

Among the small cluster of epithets which have been associated with the name of John Wyclif over the last century, the philosophical terms 'realist' and 'ultra-realist' must rank in familiarity alongside many of the more sensational political and theological labels we have come to know him by. Wyclif the philosopher, nevertheless, has not yet enjoyed the same attention as Wyclif the reformer or Wyclif the heresiarch. Since the publication of J.A. Robson's *Wyclif and the Oxford Schools* in 1961,¹ there has been no book-length study of the main philosophical writings, despite a growing recognition of their significance for Wyclif's later pronouncements on Scripture, dominion and the sacraments.² One consequence of this neglect has been that for the majority of contemporary commentators, he has remained a figure who made a modest – and for the most part unoriginal – contribution to European philosophical knowledge. The biographer Herbert Workman, who is seldom numbered among Wyclif's critics, remarked that 'as a schoolman, [he] does little more than gyrate on a well-beaten path, often concealing with a cloud of dust and digressions that he is but moving in a circle.'³ Predictably, this kind of assessment has done nothing to erode the simplistic and misleading opposition between (extreme) realism and nominalism which has grown up around his thinking. The fact that Wyclif was a 'realist' (however we may choose to define this problematic term) is still widely assumed to entail that every one of his philosophical opponents must therefore have been a 'nominalist'. Although it would certainly be no exaggeration to suggest that Wyclif had little time for the nominalists of his day (or of any other period), it would nevertheless be naïve to assume that they were the *only* thinkers worthy of his disparagement, or that he

¹ J. A. Robson, *Wyclif and the Oxford Schools: The Relation of the Summa de Ente to Scholastic Debates in Fourteenth-century Oxford* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961).

² Anthony Kenny's *Wyclif* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985) is the most thorough and accessible study to date of the relationship between Wyclif's realism and his later theological, exegetical and political ideas. The publication, in the same year as Kenny's study, of an edition and a translation of Wyclif's *De Universalibus*, made available for the first time the text of one of the philosophical treatises which exerted a very tangible influence over the ideas developed in the *Summa Theologica*.

³ *John Wyclif: A Study of the English Medieval Church* (Connecticut: Archon, 1966), vol i., p. 143. Kenny offers a brief history of the modern reception of Wyclif's philosophical thought in *Wyclif* (pp. 100-109), and concludes with a more generous assessment of his achievement. If Wyclif had not become a heretic, he argues, 'he might have been remembered as one of the great triumvirate of scholastics along with Scotus and Ockham.' (pp. 105-106)

would necessarily have been equally dismissive of every aspect of their teaching. We cannot expect, either, that Wyclif's opposition to William of Ockham and his Oxford followers (however few there may have been, and however scattered⁴) would have remained a narrowly philosophical one. There are strong indications from Wyclif's later writings, as we suggest in Chapter 5, that this was not the case. 'Nominalist' is itself a highly ambiguous term, and one whose Latin equivalent (*nominalis*) is not found anywhere in fourteenth-century philosophical or theological texts.⁵ If we are to make a detailed and explicit comparison between Wyclif and contemporary nominalists, therefore, we must be clear about how the modern term itself is being applied. Definitions of 'nominalism' will be considered in Chapter 1, which will include a brief overview of twentieth-century nominalist historiography.

The problems which surround Wyclif's status as a philosopher should not, of course, deter us from examining more closely those aspects of his work on which his philosophy exerted an influence. This is particularly true of his views on the nature of scriptural truth and authority. For Wyclif, the sacred text existed principally as an idea in the mind of God, accessible only to those who could see beyond the material signs of the printed page.

This conception of textuality, and the theories of truth and being on which it depended, rested on philosophical assumptions which ran contrary to the basic tenets of fourteenth-century nominalism. It is for this reason that the teaching of the contemporary Carmelite John Kenningham, who opposed Wyclif on key philosophical and hermeneutic issues, presented such a threat to the authority of his exegetical theory. Within Kenningham's restricted metaphysical system, there was no place for a text which existed principally as a divine idea, nor for a hermeneutic which, like Wyclif's own, effectively excluded the activities of the human author and reader from consideration.

⁴ Recent scholarship has questioned the assumption that Ockham would have had a distinct group or 'school' of followers in England. See the discussion in Ch. 1 (sections 2.2 and 3), below.

⁵ On the use of *nominalis* and related terms in the later Middle Ages, see Ch. 1 (sections 2 and 3), below.

The two focal points of debate between Wyclif and his hermeneutic opponents were truth and time, the broad aspects of scholastic thought highlighted in the title of the present study. As a realist, Wyclif regarded Scripture as an embodiment of the principle of truth, all of whose parts were – by virtue of their consistency with divine intention – ‘literally’ true. Like his Oxford mentor Walter Burley, he perceived truth to be a property of reality, and only secondarily as a logical or a linguistic phenomenon. Failure to accept this fundamental realist principle, Wyclif believed, lay at the heart of contemporary confusion over the nature of the sacred text. His conception of time, which was predicated on the same metaphysical premises as his controversial theory of being, became his chief means of defending scriptural texts against charges of falsity or logical inconsistency. The theories of truth and time together formed the basis of Wyclif’s literalistic theory of scriptural signification, which was to become one of the most distinctive and controversial aspects of his hermeneutic programme. The literal sense of Scripture was for Wyclif *any* sense which was consistent with the intention of the divine author. To this extent, it could include not only the historical sense, but any of the three ‘spiritual’ senses defined by the Alexandrian exegetes (the allegorical, tropological/moral and the anagogical).⁶ Unlike the most influential theories of the preceding century – those of Thomas Aquinas, Henry of Ghent and St Bonaventure, among others – Wyclif’s literalism afforded the human author and his activities little respect, dignity or authority. Latin terms for human authorial rôles, which had proliferated under the influence of these earlier writers (largely in response to the spread of Aristotelian exegetical conventions⁷), were not, as we shall argue, systematically distinguished in Wyclif’s works. Truth was ultimately a product (or an effect) of *divine* intention, and only *coincidentally* (a term which can hardly be stressed sufficiently) of the conscious activity of human agents. Misinterpretation of the Scriptures

⁶ On the origins of the four categories in Alexandrian exegetical theory, see Henri de Lubac, *Exégèse Médiévale* (Paris: Aubier, 1959), vol. 1.i, pp. 171-220. For a detailed exposition on the meaning of the four senses, see de Lubac, *Exégèse Médiévale*, vol. 1.ii, pp. 373-682. A concise account of the principal characteristics of the four senses is provided in Gillian Evans, *The Language and Logic of the Bible: The Earlier Middle Ages*, pp. 114-122. Wyclif’s treatment of the fourfold definition of the scriptural senses is analysed in detail in Chapter 5 (section 3.2), below.

⁷ The spread of Aristotelianism (and the growth of interest in human authorial activity) has been associated, in particular, with the introduction of the ‘Aristotelian Prologue’ into scriptural commentaries of the thirteenth century. See A.J. Minnis and A. B. Scott, eds. *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism, c. 1100-1375: The Commentary Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 197-212 (esp. pp. 203-207). See also Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages*, 2nd. ed. (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1988), pp. 28-33.

arose as a result of a failure to perceive truth and time as realities in the mind of God, which were no less distinct than the existential realities of the world of experience. This assumption, which would have appeared hopelessly extravagant to any contemporary opponent of metaphysical realism, also lay behind Wyclif's idiosyncratic interpretation of the logical principle of *ampliatio* ('extension'), a concept over which he and Kenningham remained rigidly divided.

Any study of theoretical reflections on the nature of textuality, whether the texts in question are secular or sacred, implicitly addresses questions which pertain to a broad range of historical disciplines, including (principally) literary studies, philosophy and theology. In the case of the present investigation, there can be no question of the relevance of the latter two. The first is more problematic, and will be considered alongside the principal philosophical issues of medieval nominalism and realism in the first chapter. In Chapters 2 and 3, which focus on the major philosophical writings of the first half of Wyclif's career (the *Logica*, *Logicae Continuatio* and *Summa de Ente*), the main *textual* concepts over which Wyclif and the nominalists disagreed will be introduced. These were the theory of analogy (*analogia entis*), which formed the backbone of Wyclif's hermeneutic project, and the controversial logical principles of 'real' predication and temporal extension (*ampliatio temporis*). The fourth chapter will consider the objections to Wyclif's scriptural philosophy which were raised by John Kenningham in a series of academic *determinationes*. Kenningham's philosophy will be compared with that of the Ockhamists of the earlier part of the fourteenth century, and it will be argued that, in terms of their basic ontology (if not necessarily in all other respects), the two systems are highly consistent. Kenningham is likely to have been as great a cause of metaphysical anxiety for Wyclif as any dedicated disciple of Ockham or Scotus would have been. His incisive and influential objections placed in question many of the defining characteristics of Wyclif's notion of the sacred text (and hence of textual authority), including his theory of biblical truth and signification, temporal reference, and literalistic exegesis. In the fifth and final chapter, the exegetical theory of the *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* will be analysed within the context of the philosophical and textual concepts discussed in the *Summa de Ente*, the two works on logic, and the Oxford *determinationes* (of both Kenningham and Wyclif). We show how the principles of *analogia entis* informed Wyclif's understanding of fundamental hermeneutic concepts (those of the book, the author, and authority), as well

as his approach to exegetical practice. We also examine the relationship between Wyclif's conception of propositional truth (founded on the principles of 'real' predication examined in Chapter 3) and his pronouncements on scriptural truth and divine intention. In the concluding section, developments in Wyclif's understanding of key textual concepts (most notably, *ampliatio* and the 'literal' sense of Scripture) will be considered in the light of criticism voiced by Kenningham and other anti-realist contemporaries.

The objective of this study is not principally to cast doubt on earlier depictions of the controversy between 'nominalists' and 'realists' of fourteenth-century England. Recent revisionist historiography has already done much to reshape contemporary perceptions of later medieval thinking.⁸ Rather, it seeks to highlight ways in which nominalism – considered as a group of related philosophical and theological assumptions – threatened to undermine the authority of specific interpretative discourses and practices. My emphasis is therefore principally upon the contemporary *reception* of nominalism, rather than upon the details of nominalist theory itself. Whether or not we choose to endorse the popular assessment of Wyclif as a relentless, focused opponent of contemporary 'nominalist' teaching, we cannot ignore the fundamental ideological difference between his own hermeneutic assumptions and those of academic contemporaries like Kenningham. Though we should resist the temptation to perceive his anti-nominalist activity in simple teleological terms (as a product, that is, of the incipient 'decline' of scholastic realism),⁹ we must be conscious that there was much at stake in the nominalist-realist controversy not only for the committed realist, but for any exponent of traditional hermeneutic principles. Patristic and early medieval hermeneutic theories, after all, had worked predominantly from within a broad realist paradigm. By dispensing with, or simply contradicting the fundamental tenets of philosophical realism, nominalist logicians and exegetes were threatening to undermine the very principles from which Christian texts and traditions drew their authority. Wyclif's Latin writings provide an unusual insight into this process, which was often obscured by the oblique relationship between 'speculative' and hermeneutic discourses throughout the scholastic period. Whether or not Wyclif's response can be

⁸ See the discussion in Ch. 1, below.

⁹ For a critical analysis of recent perspectives on medieval cultural and historical processes, see Ch. 1 (section 3), below.

regarded as an accurate gauge of the dangers posed by nominalist methodologies, they can leave us in no doubt whatever of the magnitude of the threat they were held to pose. Nominalism, after all, could redefine not only the theory of textuality itself, but many of the most significant sub-theories (that of the 'literal' sense being most conspicuous) from which Wyclif's hermeneutic programme drew its authority.

CHAPTER 1

NOMINALISM, REALISM AND HERMENEUTICS

1. 'TEXTUAL' THEORY, HERMENEUTICS AND THE FORMS OF THEORETICAL DISCOURSE

Wyclif's philosophical and exegetical writings occupy a significant position in the history of ideas about language and discourse, standing at the end of a long tradition of interpretative texts informed by Roman and early medieval grammatical writings (the *artes grammaticae*).¹ They have a part, as such, in the late history of what Martine Irvine, in his ground-breaking study of the verbal arts in the early Middle Ages, has termed 'textual culture'.² This broad label, as Irvine applies it, covers all of those areas of academic enquiry whose primary focus was textual, whether the nature of the particular text under scrutiny was ancient or medieval, secular or religious, Latin or vernacular. Throughout the whole of the ancient period, and for much of the Middle Ages, of course, the emphasis was on non-vernacular writings, these being originally the classical writings of Greece and Rome, and later Christianized Latin texts, Latin biblical texts, and even the texts of the Roman grammars themselves.³ It also covers the so-called 'preceptive' disciplines, the arts of speaking and writing correctly.⁴ These latter disciplines occupied a secondary position in relation to the expository and explicatory sciences, the 'arts of interpretation' out of which the long tradition of secular and Christian commentaries, glosses and exegetical texts arose.

¹ Most influential throughout the Middle Ages were the *Ars Minor* and *Ars Maior* of Donatus (fl. 4th century AD). Between them the two *artes* cover all of the basic grammatical concepts required to produce a textual commentary. Both contain descriptions of the eight parts of speech (noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, participle, conjunction, preposition and interjection), and the second includes detailed expositions on metrical units (*voces, litterae, syllabae, pedes, accentus*) as well as a list of grammatical 'faults' (*vitia*). The texts are edited by Heinrich Keil in *GL*, 4 (1864), pp. 355-366; pp. 367-401.

² *The Making of Textual Culture: 'Grammatica' and Literary Theory, 350-1100* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). See especially the introductory chapter, pp. 1-24.

³ The earliest commentaries on ancient texts were produced by the Greek scholar Heraclitus (author of the *Quaestiones Homericae*) and the Roman grammarian Donatus (author of commentaries on Terence and Vergil's *Aeneid*). See Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture*, pp. 8-12. Examples of biblical exegesis, in the various forms which this took, are very numerous. Christianized pagan texts, less directly indebted to *grammatica* than to patristic exegetical methods, include most famously Vergil's *Aeneid* and the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid. See Beryl Smalley, *English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1960). Commentaries on the two grammars of Donatus are discussed in Vivien Law's *The Insular Latin Grammarians* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1982), pp. 81-97.

⁴ Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture*, pp. 2-8

The emphasis of the late-medieval scholastic culture in which Wyclif was writing was similarly 'textual', its primary object, as in the earlier Middle Ages, being the explication of the sacred page. The form and context of this explicatory activity, however, by the late fourteenth century, was rather different. Academic commentaries, in terms of both style and structure, had undergone significant changes with the dawn of Scholasticism, and the critical apparatus available to the exegete had been transformed by new developments in logic and philosophy.⁵ An understanding of the fundamentals of logic was now a prerequisite for the explication of scriptural texts, as indeed for all aspects of higher theological debate and discussion. The dissemination of ideas about philosophy, theology, and biblical interpretation was given new impetus in the later fourteenth century by the growing tendency to retain and circulate material delivered in the lecture halls of the universities. Wyclif's two major collections of academic writings, the *Summa de Ente* and the *Summa Theologica* (of which *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* forms a part), belong very clearly to this tradition, as do his two tracts on the elements of logic (*De Logica* and *Logicae Continuatio*). It has been suggested that the texts of the first of the two *summae* occupy a similar place in Wyclif's writings to that which would traditionally have been filled by a commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, a piece of work which, until the middle of the fourteenth century, had been among the standard academic commentaries produced by all scholars in the Oxford Arts Faculty.⁶ It is certainly true that many of the issues addressed in the *Summa de Ente* bear a close resemblance to those typically examined in *Sentence*-commentaries, a fact which will be seen to be of particular importance in drawing doctrinal comparisons between Wyclif and Ockham.⁷

⁵ On the scholastic commentary tradition see A. J. Minnis and A.B. Scott, eds., *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism*, pp. 1-11.

⁶ J. I. Catto, 'Wyclif and Wycliffism at Oxford 1356-1430', in Jeremy Catto and Ralph Evans, eds., *The History of the University of Oxford II: Late Medieval Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 175-261 (p. 179).

⁷ See the discussion of analogical predication and the Trinity in Chapter 2 (section 2), below.

The most important influence on the literary style of Wyclif's writings was the academic *quaestio* or question, the dominant form of debate then current in the universities. This originally took the form of a disputation between a master and other scholars, who might have included both bachelors and masters of the faculty (whether that was the faculty of Arts or the higher faculty of Theology). The master began by presenting a thesis for consideration, against which the other students (amongst whom one was typically dominant) raised objections. These were considered by the other students present and by the master himself, who finally presented his defence of the thesis in a process known as *determinatio*.⁸ The written record of the *quaestio* was typically of a highly formalized nature, proceeding through the different stages in an economical, logical and coherent manner (typically avoiding the irrelevant repetitions and digressions which must have occurred in the live debates). The *Summa Theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas supplies us with some of the best examples of this, which also serve to highlight the contrast between the earlier and the later usages of the *quaestio*-convention. The texts of Wyclif's two main surviving *summae* are typically structured far less rigidly than the earlier *quaestiones* of Aquinas and his contemporaries, though the basic discursive form (thesis-objection-reply/determination) is often still visible. Something much closer to the oral *quaestio* is found in Wyclif's disputations with the contemporary Carmelite friar John Kenningham.⁹ These survive as a series of exchanges, identified in the manuscripts as *determinationes* rather than as *quaestiones*. This appears to reflect late fourteenth-century convention, according to which a single *quaestio* alone typically formed the basis of a protracted academic debate.¹⁰

⁸ Cf. the more detailed analysis of academic debate offered by C.J.F. Martin in his *An Introduction to Medieval Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), Ch. 3. See also the discussion in Minnis and Scott, eds., *Medieval Literary Theory*, p. 112. On the relationship between the forms of the *quaestio* and the *summa*, see John Marenbon, *Later Medieval Philosophy 1150-1350: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1987), pp. 24-34. See also Jan Pinborg and Anthony Kenny, 'Medieval Philosophical Literature', in Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny and Jan Pinborg, eds., *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), Ch. 1. For an account of the origin and development of technical terms such as *determinatio*, see M. P. Hubert, 'Quelques aspects du Latin philosophique aux XII^e et XIII^e siècles', *Revue des études latines*, 27 (1949), 211-33.

⁹ These are examined in detail in Ch. 4.

¹⁰ On this development see Catto, 'Wyclif and Wycliffism', pp. 179-80.

Though both the *Summa de Ente* and *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* were in some way concerned with the problems of meaning and interpretation, and though they clearly occupy a place in the history of exegetical debate and discussion, the problem remains as to where exactly they should be situated within the broader histories of textual and literary theory. In terms of the latter, of course, this depends very much upon the interpretation of 'literary'. Though it has often been desirable, for the sake of historical continuity, to include medieval grammatical and scholastic writings within the history of literary theory, the term 'literary' is clearly unsatisfactory for the present purpose, both in terms of its modern and its medieval significations. It is certainly true that scholastic discourse about textual meaning continued to rely upon the foundations laid by *grammatica*, and that the canon of texts valorized by the Latin tradition remained largely unchanged throughout the later Middle Ages. This would possibly justify our referring to such discourse as 'literary theoretical', especially if the texts discussed within it were confined to non-biblical writings. Wyclif's *Summa de Ente* and *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, however, belong to a tradition which, as we have observed, took the explication of the texts of the Bible as its primary object. There is a sense, therefore, in which this form of theoretical discourse, even though it strives to answer some of the questions which had arisen in the context of texts *conventionally* described as 'literary', and though concepts developed within it naturally had consequences for views of literary language, is quite different from literary-theoretical writing. To speak of 'textual', rather than 'literary' theory would go some way towards solving the problem, supplying, as it does, an inclusive, relatively neutral label. This term, however, clearly fails to identify the *kinds* of question with which scholastic scriptural theory was primarily concerned, or the historical tradition to which it belongs. The most satisfactory solution is perhaps provided by the much older term, 'hermeneutics'. To speak of Wyclif's writings as texts belonging to the field of hermeneutics, rather than to that of literary or textual theory, is to locate them within a very specific historical and ideological narrative. Such a narrative is very different from that implied by 'literary theory', but has the advantage of including particular branches of literary theory within the course of its development. Many of the problems which are today narrowly categorized as 'literary', or as 'literary-theoretical' – problems relating to the nature of the text, the author, and the reader, to the meaning of intention, authority, and tradition, and to the uses of figurative or rhetorically elaborate language – are properly speaking *hermeneutic* issues, in whose

exploration literary theory has played only a relatively small part.¹¹

In its most general sense, the term 'hermeneutics' applies to the science – or sciences – of *interpretation* (Greek ἐρμηνεύειν, 'to interpret'). Though the English word dates from the eighteenth century, when it was applied to the philosophy of biblical interpretation, the problems of interpretation more generally have preoccupied philosophers – including English men and women – since the earliest times.¹² Recent discussions of the meaning of 'hermeneutics' have focused on the three semantic traits of ἐρμηνεύειν isolated by Gerhard Ebeling, whose influential essay on the hermeneutic sciences set the parameters for much of the subsequent analysis and debate.¹³ According to Ebeling, ἐρμηνεύειν conveys the senses 'to express', 'to explain' and 'to translate'.¹⁴ These three meanings highlight themes and problems running through the hermeneutic enterprise from its beginnings in ancient philosophy to its applications in the disciplines of philosophy, theology and literary interpretation today.¹⁵ They are clearly as relevant, therefore, to *medieval* theories of scriptural interpretation as they are to modern, or to the literary or philosophical hermeneutic systems of the last century. The prominent rôle played by philosophy in all forms of hermeneutic investigation, moreover, would appear to give Wyclif and his contemporaries a very significant position in its history.

This inclusion of Wyclif and his contemporaries within the hermeneutic tradition brings with it a number of other significant advantages. Among the most obvious of these

¹¹ It is no accident that within the field of modern literary studies, much of the most significant and influential research on issues of authorship, intentionality and the process of reading has been undertaken by 'hermeneutic' critics such as E. D. Hirsch, Wolfgang Iser, Stanley Fish, Paul de Man, etc.

¹² *Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, ed. T. F. Hoad (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), p. 215. The Latin word *hermeneutica* has a longer history, though even this did not enter into common usage until the seventeenth century. See the discussion in Jean Grondin, *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 21.

¹³ 'Hermeneutik', in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Handwörterbuch für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft*, vol. 3 (1959), col. 243-262. See Grodin, *Introduction*, pp. 20-28.

¹⁴ 'Die etymologische Herkunft von ἐρμηνεύω samt Derivaten ist umstritten, weist aber auf Wurzeln mit der Bedeutung 'sprechen', 'sagen' (zusammenhängend mit lat. 'verbum' oder 'sermo'). Die Vokabel hat drei Bedeutungsrichtungen: aussagen (ausdrücken), auslegen (erklären) und übersetzen (dolmetschen).' Ebling, 'Hermeneutik', col. 243.

¹⁵ On the relevance of Ebeling's three senses to ancient and modern hermeneutic theory, see Richard E. Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1969), pp. 12-32.

is the possibility of identifying points of continuity between medieval and post-medieval hermeneutic discourse. One of the most enduring problems of the interpretative sciences, for example, has been the fundamentally *dialectical* nature of textual interpretation. Modern 'philosophical' ('general' or 'universal') hermeneutics, following the work of Friedrich Schleiermacher and Wilhelm Dilthey in the nineteenth century, and of Hans-Georg Gadamer in the twentieth, has embraced this idea of dialectical meaning.¹⁶ For Gadamer, whose *Truth and Method* (1960) has possibly been the most influential modern treatise on general hermeneutics, 'truth' is seen to lie not in any sense with the text itself, but with the coincidence of interpretative 'horizons' of reader and text.¹⁷ This was certainly not the case in the earlier history of philosophical hermeneutics, nor in that of the specifically theological interpretative projects which preceded it. It was less true, still, of patristic or medieval methods. Though for the most part, both patristic and medieval theorists acknowledged the importance of the interpretative community, the emphasis was on disciplining the mind to see the text as an object, static and unchanging, rather than as a product of an historical or social dialectic.¹⁸ Wyclif's philosophical realism greatly strengthened this emphasis in his own writings, though it also highlighted his paradoxical dependence on the dialectical processes he sought to see beyond. Indeed, the opposition between dialectical and objective conceptions of meaning can be seen to lie at the heart of the hermeneutic debate which grew out of Wyclif's philosophical disputations with his anti-realist contemporaries.

¹⁶ The terms 'general', 'philosophical' and 'universal' are usually applied to hermeneutic theories which, like those of Dilthey, Schleiermacher, and Gadamer, take the process of understanding itself, rather than the interpretative rules of a specific community of readers (e.g. theologians, exegetes, literary theorists), as their object. For definitions of 'general' and 'local' in respect of the hermeneutic enterprise, see Francis Watson, 'The Scope of Hermeneutics' in C. E. Gunton, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 65-80.

¹⁷ A concise history of the development of Gadamer's hermeneutic method is provided in Georgia Warnke, *Gadamer: Hermeneutics, Tradition and Reason* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), pp. 5-42. On the relationship between Gadamer and his predecessors in the interpretative tradition, Schleiermacher and Dilthey, see Palmer, *Hermeneutics*.

¹⁸ Ancient and early Christian hermeneutic thought has correspondingly been identified by Jean Grondin as the *prehistory* of hermeneutics. '[W]hat distinguishes the modern world-picture' from that of the ancients and medievals, he argues, is its 'consciousness of being perspectival.' (*Introduction*, p. 16) Such consciousness entails a fundamental awareness of the dialectical nature of meaning highlighted above.

2. NOMINALISM AND REALISM: CONTEXTS AND DEFINITIONS

The concepts of nominalism and realism have been invoked in very broad terms so far, and we have done little more than hint at the problems that existing definitions might present for the student of literary and non-literary hermeneutics. Like other names that share philosophical and literary currency, the terms 'nominalism' and 'realism' have been used to denote a vast range of extremely varied, often mutually inconsistent ideas and perspectives.¹⁹ Within the context of medieval philosophy and theology alone, there are multiple definitions associated with each of the major historical disciplines. Though any attempt to isolate significant points of convergence is bound to be artificial, it is nevertheless possible to identify a small number of shared ideological characteristics. Most important among these is the underlying distinction between realist and anti-realist theories of knowledge and being. This is described in the *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* as 'the standard opposition between those who affirm, and those who deny, the real existence of some kind of thing, or some kind of fact or state of affairs.' The external world, the past and future, other minds, mathematical objects, possibilities, universals, and moral or aesthetic properties are listed as examples.²⁰ In the context of medieval philosophy in general, and of Wyclif's writings in particular, 'realism' is familiar as a term applied to a belief in the reality of universal categories (*genera* and *species*), usually understood in opposition to nominalism or conceptualism.²¹ For Wyclif and a number of his contemporaries, however, this form of metaphysical realism also entailed a commitment to the reality of other, related categories such as possibilities ('hypotheticals') and past and future instants. More importantly, it became inextricably bound up with Wyclif's

¹⁹ A useful illustration of the diversity of definitions associated with these terms in contemporary culture is provided by Raymond Williams in his *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, revised ed. (London: Fontana, 1983), pp. 257-262.

²⁰ *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. Simon Blackburn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 319-20.

²¹ On the distinction between 'nominalism' and 'conceptualism', see section 2.2, below.

convictions about the nature of good and evil (and hence, with his understanding of heresy and untruth), leading him to a form of *moral* realism.

Beyond their basic metaphysical disagreements, medieval nominalists and realists were habitually divided over a range of key theological issues. The most important of these was the problem of the relationship between God and his creatures. Though views about this were developed essentially independently of ideas about the logic of universals, the two were fundamentally compatible, and are almost invariably associated in histories of late scholasticism. Among the issues most frequently discussed were those of the relationship between the created mind and God – and hence between human and divine ideas – and the nature of divine power. Closely related to the general problem of the relationship between God and his creatures is that of the meaning of salvation and merit. Here, the central concepts were those of the rôle of the individual will and its relation to the supernatural habit. Though not all of these theological ideas have such a significant rôle in Wyclif's *hermeneutic* theory as the basic metaphysical concepts listed above, they do, as we shall argue, play an important part.

Both the theological and the metaphysical aspects of the nominalist-realist controversy have been subjected to intense academic scrutiny in recent years. This has been the result of a growing recognition of the heterogeneity of late-medieval nominalist thinking, and of the dangers of reductive distinctions between 'nominalist' and 'realist' values. Such a recognition has been long overdue, and possibly owes something to the recent renewal of interest in medieval nominalism (both as a philosophical and a 'literary' phenomenon) within the academy. Richard Utz, in a recent essay on nominalist historiography, attributes this in turn to a shift away from the predominantly Thomistic research paradigm established by Catholic scholars in the first half of this century.²² In recent decades, he argues, nominalism has been recognised increasingly as a central, rather than as a marginal or 'supplementary' intellectual phenomenon. No longer regarded as a perverse departure from the 'norms' established by medieval Thomism, nor as a chaotic outgrowth from a more structured and disciplined system, it has finally begun to attract the

²² 'Negotiating the Paradigm: Literary Nominalism and the Theory of Rereading Late Medieval Texts', in Richard J. Utz, ed., *Literary Nominalism and the Theory of Rereading Late Medieval Texts: A New Research Paradigm* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1995), pp. 1-31 (pp. 3-10).

scholarly attention it deserves.

In spite of these encouraging developments in historical scholarship, there has not been a significant change in the traditional assessment of the philosophy of Wyclif and his opponents. Though recent historians have recognized the need to exercise caution in applying labels such as ‘extreme realist’, the tendency to oppose Wyclif the realist to a group of scholars who, in spite of the diversity of their logical and metaphysical beliefs, are described simply as ‘nominalists’, has remained. The diversity within this group has consequently gone largely unnoticed, and has yet to be analysed in a way which does full justice to the ideological richness of Wyclif’s philosophical surroundings. Though there is certainly good reason to see Wyclif as a self-conscious objector to the nominalist ideas of William of Ockham and his followers, it would be grossly reductive to assume that all, or even most, of the targets of Wyclif’s regular philosophical invectives were Ockhamists. The revised assessment of medieval nominalism will be considered in detail below (sections 2.1 and 2.2), and the case will be made for a new approach to the forms of nominalism current in Wyclif’s Oxford (section 2.2).

2.1. *Nominalism in Early Scholastic Philosophy: Vocales and Nominales*

The most extreme form of anti-realism in the early scholastic period was that which associated universal categories with spoken words merely. Such a view has been connected with the philosopher and theologian Roscelin of Compiègne (c. 1050-1125), who has traditionally been regarded as the earliest nominalist.²³ It is almost certainly true that Roscelin’s views on the status of universals had no significant precedents in the Middle Ages, though he is now known to have derived the basic principles of his logic from his master, a mysterious character known only as ‘John’. Other students of this same teacher include Robert of Paris and Arnulf Laudunensis. All three, according to contemporary sources, taught that logic takes *voces*, rather than *res*, as its object. They were thus

²³ A concise account of Roscelin’s nominalism (and its theological implications) is provided in Eike-Henner W. Kluge, ‘Roscelin and the Medieval Problem of Universals’, *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 14 (1976), 405-414. For a recent reassessment of Roscelin’s contribution to philosophy, see Constant J. Mews, ‘Nominalism and Theology before Abaelard: New Light on Roscelin of Compiègne’, *Vivarium* 30, 1 (1992), 4-33.

identified originally not as ‘nominalists’ (*nominales*), but as ‘vocalists’ (*vocales*).²⁴ Recent research has shown that Roscelin is unlikely to have been the earliest of these vocalists, though he is the first to have applied the techniques of vocalism to the study of universals.²⁵

Only a single letter to Peter Abelard (1079-c.1142) survives from Roscelin’s writings,²⁶ and much of what we know of his ideas (and their contemporary reception) derives from the secondary accounts of Abelard and John of Salisbury (c.1120-1180). Abelard’s own nominalism (or vocalism), less extreme than that of Roscelin, possibly owes something to him, and it seems likely that he was taught by him at some point in his career.²⁷ The ideas of the two men were certainly closely associated by their contemporary, John of Salisbury, who provides a usefully concise account of their respective doctrines in his educational treatise, the *Metalogicon*:

...All are here... declaiming on the nature of universals, and attempting to explain, contrary to the intention of the Author, what is really the most profound question, and a matter [that should be reserved] for more advanced studies. One holds that universals are merely word-sounds, although this opinion, along with its author Roscelin, has already almost passed into oblivion. Another maintains that universals are word concepts, and twists to support his thesis everything that he can ever remember to have been written on the subject. Our peripatetic of pallet, Abelard, was ensnared in this opinion. He left many, and still has, some followers and proponents of his doctrine.²⁸

Philosophical systems which denied reality to universal categories were clearly viewed with some degree of suspicion in the twelfth century. As John of Salisbury’s description

²⁴ This brief account of the development of ‘vocalistic’ teaching in the eleventh and twelfth centuries is heavily indebted to Iwakuma Yukio’s article, ‘“Vocales” or Early Nominalists’, *Traditio* 47 (1992), 37-111. See also John Marenbon, ‘Vocalism, Nominalism and the Commentaries on the *Categories* from the Earlier Twelfth Century’, *Vivarium* 30/1 (1992), 51-61

²⁵ Yukio, ‘“Vocales”’, pp. 40-47.

²⁶ *PL*, 178, col. 357-372.

²⁷ The most recent comprehensive survey of Abelard’s philosophical system is John Marenbon’s *The Philosophy of Peter Abelard* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). See esp. pp. 174-202. On the relationship between Abelard and Roscelin, see M. T. Clanchy, *Abelard: A Medieval Life* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), pp. 105-107; pp. 292-295.

²⁸ ‘Naturam... univerialium hic omnes expediunt, et altissimum negotium et maioris inquisitionis contra mentem auctoris explicare nituntur. Alius ergo consistit in uocibus; licet haec opinio cum Roscelino suo fere omnino iam euanuerit. Alius sermones intuetur et ad illos detorquet quicquid alicubi de uniuersalibus meminit scriptum; in hac autem opinione deprachensus est Peripateticus Palatinus Abaelardus noster, qui multos reliquit et adhuc quidem aliquos habet professionis huius sectatores et testes.’ *Metalogicon*, 17 (ed. Clemens C. I. Webb (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929), pp. 91-2; trans. Daniel D. McGarry (Berkeley and Los Angeles: California University Press, 1955), p. 112.)

testifies, this was largely on account of the perceived departure from the norms and conventions found in Aristotle (the 'Author' mentioned at the beginning of the passage).

Any such departure was bound to have been perceived as extreme at a time when the last four books of the *Organon* (the *Topics*, the *Sophistici Elenchi* and the *Prior* and *Posterior Analytics*) had only recently become available.²⁹ This 'modern' tendency in philosophical methodology, however, was part of a more general movement towards an autonomous logical system, which by the fourteenth century had become highly sophisticated.³⁰ The name of Roscelin was also associated with a controversial understanding of the nature of the Trinity. Though clearly a corollary of his nominalist logic, his individualistic conception of the Trinity, which viewed it essentially as three separate persons, is likely to have provoked more widespread debate than his philosophical pronouncements had done alone.³¹ Early medieval nominalism has also been connected with the heretical doctrine of Sabellianism, according to which the three divine persons were held to be only notionally distinct.³² The close relationship between nominalism and particular Trinitarian doctrines has recently been emphasized by Calvin Normore, who attempts to redefine medieval nominalism in theological, rather than in strictly logical terms.³³ As I shall argue, debate about the nature of the Trinity provides a valuable link between twelfth- and fourteenth-century nominalist thinking. Theories of identity and distinction, which had become highly sophisticated by the thirteenth century, were often invoked in attempts to explain the relationship between the persons of the Trinity and the unitary divine nature, and typically divided nominalists and realists.

²⁹ The discovery of the last texts of the *Organon* is usually seen as heralding the beginning of the second major phase in the history of medieval logic. During the earliest phase, which extends to the early twelfth century, the most important philosophical authorities were the first two books of the *Organon*, the *Categories* and *De Interpretatione*. These were supplemented by Boethius's commentary on Porphyry's *Isagogue*.

³⁰ See L. M. de Rijk, *Logica Modernorum: A Contribution to the History of Early Terminist Logic* (Assen: H. J. & H. M. G. Prakke, 1962-1967); Alfonso Maierù, *Terminologia Logica della Tarda Scolastica* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1972), pp. 9-46.

³¹ On the treatment of Roscelin's Trinitarian doctrine by Anselm and Abelard, see Michael Haren, *Medieval Thought: The Western Intellectual Tradition from Antiquity to the Thirteenth Century*. 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1992), pp. 91-110.

³² Charges of Sabellianism were also made against Roscelin. See the discussion in Ch. 2 (section 2), below.

³³ Calvin Normore, 'The Tradition of Medieval Nominalism', in John F. Wippel, ed., *Studies in Medieval Philosophy* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1987), pp. 201-217.

2.2. Nominalism in Wyclif's Oxford

The form of extreme nominalism (or vocalism) which characterized Roscelin and Abelard's thinking did not survive into the fourteenth century.³⁴ Nominalism of a different kind, nevertheless, was exerting an influence in the universities of England and Europe from the early part of the century onwards. This has been associated in particular with the teachings of the Franciscan friar William of Ockham (c. 1285 - 1347), who lectured on the *Sentences* in Oxford between 1317 and 1319. The extent, nature, and repercussions of this influence have been variously estimated, and it has been here, in particular, that the older studies of nominalist philosophy have recently been found to be wanting. The main ideas to come under scrutiny, particularly in the revisionist work of the 1970s, have been those which have associated nominalism with a particularised, atomistic view of reality, with a radically sceptical theory of knowledge, and with a theology which focused on an omnipotent and unknowable God. Many of the most widely used historical accounts written before 1965, including those of David Knowles, Gordon Leff and Meyrick Carré, rely heavily on such ideas, and have tended to emphasize the discontinuities between late-medieval nominalism and the older scholastic tradition (which was seen to have been rooted in the 'Thomistic' system described by Utz).³⁵ Though the ideas themselves had begun to lose their hold on historians long before the accounts of Knowles, Leff and Carré were being written, their influence is still visible in writings of the present day. This is in spite of the appearance of three major studies of Ockham's work since 1970: Gordon Leff's *William of Ockham: The Metamorphosis of Scholastic Discourse* (published in 1975 as a corrective to Leff's earlier and much shorter account), Marilyn McCord Adams's two-volume philosophical study, *William Ockham* (1987), and Katherine Tachau's *Vision and Certitude in the Age of Ockham* (1988).³⁶ This response appears even slower when we

³⁴ On the relationship between the first- and second-generation *nominales*, see William Courtenay, 'Late-Medieval Nominalism Revisited: 1972-1982', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 44/1 (1983), 159-164 (pp. 160-1).

³⁵ See David Knowles, *The Evolution of Medieval Thought* (London: Longman, 1962), pp. 291-337; Gordon Leff, *Medieval Thought: St Augustine to Ockham* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1959), pp. 255-305; Meyrick H. Carré, *Realists and Nominalists* (London: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 120-25.

³⁶ Gordon Leff, *William of Ockham: The Metamorphosis of Scholastic Discourse* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975). See especially the introductory section, pp. xiii-xxiv. Marilyn McCord Adams, *William Ockham* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987). Katherine Tachau, *Vision and*

consider William Courtenay's claim, in a survey of nominalist literature from the beginning of this century until 1972, that the 'traditional' interpretation of late-medieval nominalism had begun to be challenged as early as the 1930s. Courtenay attributes the delayed response of contemporary scholars in part to a reluctance to reinterpret the primary texts.³⁷ Many of the mistakes that have been made, he suggests, are mistakes of *interpretation*, which are not obvious from the words of the medieval thinkers themselves. Perhaps not surprisingly, the 'traditional' view of nominalism has survived very conspicuously in *literary* histories of the later Middle Ages.³⁸ Even since the publication of Courtenay's survey, and of his later *Schools and Scholars in Medieval England* (1987) – both of which address the problem of the literary reception of nominalist ideas – the historical interpretations of the first half of this century have exerted a powerful influence over critical readings of Chaucer, Langland, and the *Gawain*-poet. These have often relied heavily – or even exclusively – on secondary nominalist literature (not always with an awareness of its chronology), and have tended to perceive parallels very readily between philosophical and vernacular literary discourses.³⁹ Though the most recent studies to appear have often been more cautious, there are at least as many that continue to rely on the older and more misleading – if often the most appealing – prejudices of historical scholarship. The basic tenets of medieval nominalism have been further distorted by a willingness to construe them in naïve 'precursorist' terms. Nominalism, for more than a minority of literary commentators, has been regarded essentially as a form of proto-structuralism.⁴⁰

Certitude in the Age of Ockham: Optics, Epistemology and the Foundations of Semantics, 1250-1345 (Leiden: Brill, 1988).

³⁷ Some changes were in progress, Courtenay suggests, even before the 1930s. The revised picture which has emerged in the work produced since the 1930s, however, 'has not made the impact it deserves'. See 'Nominalism and Late Medieval Religion', in Charles Trinkaus and Heiko A. Oberman, eds., *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), pp. 26-58 (p. 32).

³⁸ Courtenay lists literature, art and religion as the primary discourses in which the 'traditional' view of nominalism has survived. See 'Nominalism and Late Medieval Religion', p. 31.

³⁹ For a sceptical assessment of the relevance of developments in late-medieval nominalism to the study of vernacular literature see Robert Myles, *Chaucerian Realism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), Ch. 1. See also my 'Literary Nominalism and Medieval Sign Theory: Problems and Perspectives', in Hugo Keiper, Christoph Bode and Richard J. Utz, eds., *Nominalism and Literary Discourse: New Perspectives* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1997), pp. 157-189.

⁴⁰ This tendency has been conspicuous in literary analyses of nominalist semiotic theories. For a detailed critique of this approach, see my 'Literary Nominalism and Medieval Sign Theory', esp. pp. 167-173.

The revised view of nominalism is still developing, and represents a complex and often tentative group of assumptions. It has been summarized conveniently by Courtenay in terms of a three-school system of ideas. Following Heiko Oberman, he designates the respective schools 'conservative', 'moderate' and 'radical'.⁴¹ For the purposes of the present study, the 'moderate' (or 'Ockhamist') school, in which are placed William of Ockham, Pierre d'Ailly and Gabriel Biel,⁴² is the most significant. From an explicit reference to Ockham's *Sentences*-commentary in *De Universalibus* (and an anonymous citation from the same section of this work in the earlier *De Ideis*⁴³), we know that the ideas of the *Venerabilis Inceptor* were familiar to Wyclif. Though it may indeed be true, as recent scholarship suggests, that Ockham was a less influential figure in Oxford than had once been thought, there can be no doubt that Wyclif perceived his ideas to be a threat, even if he did not associate them exclusively with Ockham himself (or with a distinct 'Ockhamist' school).⁴⁴ This much is clear from his frequent dismissal of metaphysical arguments which were consistent with Ockham's assumptions. As we suggest in Chapter 2, moreover, Wyclif's perception of Ockham must have been conditioned in part by the teachings of Walter Burley, a notorious opponent of Ockhamist thinking. Though it would be naïve to assume that Burley's pronouncements on logic and metaphysics were followed by Wyclif to the letter, he nevertheless exerted a powerful influence (as we demonstrate in Chapter 3) over his student's metaphysical orientation. Ideas which were inherited from Burley, though not often used by Wyclif explicitly to undermine Ockham, can therefore

⁴¹ 'Nominalism and Medieval Religion', p. 34. Cf. Oberman, 'Some Notes on the Theology of Nominalism, with Attention to its Relation to the Renaissance', *Harvard Theological Review*, 53 (1960), 47-76 (esp. pp. 54-6, in which the respective 'schools' are described).

⁴² 'Nominalism and Medieval Religion', p. 34.

⁴³ The reference is to book 1, dist. 35, q. 5. See *De Universalibus*, Ch. 15, ll. 150-57. The text of *De Universalibus* is edited by Ivan Müller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), and translated by Anthony Kenny as *On Universals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985). An abbreviated form of the same passage is also cited (anonymously, but with a marginal ascription to Ockham) in *De Universalibus*, Ch. 15, ll. 231-33. My attention was drawn to the identity of the passages cited in *De Universalibus* and *De Ideis* by Dr Vilém Herold. The relationship between the two texts is analysed in detail in his article, 'Wyclifs Polemik gegen Ockhams Auffassung der platonischen Ideen und ihr Nachklang in der tschechischen hussitischen Philosophie', *Studies in Church History, Subsidia*, 5 (1985), 185-215 (pp. 191-192).

⁴⁴ See Courtenay, 'The Reception of Ockham's Thought in Fourteenth-century England', *Studies in Church History, Subsidia*, 5 (1987), pp. 89-108. Courtenay questions the extent to which two figures traditionally regarded as Ockhamists, Robert Holcot and Adam Wodeham, can realistically be regarded as such. Cf. His later observation that there was 'a relatively weak ideological tie between a master and those who attended his lectures', making the identification of particular schools of thought problematic. Courtenay, 'Theology and Theologians from Ockham to Wyclif', in Catto and Evans, eds., pp. 1-34 (pp. 10-11).

be seen to have had their origins, at the very least, in a system which was consciously opposed to Ockhamism.

The 'key' principles of Ockham's philosophy would be difficult to isolate, and it is unlikely that any two scholars would be in full agreement as to what these should be. I will therefore concentrate on those aspects which are likely to have been known by Wyclif, or which had significant consequences for the development of his hermeneutic theory. These will be considered in turn, and will be related to the revisions to the 'traditional' conception of Ockham's nominalism outlined by Courtenay. First among them is the problem of universals (and the related issue of the reality of divine ideas). Though this is no longer regarded as the chief concern of Ockham's philosophy, it was arguably the single aspect of nominalist teaching which caused Wyclif greatest anxiety. Ockham, moreover, is the only thinker to be identified explicitly with 'nominalist' responses to this fundamental metaphysical problem. Ockham saw the 'reality' attributed to universals as a mere fiction, the result of the mental process of 'abstractive' cognition (*notitia abstractiva*). This process derived in turn from individual acts of intuitive cognition (*notitia intuitiva*), through which singulars in the world were represented as 'natural' (non-arbitrary) concepts in the mind. The perception of singulars therefore preceded the formation of universal concepts in the mind. As concepts, Ockham suggested, universals *are themselves singulars*, leading him to the conclusion that 'every universal... is only a universal by signification, by being a sign of several things' ('quodlibet universale... non est universale nisi per significationem, quia est signum plurimum').⁴⁵ Though universals for Ockham did not represent realities, therefore, genera (*animal, plant, etc.*) and species (*dog, cat, human; tree, flower, bush, etc.*) were ultimately non-arbitrary concepts (usually described as *ficta* or *figmenta*), and only secondarily conventional (*ad placitum*) signs. Herein lies the most significant difference between Ockham's nominalism, which was strictly a form of *conceptualism*,⁴⁶ and the more extreme teachings of first-generation nominalists (the *vocales*) such as Roscelin. The distinction between these two perspectives, especially among literary scholars, has often

⁴⁵ *Summa Totius Logicae*, I, c. xiv. Text ed. and trans. Philotheus Boehner, *Ockham: Philosophical Writings* (Edinburgh: Nelson, 1957), p. 33.

⁴⁶ 'Conceptualism' denotes a philosophical system in which universal categories are held to exist as concepts in the mind. The term is gaining currency among historians of the later Middle Ages. See, for example, Marilyn McCord Adams, 'Universals in the Early Fourteenth Century', in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, pp. 411-439 (p. 434).

been overlooked.⁴⁷

Closely related to the problem of universals, though less often the focus of scholarly attention, is the theory of identity and distinction. In the context of Wyclif's anti-nominalism, this undoubtedly played as significant a rôle (albeit often a less conspicuous one) as any other issue in contemporary logic and metaphysics. Like the problem of universals, the theory of identity and distinction was fundamentally concerned with the nature of being. What was it that made things distinct from each other, and how could it be proved that they were not, in fact, the same? What constituted a *real*, as opposed to a conceptual, distinction? These were far from trivial questions, and had particularly important implications for the perceived relationship between universals and their particulars. Debate between nominalists and realists throughout the fourteenth century centred on the notion of *formal* distinction (*distinctio formalis*) and identity, which received its most famous formulation in the philosophy of the moderate realist, John Duns Scotus (c. 1265-1308). According to Scotus, something of a single nature (something which is in real terms the same as itself) could consist of elements which were *formally* distinct from each other (as opposed to *essentially* distinct, as in the case of two different entities). This kind of distinction, Scotus insisted, was itself real, and preceded any act of the intellect which could introduce distinctions on a conceptual level.⁴⁸ For conceptualists like Ockham, such a position could not be defended. The limited ontology of the Ockham's philosophy, as Marilyn McCord Adams has argued, would not allow for real identity and distinction to co-exist within a single entity.⁴⁹ This, as we shall see, separated him from Wyclif not only in respect of his understanding of universals, but also (in Wyclif's own eyes, at least) in respect of his conception of the Trinity. A failure to understand the true nature of identity and distinction therefore represented not merely a philosophical error, but

⁴⁷ But see the discussion in Hugo Keiper's recent essay, 'A Literary 'Debate over Universals'? New Perspectives on the Relationships between Nominalism, Realism, and Literary Discourse', in Keiper, Bode and Utz, eds., *Nominalism and Literary Discourse*, pp. 1-87 (p. 5).

⁴⁸ This brief overview of Scotus's theory is heavily indebted to the account provided by Marilyn McCord Adams, 'Universals in the Fourteenth Century', pp. 412-416.

⁴⁹ For Ockham, 'real things and beings of reason or concepts are the only beings there are, and there are no real beings that are not real things. But Scotus'... formal distinction is premised on a wider ontology that allows for distinct formalities within one and the same thing.' Adams, 'Universals', pp. 417-419.

also a potential source of Christological heresy.⁵⁰

Among the most significant changes to the received understanding of nominalist philosophy were made in the area of the theological problem of the relationship between God and his creatures. Ockham's insistence on preserving an absolute distinction between divine and human natures had led in many of the earlier accounts to an exaggerated emphasis on the futility of thought and rational enquiry.⁵¹ This was frequently reinforced by a misunderstanding of Ockham's use of the scholastic concepts of *potentia dei absoluta* and *potentia dei ordinata*. Rather than seeing the absolute power of God in terms of possibilities once available but now excluded, commentators perceived a threat of supernatural intervention in the created order.⁵² According to Courtenay, this represented not only a misrepresentation of the nature of divine power itself, but of the main purpose behind the distinction:

The distinction is deceptive for the modern reader because it seems to be talking about possibilities and avenues for divine action when in fact it is making a statement about the non-necessity of the created order. Both parts of the dialectic, which must be taken together to be meaningful, face in the direction of creation, not God. Together they declare the contingent, conventional character of the created world.⁵³

⁵⁰ See Ch. 2 (section 2) and Ch. 5 (section 4.1).

⁵¹ See Courtenay, 'Nominalism and Late Medieval Religion', pp. 27-8

⁵² This view of divine power has exerted a conspicuous influence on literary interpretations of nominalist theology. Seeking allegories of nominalism in fourteenth-century vernacular literature, numerous commentators have sought fictional analogues to the image of mankind at the mercy of an omnipotent and capricious creator. Robert Stepsis, for example, finds just such an analogue in the figures of Walter and Griselda in Chaucer's *Clerk's Tale*. Nominalism, he argues, provides the only way of reconciling the 'vain, capricious and unfeeling' behaviour of Walter with his 'anagogic' significance as the God of Christian theology. Focusing on the divine contravention of ordained laws (paralleled in Walter's capricious behaviour), and on the futility of human reason (exemplified in Griselda's response), Stepsis reveals very clearly his indebtedness to the older conception of nominalist philosophy. See '*Potentia Absoluta* and the *Clerk's Tale*', *Chaucer Review*, 10 (1975), 129-46. David Steinmetz makes a less extreme attempt to read the tale as a nominalist allegory, interpreting divine power not in terms of the supremacy of the *potentia absoluta* but as a dialectical relationship between absolute and ordained powers. Walter's self-imposed contract of marriage, like the *potentia ordinata* of God, means that possibilities once open to him (analogous to those available to God through his *potentia absoluta*) are now closed off. This reading, though more persuasive than that of Stepsis, leaves the obvious problem of Walter's cruelty unresolved. See 'Late Medieval Nominalism and the *Clerk's Tale*', *Chaucer Review*, 12 (1977), 38-54. A recent attempt to revive and develop Steinmetz's interpretation can be found in Rodney Delasanta's article, 'Nominalism and the *Clerk's Tale* Revisited', *The Chaucer Review*, 31/3 (1997), 209-231.

⁵³ 'Nominalism and Late Medieval Religion,' p. 39. Courtenay discusses the importance of the distinction in the later nominalist tradition in 'Covenant and Causality in Pierre d'Ailly,' *Speculum*, 46 (1971), 94-119.

A possible cause of the misunderstanding Courtenay describes is Ockham's doctrine of primary and secondary causes. According to the principle of primary causation, God, though he would never behave in a way which was unnecessary, could still produce supernatural effects, provided only that they were analogous to the effects produced by natural agency:

'Whatever God can produce by means of secondary causes, he can directly produce and preserve without them.' From this maxim I argue thus. Every effect which God can produce by means of a secondary cause, he can produce directly on his own account. He can produce intuitive sense cognition by means of an object; hence he can produce it directly on his own account.⁵⁴

Ockham's suggestion that God would be capable, if he chose to do so, of producing an intuitive cognition of a non-existent, has often been taken as a further affirmation of his sceptical epistemology. Reason, it is argued, incapable of distinguishing between natural and supernatural, would be rendered futile as a means of enquiry. Again, however, the assumption that God can produce such effects miraculously is merely a guarantee of his omnipotence, and not an indication of the likelihood of their being brought into being.⁵⁵

For Ockham, as for the earlier scholastics, reason was a sacred faculty, and remained an authority for Christian and philosopher alike.⁵⁶ God's existence, for faith and reason alike, could never be doubted, despite the charges of agnosticism which have been made against

⁵⁴ 'Quidquid Deus producit mediantibus causis secundis potest immediate sine illis producere et conservare.' Ex ista propositione arguo sic: Omnem effectum quem potest Deus mediante causa secunda immediate per se; sed in notitiam intuitivam corporalem potest mediante obiecto; ergo potest in eam immediate per se.' *Quodlibeta*, VI, q. vi. ed. and trans. Philotheus Boehner, *William Ockham: Philosophical Writings* (Edinburgh: Nelson, 1957), pp. 25-26.

⁵⁵ On the problem of interpreting Ockham's idea of intuitive cognition of non-existents, see Philotheus Boehner, 'The *Notitia Intuitiva* of Non-Existents according to William of Ockham,' in *Collected Articles*, pp. 268-300. Boehner argues against the many sceptical interpretations, suggesting that for Ockham, as for the other scholastics, intuitive knowledge was *infallible*. The idea of intuitive cognition of non-existents was developed in response to a specific theological problem, and was not a general epistemological principle. (p. 275)

⁵⁶ On Ockham's use of the scholastic concept of *recta ratio* ('right reason'), see David Clark, 'William of Ockham on Right Reason,' *Speculum*, 48 (1978), 13-36. Clark discusses the implication of the *ordinata-absoluta* distinction for the moral sense of the individual, concluding with an optimistic assessment of the function of reason. He points out, in particular, the error of seeing 'the contingent decrees of God [as] the sole basis of moral value and obligation' (p. 19).

Ockham and the later nominalists.

Interpretations of divine power, whether those of nominalists or realists, were linked inextricably to the question of grace and salvation. A conspicuous feature of older histories of later medieval theology, and (somewhat predictably) of literary studies of nominalist influence, has been the association of nominalism with voluntarist or Pelagian positions.⁵⁷

The doctrine of *facere quod in se est*, doing what is in oneself in order to merit grace, has often been associated with Ockham, despite its widespread acceptance (among nominalists and anti-nominalists alike). Ockham, it is true, took a good deal of trouble to emphasise the importance of the will over the supernatural habit, but this is no reason to suppose that he was in any way extraordinary.⁵⁸ Not only Robert Holcot, whose status as a nominalist (if not as an Ockhamist) is not in doubt, but also Thomas Aquinas, Richard Fitzralph and even Wyclif himself have been found to invoke this Pelagian (or semi-Pelagian) principle.

There is, it would seem, no secure philosophical ground on which to found a distinction between realist and anti-realist versions of the Pelagian doctrine. Realists such as Bradwardine and Wyclif, nevertheless, have traditionally been associated with an extreme determinism, according to which the supernatural habit is necessarily prior to the individual will (and hence to human freedom) in respect of the question of grace. For these thinkers (however different the particulars of their teaching may have been), it was thought, all things were seen to happen *of necessity*. This interpretation has recently been placed in question by Anthony Kenny, who seeks to reinstate human freedom as a vital component in Wyclif's theology. Even if Wyclif could be regarded as determinist, he argues, we must avoid the temptation to regard this either as an extreme position, or as a necessary

⁵⁷ Notable examples of literary studies influenced by the assumption of a necessary relationship between nominalism and semi-Pelagianism in the later Middle Ages include Janet Coleman, *Piers Plowman and the 'Moderns'* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1981) and Philip F. O'Mara, 'Robert Holcot's "Ecumenism" and the Green Knight', *Chaucer Review*, 26-27 (1992), 329-342; 97-106. More tentative links between the two are suggested by Robert Adams, 'Piers's Pardon and Langland's Semi-Pelagianism', *Traditio*, 39 (1983), 367-418, and by Katherine Lynch, 'The *Parliament of Fowls* and Late Medieval Voluntarism,' *Chaucer Review*, 25 (nos. 1-2) (1990), 1-16 and 85-95. See also Adams's later article, 'Langland's Theology', in John A. Alford, ed., *A Companion to Piers Plowman* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 107-09. For a sceptical assessment of the relationship between semi-Pelagianism, nominalism, and literary practice, see A. J. Minnis, 'Looking for a Sign: The Quest for Nominalism in Chaucer and Langland', in A. J. Minnis, Charlotte C. Morse and Thorlac Turville-Petre, eds., *Essays on Ricardian Literature in Honour of J. A. Burrow* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 142-178.

⁵⁸ According to Ockhamist ethics, only an act of will can be necessarily virtuous. The love of God is such an act since, *de potentia dei ordinata*, it cannot be vicious. Nor can it be performed against the will. The value of all *contingently* virtuous acts is this dependent on this necessary act of virtue. See *Quodlibeta*, III, q. xxx.

consequence of his philosophical realism.⁵⁹ Wyclif and Ockham, it would seem, are likely to have had more in common in respect of the questions of freedom, necessity, grace, and salvation, than has generally been allowed. This assumption is supported by our analysis of Wyclif's treatment of freedom and necessity in Chapter 5.⁶⁰

3. ANTI-NOMINALISM AND ANTI-MODERNISM IN WYCLIF'S HERMENEUTIC WRITINGS

That Wyclif was opposed to the basic principles of nominalist teaching in general, and of Ockhamism in particular, has never been seriously in doubt. His philosophical pronouncements alone, quite apart from any explicit criticism of nominalism he may have voiced, are sufficient to establish this. There are, however, within the texts of the *Summa de Ente* and the *Summa Theologica*, relatively few unambiguous references to the practices of contemporary or near-contemporary nominalists. It is undoubtedly true that much of what Wyclif had to say on the subject of 'sophistical' and heretical philosophies would have been directed very deliberately towards fourteenth-century Ockhamist thinkers, but there were nevertheless a large number of other potential targets, none of whom need necessarily be regarded – at least as regards their basic ontological views – as nominalists. Even in the age of Abelard and Roscelin, when the opponents of nominalist thinking were at least willing to identify its adherents as *nominales* or (more usually) *vocales*, there was ample room for uncertainty as to exactly who was being targeted.⁶¹ In Wyclif, the term *nominalis* is never used,⁶² and although there are many examples in which reference is clearly being made to anti-universalist thinkers (Ockham himself, as we have suggested, is even named in a small number of cases), there are as many in which the philosophical allegiances of the person or group in question remain obscure. The term *sophista*, for

⁵⁹ Anthony Kenny, 'Realism and Determinism in the Early Wyclif', *Studies in Church History, Subsidia*, 5 (1987), 165-177.

⁶⁰ See Ch. 5 (section 4.1), below.

⁶¹ Calvin Normore has cast doubt on the traditional assumption that the term *nominales* was used to identify opponents of philosophical realism. See 'The Tradition of Medieval Nominalism', pp. 201-217. On Roscelin and Abelard see section 2.2, above.

⁶² As a pejorative term, *nominalis* had disappeared from use by the end of the twelfth century. See *MLW*, p. 314.

example, is used in an essentially neutral sense in both the *Summa de Ente* and *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, often simply as a means of identifying a scholar with an interest in properties of propositional terms (*proprietas terminorum*). Other labels which were frequently used by Wyclif to identify philosophical wrongdoers, including, most notably, *pueri* ('children') and *moderni* ('moderns'), are likely to have been applied in an equally general way.

The theory of properties of terms, which occupied a fundamental place in late-medieval logical discourse,⁶³ can certainly be seen to have been complementary to nominalist assumptions about the nature of propositional truth, but was by no means the sole preserve of nominalist logicians.⁶⁴ It attracted bitter and derisive criticism, moreover, from nominalists and realists alike.⁶⁵ Disputations over the properties of terms are likely to have been what Wyclif had in mind when, in a famous passage from *Logicae Continuatio*, he described the 'sophistical disagreements' (*dissensiones sophisticae*) of scholars in the faculty of Arts, contrasting them with the lighter and less burdensome pursuits of the Theology faculty.⁶⁶ Though it is possible that such disagreements might easily have arisen within the framework of nominalist logic, and though it is almost certain that Wyclif himself first encountered nominalist philosophy as a young Arts student,⁶⁷ we cannot assume that the reference here is to nominalists exclusively. This is equally true of Wyclif's frequent remarks on the 'doctors of signs' (*doctores signorum*), which have often been treated uncritically as covert references to contemporary nominalists. Here, once

⁶³ On the origins, development, and applications of the medieval theory of properties of terms, see L. M. de Rijk, 'Origins of the Theory of Properties of Terms', in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, pp. 161-173. A useful study of the relationship between nominalism and terminism is provided by William Courtenay in his 'Antiqui and Moderni in Late Medieval Thought', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 48/1(1987), 3-10 (pp. 6-10).

⁶⁴ Marcia Colish has recently remarked that, 'so pervasive was terminism that it could transcend the debate between realists and nominalists, enlisting thinkers from both camps.' *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition, 400-1100* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press), p. 302. For a contrasting view see Normore, 'The Tradition of Medieval Nominalism', p. 211. Courtenay lists terminist logic among the features traditionally associated with 'the English school of nominalism', though makes no attempt to identify terminism *exclusively* with nominalist philosophy. See 'Reception of Ockham's Thought', p. 89.

⁶⁵ See Ch. 4, below.

⁶⁶ *Logicae Continuatio*, p. 144.

⁶⁷ See M. J. Wilks, 'The Early Oxford Wyclif: Papalist or Nominalist?', *Studies in Church History*, 5 (1969), 69-98.

again, the targets would certainly have included nominalists (if by ‘nominalist’ we mean simply one who denies the reality of universals *ex parte rei*), but are unlikely to have been nominalists exclusively. Ockham himself is not associated explicitly with the doctors of signs, though Wyclif does draw a connection between nominalists and the *doctores* in his *De Universalibus* and *De Ente in Communi*.⁶⁸ In the context of his Latin writings as a whole, however, the range of potential referents is far broader, and includes figures whose perceived shortcomings have little or nothing to do with either nominalism or terminism. The later theological writings, in particular, use *signum* primarily as a synonym for ‘icon’, usually in the context of Eucharistic theology. The *secta signorum* or *doctores signorum* of which Wyclif speaks in this context are therefore – for the most part – theologians who opposed him on the issue of Eucharistic presence. These, again, may have included nominalists, but need not *necessarily* have done so. By the time Wyclif composed the *Triologus*, a fictional academic dialogue in which his mature theological views were presented, the term *signum* was being applied exclusively in this sense. The fourth and longest book of the treatise, entitled *De Signis*, is devoted entirely to issues of sacramental theology.⁶⁹

These problems of identification are made worse by the fact that there were, throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, thinkers who were not nominalists, but who nevertheless held some of the views with which the nominalists have been associated. A good example would be the Franciscan John Duns Scotus (c.1265-1308), whose ideas on predication and theological language were broadly consistent with those of Ockham,⁷⁰ but whose philosophy is more generally characterized as a form of ‘moderate’ realism. Scotus also shared Ockham’s philosophical views on the nature of the Eucharist, which were antithetically opposed to Wyclif’s controversial theory of ‘remanence’ (according to which the bread and wine remained *substantially* the same after the consecration of the host), and which were fundamentally inconsistent with a strong realist metaphysic. The

⁶⁸ *De Universalibus*, Ch. 7, ll. 301-306; *De Ente in Communi*, pp. 46, 57.

⁶⁹ The Eucharist, which is described by the character of Alithia (Gk. ‘ἀλήθεια, ‘truth’), the mediator between the other two participants in the dialogue, as ‘magis venerabile inter alia’, is analysed at the greatest length. See *Joannis Wiclif Triologus cum Supplemento Trialogi*, ed. G. Lechler (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1869), pp. 244-407.

⁷⁰ See the discussion of ‘univocal’ predication in Ch. 2 (section 4), below.

relationship between Scotus and Ockham has more often been regarded as antagonistic than harmonious, though we cannot ignore the fact that there were many ideas shared between them. Scotus is certainly mentioned in Wyclif's writings, though not within the same passages or contexts as Ockham himself. As a fellow realist, Wyclif is unlikely to have felt inclined to criticise him on specific metaphysical points. In *De Universalibus*, he is even spoken of as a *constans universalium explanator*.⁷¹ This does not fundamentally alter the fact, nevertheless, that those ideas which he shared with Ockham (particularly those relating to predication) would have been incompatible with Wyclif's metaphysics. What this demonstrates, once again, is the need for caution in identifying Wyclif's frequent anonymous references to philosophical opponents as references to nominalists exclusively. We must be aware, too, that late fourteenth-century Oxford, as Courtenay has argued, is unlikely to have been dominated by philosophical nominalists.⁷² This makes it less likely still that Wyclif would have associated erroneous metaphysical assumptions with nominalists alone.

Despite these unfavourable conditions, there were certainly figures among Wyclif's Oxford contemporaries who held views which would not have seemed out of place in a nominalist treatise. The best known of these is the Carmelite friar John Kenningham, whose often protracted debates with Wyclif are known to us – albeit in an incomplete form – from the *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*.⁷³ Kenningham, though not traditionally numbered amongst fourteenth-century nominalists, appears to have held metaphysical views which were often similar to, and always broadly consistent with, those of Ockhamist philosophy. His views on time and intelligible being have much in common, too, with those of earlier anti-realist thinkers of the fourteenth century such as William of Alnwick (a disciple of Scotus), whose controversial opinions on the nature of predication had attracted criticism

⁷¹ *De Universalibus*, Ch. 7, l. 238.

⁷² The influence of nominalism in late-medieval Oxford, Courtenay suggests, has often been exaggerated. Though Ockham's opinions would clearly not have passed unnoticed, there was never such a thing, he argues, as an equivalent to Parisian Ockhamism in England. See William Courtenay, *Schools and Scholars in Fourteenth-century England*, Ockham's influence in Oxford is analysed further in Courtenay's more recent article, 'The Reception of Ockham's Thought', pp. 106-107.

⁷³ Thomas Netter of Walden, *Fasciculi Zizaniorum Magistri Johannis Wyclif cum Tritico*, ed. W. W. Shirley (London: Rolls Series, 1858). All subsequent references to this text will be abbreviated thus: *FZ*.

from contemporary Oxford realists.⁷⁴ One of the few contemporary critics of Wyclif whose ideas are known to us in any detail, Kenningham thus provides a valuable link between anti-realist theory and the realities of late fourteenth-century academic and theological debate.⁷⁵ Whether he was familiar with the works of either Ockham or Alnwick must remain a matter for speculation, though there can be no serious doubt of his acquaintance with the broad principles of their teaching. This is not to say, of course, that we should therefore regard Kenningham as a nominalist; as in the case of Scotus, there were clearly elements in his philosophical system which ran contrary to Ockhamist assumptions.⁷⁶ The context of the academic *determinatio*, moreover, often makes the application of such labels difficult. It is clear that both Kenningham and Wyclif, for example, were ready to exaggerate the errors of their opponents, or even to attribute to them ideas which they cannot have held. The adversarial nature of the *determinatio*, moreover, meant that those arguments which were put forward – especially by the respondent – need not necessarily have been expressions of personal conviction. There is, nevertheless, a high degree of consistency in Kenningham’s philosophical arguments against Wyclif, whose responses (which are analysed in Chapters 4 and 5 below) reveal how potentially damaging such arguments would have been. The relationship between philosophical and hermeneutic theory, moreover, remains explicit throughout much of his analysis of Wyclif’s work. His critique of Wyclif’s understanding of the ‘literal’ sense of Scripture, for example, was grounded very firmly in his rejection of the concept of intelligible being (the subject of his last determination). If intelligible being was inadmissible as a metaphysical principle, then so, too, were the fundamental realist notions of analogy, ‘real’ predication and temporal amplification (*ampliatio temporis*). These principles, as we illustrate in Chapters 2 and 3, formed the philosophical superstructure of Wyclif’s theory of scriptural truth and textuality.

⁷⁴ See Ch. 2, below.

⁷⁵ The most important contemporary critic of Wyclif’s exegetical system, beside Kenningham, is the Franciscan biblical scholar William Woodford. Unlike Kenningham, Woodford cannot easily be identified with a distinct philosophical position, and his metaphysical views must remain largely a matter for speculation. He did pose a significant challenge, nevertheless, to Wyclif’s literalistic exegesis, as well as to his understanding of the basis of scriptural authority. On Woodford’s critique of Wyclif, see Michael Hurley, ‘Scriptura Sola’: Wyclif and his Critics’, *Traditio*, 16 (1960), 275-352; Eric Doyle, ‘William Woodford on Scripture and Tradition’, in *Studia Historico-Ecclesiastica: Festgabe für Prof. Luchsius G. Spätling, O.F.M.* ed. Isaac Vázquez, O.F.M. (Rome: Pontificum Athenaeum Antonianum, 1977.)

⁷⁶ A good example would be Kenningham’s views on subsequent necessity. See the discussion in Ch. 4, below.

The last is the only one which is likely to have been considered truly idiosyncratic, though all three were equally vulnerable to assault from contemporary anti-realists. As was the case with other aspects of Wyclif's philosophical realism, the three interrelated principles – and the concept of intelligible being which informed them – became most controversial when they had been applied to concepts and practices outside the strict confines of speculative theology.⁷⁷ They were most problematic, that is, when the authority of competing texts and interpretative communities (whether defined politically or doctrinally) was at stake.

⁷⁷ Cf. The philosophical principles underlying Wyclif's theory of Eucharistic remanence, which nowhere provoked serious controversy on their own account.

CHAPTER 2

PHILOSOPHY AND SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETATION 1: ANALOGY

The philosophical principles underlying Wyclif's *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* and the other tractates of the *Summa Theologica* have their immediate origins, for the most part, in his logical and metaphysical writings. Many of the key principles of his realist exegetical theory had been tried and tested, if not always in a strictly theological context, long before they appeared in his principal work on the nature of hermeneutics. Indeed, the philosophical underpinnings of many of the arguments of *De Veritate* might now seem obscure if it were not for the survival of these earlier writings. The same is undoubtedly true of Wyclif's anti-nominalist rhetoric, some of whose main characteristics are clearly traceable in the writings of the first half of his career. The philosophical material itself was presented in two treatises on logic, *De Logica* and the *Logicae Continuatio*, and up to a further three *summae* of writings (only two of which survive in their entirety) devoted to subjects of a metaphysical nature.¹ The longest and most important of these, which was also composed later than the other two, is the *Summa de Ente*. This is split into two books of seven and six tractates, respectively. The first book is concerned primarily with the question of being, and with the relationship between created and uncreated being, and the second with the nature of God (his knowledge, will, understanding, the Trinity, divine ideas, etc).² The second *summa* is now mostly lost, though is thought to have contained eight books, including *De Actibus Animae* (the only book which now survives).³ The third (and earliest) *summa* is the work now normally referred to as *De Ente Praedicamentali*, a collection of five texts concerned, as the name suggests, with the 'predicaments' or categories of Aristotle. Each of the texts covers a different category or group of categories: substance and quality, quantity, relation, action and passion, and time. The remaining three categories of position, place and state are thought to have been included in missing portions of the *summa*. It has been conjectured that this *summa* may later have formed the fifth tractate of book I of the *Summa de Ente*, as the nature of its subject matter appears to

¹ See Ivan Müller's introduction to his edition of *De Universalibus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. xxxiv-xxxviii.

² For details of the composition of the *Summa de Ente*, and of the uncertainty surrounding its intended structure, see Willliell R. Thomson, *The Latin Writings of John Wyclif: An Annotated Catalog* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1983), pp. 14-17.

³ On the evidence for the existence of this *summa*, and its most likely structure, see Müller, pp. xxxvi-xxxvii. Thomson makes no mention of the possibility that this tract may have belonged to a *summa* of writings. See *Latin Writings*, pp. 8-9.

suggest.⁴ Wyclif's major treatise on logic, the *Logicae Continuatio* is thought to have been composed some time between the completion of the second *summa* and the beginning of the *Summa de Ente*.⁵ The material it contains certainly has more in common with that of the *Summa de Ente* than it does with that of the relatively early *De Logica*. It is with the *Logicae Continuatio* and the *Summa de Ente* (including *De Ente Praedicamentali*), therefore, that the present chapter will be principally concerned.

The principle of analogy, as we suggested in Chapter 1, was one of the defining features of Wyclif's hermeneutic theory. It lay at the heart not only of his understanding of scriptural symbolism (in its diverse forms), but also, as we shall argue in Chapter 5, of his conception of the fundamental components of the hermeneutic process itself (the book, the author, and the author's intention).⁶ As such, it acted as the principal means of preserving the uniqueness and the authority of the sacred text. On a philosophical level, it divided Wyclif from nominalist logicians as decisively as the theory of universals itself, and engendered further, very distinctive divisions in respect of hermeneutic and theological issues. The most significant of these, from the broad perspective of Wyclif's development as a hermeneutic theorist, were the questions of the meaning of theological terms, the significance of literal and metaphorical uses of language, the nature of the Trinity, and lastly, the meaning of knowledge and the use or validity of its various kinds. These will be considered in turn below.

1. THE CONCEPT OF ANALOGY: WYCLIF, AQUINAS AND THE REALIST TRADITION

Analogy, as a hermeneutic and dialectical principle, was among the most distinctive features of medieval realist philosophy. It occupied a fundamental place in Wyclif's logical and metaphysical writings, and played a vital role in his understanding of the scriptures and the liturgy. He defended its principles vigorously, and was highly contemptuous of any philosopher, grammarian or logician who sought to contradict them. Those who, like William of Ockham and his followers, denied the possibility of analogy, were blind, he believed, to the true nature of things. The analogical method which characterizes much of

⁴ According to Thomson, there can be little doubt that *De Ente Praedicamentali* formed part of the *Summa de Ente*, though the assumption that it formed the *fifth* tractate of the first book is less secure. See *Latin Writings* pp. 26-27.

⁵ This short chronology is based on that given by Müller, *De Universalibus*, pp xxxiii-xxxviii .

⁶ See especially sections 1 and 2.

Wyclif's thinking locates him within a tradition dating back to Pre-Socratic philosophy.⁷ The most conspicuous influences from the earlier part of this tradition are those of the Church Fathers, whose exegetical writings rested on a form of Christianized analogy introduced by Philo and his students in the first century. Among the Fathers, Origen, Augustine and Pseudo-Dionysius (the latter two in particular) figure very prominently in Wyclif's work. Less obvious influences are St Anselm and St Bonaventure, whose writings were frequently cited by Wyclif, but whose distinctive views on analogy (or on theological principles derived from analogical reasoning) are seldom appealed to directly.⁸ The most important influence of all, however, comes late in the history of analogy, with Thomas Aquinas. The late-medieval philosophical preoccupation with the semantics of terms, and in particular those terms which were used to describe God, had given renewed impetus to the study of analogy, which until the time of Aquinas had lacked a truly systematic definition. It is according to Aquinas' definition, and the logical metalanguage which accompanied it, that Wyclif's arguments about the nature of analogy are framed. Drawing on the analogical principles expounded by Pseudo-Dionysius, Augustine and Aquinas, Wyclif was able not only to demonstrate the necessity of analogy, but also to legitimate his own philosophical claims about the nature and reality of universals. In both cases, this amounted to a disproof of assumptions surviving from Ockhamist and Scotist philosophy of the early fourteenth century.

For Aquinas and Wyclif alike, analogy provided the most adequate means of accounting for the fact that both God and man, though distinct in their natures, could be described in terms of a group of shared words: 'good', 'merciful', 'powerful', 'kind', etc. Though a term such as 'good' could apply to God or to man, Aquinas argued, there was no sense in which man was good in the same way that God was good. If this were the case, then the term 'good' would refer *univocally* to a goodness shared equally by God and His creatures. At the opposite extreme, however, it was felt to be equally unsatisfactory to deny *any* relationship between human good and divine good, since the perfect goodness of God was the final cause of all that was good in mankind. This would be to suggest that the term 'good' referred *equivocally* to two different things. The solution was to posit a relationship of proportional likeness or *analogy* between the two natures:

⁷ On the history of analogy in the Greek and Christian traditions see Hampus Lyttkens, *The Analogy Between God and the World: An Investigation of the Background and Interpretation of its Use by Thomas of Aquino* (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells Boktryckeri, 1952), pp. 15-110. See also the entries by G. E. R. Lloyd and Armand Maurer in *DMA*, vol. 1, pp. 60-63, 64-67. On theological applications of the principle of analogy, see Frederick Ferré, 'Analogy in Theology', in Paul Edwards, ed., *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York and London: Macmillan, 1967), vol. 1, pp. 94-7.

⁸ For a discussion of the contribution of Augustine, Anselm and Bonaventure to the history of analogical reasoning, see Lyttkens, *The Analogy Between God and the World*, pp. 110-163.

It is impossible to predicate anything univocally of God and creatures. Every effect that falls short of what is typical of the power of its cause represents it inadequately, for it is not the same kind of thing as the cause. Thus what exists simply and in a unified way in the cause will be divided up and take various different forms in such effects – as the simple power of the sun produces many kinds of lesser things. In the same way, ...the perfections which in creatures are many and various pre-exist in God as one... Yet although we never use words in exactly the same sense of creatures and God we are not merely equivocating when we use the same word... for if this were so we could never argue from statements about creatures to statements about God... That this does not happen we know not merely from the teachings of the philosophers... but also from the teaching of St Paul, for he says, *The invisible things of God are made known by the things that are made* (Romans I, 20).⁹

The assumption that analogy could lead the mind from the created world to an understanding of God was a convenient medium between extreme scepticism and the belief that man could know God in His perfection. Not all forms of analogy, however, were equally significant. Both man and urine, to take the standard medieval example, could be described as ‘healthy’, but not on account of any real continuity between them. Rather, urine was called ‘healthy’ by a process of attribution, because it was a sign of health in man. The relations of man and urine to the common term (the *analogon*), in other words, were of distinct kinds. In the case of God and man, on the other hand, the common term was a guarantee of the proportional likeness between the two. God, in His perfection, represented goodness, wisdom, power, mercy par excellence: His relation to the analogon, whatever it might be, was complete. The creature, on the other hand, could only be good, wise, powerful, merciful insofar as he or she ‘partook’ of goodness, wisdom, power or mercy (possessing them as accidental properties). Though by definition ‘partial’, therefore, the resemblance between God and His creation was real, and human language applied analogically to the divinity could be seen to be meaningful in more than a purely conventional (*ad placitum*) or logical sense.

God, as the first being, was the cause of all other beings, whose various accidental qualities found perfection and unity in the divine essence. As the text from Aquinas shows,

⁹ ‘...impossibile est aliquid praedicari de Deo et creaturis univoce. Quia omnis effectus non aequans virtutem causae agentis recipit similitudinem agentis, non secundum eadem rationem, sed deficienter. Ita ut quod divisim et multipliciter est in effectibus in causa est simpliciter et eodem modo; sicut sol secundum unam suam virtutem multiformes et varias formas in istis inferioribus producit. Eodem modo, ...omnes rerum perfectiones quae sunt in rebus creatis divisim et multipliciter, in Deo praeexistunt unite et simpliciter... Sed nec etiam pure aequivoce... Quia secundum hoc ex creaturis nihil posset cognosci de Deo, nec demonstrari... Et hoc est tam contra philosophos... quam etiam contra Apostolum dicentem, *Invisibilia Dei, per ea quae facta sunt, intellecta conspiciuntur.*’ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 1a, q. 13. 5 (extract). Text ed. and trans. Herbert McCabe, vol. 3 in the Blackfriars edition (London: Blackfriars, 1964).

this second form of analogy (usually referred to as analogy of proper proportionality) was intimately tied up with the problem of the meaning of theological language. It is in this context primarily that we encounter it in Wyclif, though it often assumes a more general explicatory function. The first and weaker form of analogy (analogy of attribution¹⁰) is also used, but only in a purely negative context.¹¹ In the second chapter of *De Logica* (c. 1360),¹² Wyclif's early work on the nature of logic, he introduces analogy of proportionality as one of the four basic principles of identity, the others being generic, specific and numeric. Though his definition is brief, the theological implications of this fundamental philosophical principle are already quite clear:

Analogical identity is between a primary cause and the thing caused, between a substance and its accident; for although God, substance and accident are not common in any genus, they come together in transcendent being and its analogue. For all things which exist are entities by analogy, and so all things are the same in terms of entity.¹³

God and the created world can be considered together *only* in terms of analogy. To this extent, analogy serves not merely as a tool of the speculative theologian, but also as an instrument of the exegete, who (as we learn from *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*) must discipline his mind to see beyond the accidental properties of the first analogate, to the essential properties of the divine. This, as we shall see, applies in the case of exegetical practice (especially in the interpretation of 'mystical' propositions) and hermeneutic theory (in the apprehension of the nature of the sacred text, its senses and its authority).¹⁴ Other

¹⁰ The terms *analogy of attribution* and *analogy of proportionality* date from the fifteenth-century Thomistic writer Thomas de Vio, Cardinal Cajetan, whose treatise *De Nominum Analogia* (1498) was the first serious attempt to systematize Aquinas's ideas on analogy. Cajetan lists a third form of analogy, *analogy of inequality*, which he applies to terms denoting disparate entities which are not related in proportional terms (e.g. 'body' as applied to celestial and earthly bodies). See *De Nominum Analogia*, Ch. 1 (trans. by Edward Bushinski as *The Analogy of Names* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University, 1959)). Cajetan's third category, though not found in Aquinas, has a precedent in Aristotle's asymmetric πρὸς ἓν relations. See the discussion in Lyttkens, *The Analogy between God and the World*, pp. 54-8 (on πρὸς ἓν relations); p. 206 (on their relation to Cajetan's third category). Analogy of inequality is construed by Wyclif as a form of equivocation. For a comprehensive study of the theory of analogy as it was inherited from Aquinas and Cajetan, see Ralph C. McInerney, *The Logic of Analogy: An Interpretation of St Thomas* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961).

¹¹ Certain nominalist categories, Wyclif argues, receive their names only by analogy of attribution, and are therefore not properly categories at all. See n. 51, below.

¹² On the dating of this treatise, see Thomson, *Latin Writings*, p. 4.

¹³ 'Identitas analogica est inter primam causam et causatum, est inter substanciam et accidens; quia quamvis Deus, substancia et accidens non communicant in aliquo genere, tamen conveniunt in ente transcendente et analogo, quia omnia quae sunt, sunt encia analogice; et sic omnia sunt idem in entitate.' *De Logica*, Ch. 2 (*Tractatus de Logica*, ed. M.H. Dziewicki (London: WS, 1893), vol. 1, p. 10). Cf. *De Universalibus*, Ch. 4, ll. 126-30, in which Wyclif discusses the three modes of essential identity.

¹⁴ See Ch. 5 (sections 1 and 3).

forms of identity are simply irrelevant, since, as Wyclif points out, there is no genus (much less any species) which includes both God and creatures. Generic and specific identity, such as apply respectively, for example, to all animals and all human beings, can only apply to elements of the created order. Numeric identity is similarly inapplicable, since God and his creatures are not parts of a unitary essence in the same way as Christ and his humanity are numerically identical, or as memory, reason and will are identical with the individual soul.¹⁵ For Wyclif, as for Aquinas, this view of analogy and identity has consequences for the theory of predication, since analogical predication is neither univocal (as generic or specific predication), nor equivocal according to the definitions supplied earlier in *De Logica*:

A term is univocal if by the same meaning of a name it signifies different things, as the name 'man' signifies every man by the meaning 'rational animal', and the term 'animal' signifies every animal by the meaning 'animate sensible substance'. For every man is a rational animal, and every animal is an animate sensible substance. A term is equivocal if, according to different meanings it signifies different things, whether they are of diverse species (as 'barking animal', 'sea monster' and 'heavenly constellation', any of which may be [the referent] of the term 'dog', according to diverse specific meanings), or of the same species.¹⁶

Analogical predication sat between the two extremes Wyclif describes. The definitions of equivocity and univocity, as in Aquinas, are realist definitions, since the categories and headings ('rational animal', 'animate sensible substance', etc), as Wyclif is often at pains to point out, were realities, and not merely conceptual categories (*rationes*). To predicate 'entity' of God and creatures was to posit a real, if distant, relationship between them. Being itself represented the most primitive form of analogical relationship, since every analogy presupposed being in its analogates. All of the various forms of analogy, therefore, were ultimately reducible to relationships between modes of being.

In the *Summa de Ente*, the implications of the analogy of being for metaphysics and hermeneutics are examined in detail. In the tractate on being in general (*De Ente in Communi*), Wyclif presents God as the prime and transcendent being, final cause of all

¹⁵ *De Logica*, ll. 19-24.

¹⁶ 'Terminus univocus est qui per eandem nominis rationem significat res diversas; sicut iste terminus, *homo*, significat omnem hominem sub ista ratione quae est *animal rationale*. Et iste terminus, *animal*, significat omne animal sub ista ratione qua[e] est *substantia animata sensibilis*; quia omnis homo est animal rationale, et omne animal est substantia animata sensibilis. Terminus aequivocus est, qui propter rationes diversas significat res diversas, sive ipsa sint diversarum specierum (sicut *animal latrabile*, *marina bellua*, et *celestes sidus*, quorum quodlibet sit iste terminus *canis*, secundum diversas rationes specificas), sive sint eiusdem speciei.' *De Logica*, Ch. 1 (Dziewicki, vol.1, p.4, ll. 33-44).

other beings. For the realist, the participatory relationship between the being of creatures and prime Being, was a guarantee of the proportional relationship between them. Since knowledge of the existence of creatures entailed knowledge of the existence of Being, any act of knowing was proof of the existence of the transcendent.¹⁷ Participation, nevertheless, was not a direct participation of human essence (*ens*) in the pure existence (*esse*) of the divine. Rather, every creature participated in being in general (*ens* or *esse commune*), which was itself an imperfect reflection of the first being (*primum ens*), or divine nature. As John F. Wippel has convincingly argued, Aquinas, despite some terminological confusion, generally distinguishes the first being (which he terms *esse subsistens*) from the *esse commune* in which created beings participate. Not to do so would be to leave himself open to charges of pantheism, which any scholastic would certainly have been anxious to avoid.¹⁸ Wyclif likewise distinguishes between created being (*ens cummune*) and the perfect uncreated being of God, though he is often less than explicit about the true nature of this distinction.¹⁹

Analogical relationships, by definition, implied unequal degrees of participation between analogates. Univocal relationships, on the other hand, entailed equality between participants: no member of a species could be regarded as being more perfectly a member of that species (as participating more fully in its nature) than any other. This important distinction between equal and unequal participation is articulated most clearly by Wyclif in *De Ente Praedicamentali*:

It seems to me that it is sufficient, in terms of logical genus, that there be a positive nature communicated to many species without participation in its essence according to greater or lesser degrees... For all substances come together in that none of them is to a greater degree its own genus than any other of the same genus, because no nature or essence receives in that sense greater or less. But just as God is more perfectly a being than substance, so substance is more perfectly a being than an accident, and one such accident is more perfectly a being than another. But the same does not apply to [even] the highest logical genus.²⁰

¹⁷ *De Ente in Communi*, Ch. 1 (*Summa de Ente: Libri Primi Tractatus Primus et Secundus*, ed. S. Harrison Thomson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930). See esp. pp. 1-3)

¹⁸ 'Thomas Aquinas and Participation', in John F. Wippel, ed., *Studies in Medieval Philosophy*, pp. 117-158.

¹⁹ In the second chapter of *De Ideis*, nevertheless, he is careful to distance himself from any form of theological pantheism: 'Et si dicatur, quod male sonat concedere asinum et quodlibet aliud esse Deum, conceditur apud aegre intelligentes.' (ed. Herold: fo. 43rb.)

²⁰ '...videtur mihi, quod sufficit ad rationem generis logici, quod sit natura positiva multis speciebus communicata sine participacione sue essencie secundum magis et minus... eciam omnes substancie conveniunt in hoc, quod nullum illorum est reliquo magis suum genus, quam quodlibet eiusdem, quia nulla essencia vel natura suscipit ad istum sensum magis aut minus. Sed sicut Deus est magis ens, quam substancia, sic

In terms of predication, degrees of similarity or difference could only be meaningful in relation to things of different genera, or to things on a different level of being (and hence perfection) altogether. This idea lay at the heart of the realist's vertical conception of the universe, in which the relationship between higher and lower forms of being was habitually expressed in terms of degrees of perfection. The relevance of being to the notion of analogy becomes clearer as Wyclif turns his attention explicitly to the nature of the first being (*ens primum*), the subject of the second tractate of the *Summa de Ente (De Ente Primo in Communi)*. As the first being, God was also the first truth and the first good, the unitary principle from which the diverse lesser goods receive their cause:

Since, therefore, many [things] are good in common, it appears that there is a common good in which each of their [particular] goods shares. And since this common good founded in singulars cannot exist without a superior extrinsic cause, it appears that there is a more distant exemplar of goodness for everything which is itself good. For in this way [Holy] Scripture attributes substance to God: greatness, strength, paternal generation, creation and immensity, eternity, the acts of resting and possession, in accordance with the ten categories. For whatever there is of perfection in those things, God has, according to what the external thing exemplifies.²¹

Here, Wyclif is explicit about the participatory relationship between God and His creation. To say that a creature is 'good' was for him, as for Aquinas, to say something of its proximity to God, since goodness in the two is analogous. More significantly, it was also to establish a symbolic relationship between them, to make creation a sign of the creator. The possibility of discovering God in the Book of Nature had been taken for granted by Christian Platonists like St Augustine, for whom God was the final referent of all earthly signs. Pseudo-Dionysius, likewise, saw the created world as a dim shadow of the real. The difficulty, for all three philosophers, was disciplining the mind to see beyond the accidents of nature. For Dionysius, the distance between human and divine nature meant that God, transcending all that was known, was better contemplated by negation than by affirmative analogy. To say what God was not, according to this negative theology, had a far greater

substantia est magis ens, quam accidens, et unum tale reliquo magis accidens; non sic autem de supremo genere loyico.' *De Ente Praedicamentali*, Ch. 3 (*De Ente Praedicamentali et Quaestiones XIII Logicae et Philosophicae*, ed. Rudolf Beer (London: WS, 1891), p. 27)

²¹ 'Cum igitur multa sunt communicancia in bonitate, patet ex secundo quod est dare bonitatem communem que inest cuilibet eorum. Et cum communis bonitas fundata in singularibus non potest esse sine superiori extrinseco causante, patet quod illud habet bonitatem exemplarem eminencioem in quolibet quod ipsa per se facit. Et isto modo attribuit scriptura substantiam deo magnitudinem, virtutem, paternitatem generativum, produccionem et immensitatem, eternitatem, sessionem et possessionem, correspondentem ad decem predicamenta. Illud enim quod est perfeccionis simpliciter in illis generibus habet deus secundum quod exemplat res ad extra...' John Wyclif, *De Ente Primo in Communi*, Ch. 3 (Thomson, ed., *Summa de Ente*, pp. 86-7)

claim to certainty than saying what He was. Wyclif was less sceptical than Dionysius, but could not avoid the paradox inherent in analogical thought. In a passage at the end of *De Ente Primo in Communi*, he articulates the Dionysian view in very explicit terms:

... We see now how the meaning of the saints is to be interpreted, who say that on account of its immensity, the nature of God is not properly definable. For everything that is properly definable has a genus and differentiae, the prior causes and limits of its being, as it is distinguished from others. This we learn from the seventh book of [Aristotle's] *Metaphysics*. But since these things cannot apply to God, it is clear that neither can the concept of definition. For He is above and beyond every genus, and is consequently defined by no genus. And it is clear that we cannot know what He is, since he is not a 'what', unless this term is used equivocally. Nevertheless, we can know, if imperfectly, what *kind* of thing He is, as when it is supposed that he is good, wise, indivisible, incorruptible, etc. But no substantive nouns apply formally to His nature unless understood figuratively, as the property of a thing which is found analogically in God... And thus it appears that it is easier to know what God is not than to know what He is.²²

By denying God a definition, Wyclif was effectively placing Him outside the reach of language or thought altogether. Nothing in the world could be contemplated if, like God, it could not be assigned to a genus or species. As the 'prior causes' of a creature's being, genera and species were the basis of knowledge of its shared nature. To know a man was to know humanity, and hence to understand what it was to be human. Knowledge of any number of genera, however, could not reveal what it was to be the creator and cause of such natures. Negative analogy could bring the mind closer, but any knowledge was bound to be imperfect. It was for this reason, in part, that faith played such an important role in Wyclif's theology; it was only by virtue of faith that the mind was able to be raised beyond the lowest level of knowing. There were, Wyclif suggested, different degrees of knowledge, just as there were different levels of being between pure being and existence. Knowledge of genera and species, though it did not amount to knowledge of truth, was nevertheless closer to an understanding of the divinity than a knowledge of particular natures or attributes. This hierarchical conception of thought and being was one of the most characteristically Dionysian aspects of Wyclif's philosophy. It receives its most detailed

²² '...patet quomodo intelligenda est sententia sanctorum dicentium quod natura divina non est proprie diffinibilis propter ejus inmensitatem, quia omne proprie diffinibile habet genus et differentias ipso priores causancia vel limitancia ejus esse, ut distinguitur ab aliis, ut patet septimo *Metaphisice*. Set cum haec non possunt competere deo, patet quod nec diffinicio. Ipse enim est supra et extra omne genus, et per consequens nullo genere diffinitus. Et patet quod non possumus cognoscere quid est, quia non est quid si non equivocetur in loquendo. Bene tamen cognoscimus licet imperfecte qualis est, ut puta, quod est bonus, sapiens, indivisibilis, incorruptibilis et cetera. Sed nulla nomina substantiva competunt formaliter illi nature nisi figurative intelligendo proprietatem rei que analogice reperitur in deo... Et sic patet quod facilius est cognoscere que res non est deus quam est cognoscere que res est deus.' *De Ente Primo in Communi*, Ch. 3 (Thomson, ed., *Summa de Ente*, p. 90)

formulation in the sixth tract of the *Summa de Ente, De Universalibus*, in which Wyclif lists the four different kinds of being which belong to every creature. The first and most elevated is the eternal *intelligible* being ('esse intelligibile') which every creature has in God. This kind of being, Wyclif suggests, is an 'item of divine life' ('ratio vitalis', literally 'living idea'), and is in real terms God Himself. He cites the passage from the first chapter of St John's Gospel in support of his argument: 'What was made, in him was life.' (1:3-4)²³ In the second place, creatures have being *in their universal or particular causes* ('in suis causis sive universalibus sive particularibus'). This kind of being, which in its universal aspect is closest to the divine, is explained at length. Every creature has being in its universal causes from the point of creation, leading Wyclif to Ecclesiasticus 18, in which we learn that all things were created 'together' (*simul*). Creatures likewise have being in their particular causes from the beginning of time. It is for this reason, we are told, that the saints spoke of the whole human race being the first Adam:

The first subdivision of this kind of being is being in their universal causes; it is thus that every particular creature has being in its species or its genus once that is created at the beginning of the world. And this is how to take the text of Ecclesiasticus 18, 'He that liveth for ever created all things together.'

Every creature which was at any time to be is said to be in its particular causes at the beginning of the world. In this sense the saints say that the whole human race was the first Adam. As will be explained elsewhere, there are many degrees of this kind of being, depending on the proximity or remoteness of the causes.²⁴

The third kind of being is individual existence, which begins and ends in time. This, Wyclif claims, is the only kind of being which the 'modern doctors' recognize.²⁵ The reference here is unambiguously to the nominalists, whose very identity, in the philosophical world at least, clearly rested on the rejection of the second category of being (being in respect of universal causes). For thinkers like Ockham, the distinction between essence and existence (the basis of realist theories of analogy and participation) was likewise seen as a superfluous one, so that neither the first nor the second categories could

²³ See *De Universalibus*, Ch. 7, ll. 35-8. I have departed here from the Douay-Rheims translation.

²⁴ 'Primum.. membrum illius esse est esse in suis causis universalibus, ut omnis creatura singularis habet esse in sua specie vel suo genere creato in mundi principio. Et sic intelligitur illud, Ecclesiastici 18: 'Qui vivit in aeternum creavit omnia simul'. (18:1) // In causis autem particularibus dicitur creatura quantumcumque futura esse in mundi principio. Ad quem sensum dicunt sancti omne genus hominum fuisse primum Adam. Et in tali esse sunt quotlibet gradus secundum propinquitatem et remotionem causarum, ut declarabitur alibi.' *De Universalibus*, Ch. 7, ll. 43-53.

²⁵ 'Tertio habet creatura esse existere individuum, secundum quod esse incipit et corrumpitur pro suo tempore. Et solum illud esse acceptant moderni doctores.' *De Universalibus*, Ch.. 7, ll. 54-7.

strictly be accepted.²⁶ Wyclif addresses nominalist objections in the second part of the passage, concluding that essence and existence must be seen as separate things in reality:

...even recent writers grant, with respect to the second being, that even when there are no roses in existence a rose is a flower. And similarly with other predications of genera of their species, since the genus contains the species in itself, and the species in turn contains the species in respect of its potential being in secondary causes, even though none of those individuals may have actual existence. For it is one thing to be [i.e. to have essence], and another to exist.²⁷

The distinction between 'potential being' and 'actual existence', usually referred to simply as potency and act (*potentia* and *actus*), was often mentioned alongside that of essence and existence. God, for the realists, represented Pure Act,²⁸ in the same way as He was the first Being (pure existence) on which all others depended. The doctrine of potency and act was an important element in Wyclif's (and Aquinas's) theory of participation, but also played a very significant role in determining the status of future propositions (the classic example being 'Antichrist will come', which according to Wyclif had being as a potential reality in the mind of God.) For the nominalists, potential being was meaningful only as a conceptual category. This meant that not only Wyclif's theory of participation, but also many aspects of his understanding of time and futurity (which was to have important implications for his exegetical theory²⁹) were beyond the reach of these 'less subtle' doctors.³⁰

The last mode of being mentioned by Wyclif is the *accidental* being of a substance. This kind of being, he suggests, is consequent upon the other three, since it presupposes the existence of a substance. It is also furthest removed from the essence of God, and is hence of the least concern to the true philosopher. All four modes of being played a

²⁶ In response to the question of whether essence and existence are distinct *in re*, Ockham writes, 'mihi videtur, quod non sunt talia duo, nec 'esse existere' significat aliquid distinctum a re.' *Summa Logicae*, III, ii, Ch. 27.

²⁷ 'Vero etiam recentes concedunt iuxta secundum esse quod nulla rosa existente, rosa est flos! Et ita de aliis praedicationibus generum de suis speciebus cum genus continet in se speciem et ipsa continet in se individua secundum praedictum esse potentiale in causis secundis, licet nullum illorum individuorum habeat existentiam actualem. Aliud enim est esse et aliud existere.' *De Universalibus*, Ch. 7, ll. 57-64.

²⁸ In Ch. 6 of *De Universalibus* God is described as 'Actus Purus summe beatus' (ll. 169-70).

²⁹ See the section on *ampliatio temporis* in Ch. 3 (section 2), below.

³⁰ Ockham presents the following statement in relation to potency and act: '...dividitur 'ens' in ens in potentia et in ens in actu. Quod non est intelligendum, quod aliquid, quod non est in rerum natura, sed potest esse, sit vere ens, et aliquid aliud, quod est in rerum natura, sit etiam ens.' *Summa Logicae*, I, Ch. 38. He goes on to consider propositions denoting things which might be, including 'Antichristus potest esse in ens', concluding that these, like individuals, only have real being in one sense, namely *in the event*.

significant role in Wyclif's philosophy and theology, and in particular in his hierarchical understanding of the structures of the book of nature and the Bible. An understanding of the book of nature was an important precondition to an understanding of the text of the divine author, and there are some important parallels in Wyclif's writing between his interpretation of the two. In the second chapter of *De Universalibus*, for example, the different kinds of universal nature are considered in relation to his fourfold definition of being. The resulting five-level hierarchical system of modes of knowing and modes of being, which is later mirrored in the context of scriptural being in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, is summarized in the passage below:

...one can list five types of universals, as Grosseteste explains in the seventh chapter of his commentary on the first book of the *Posterior Analytics*. The first and foremost kind is the eternal notion or exemplar in the mind of God. The second kind is the common created notion in the superior causes, like the intelligences and the heavenly spheres. The third kind of universal is the common form rooted in its individuals. This, says Grosseteste, is what Aristotle's genera and species are. Fourthly, there is the universal which is the common form in its accidents, apprehended by the lowest form of the intellect. There is a fifth kind of universal - signs and mental acts - which Grosseteste sets aside as irrelevant to his concerns.³¹

The connection between knowing and being is here made very explicit: just as universals apprehended through accidents represented the lowest form of being, so they were apprehended by the lowest form of the intellect. The progression of the mind from one level to another thus depended on a sequence of progressive denials or reinterpretations. To dwell too long on the material and accidental aspects of creation, or to confuse these for a higher order of truth, was to strand the intellect in the world of the finite and transitory. Even the beasts, as Wyclif argues at the beginning of *De Ente in Communi*, were capable of this form of knowledge, and thus had a knowledge of being in general.³² What distinguished man from the beasts was his capacity to apprehend universal natures (rather

³¹ '...est dare quinque manieres universalium, ut declarat Lincolniensis, I Posteriorum, capitulo 7. Primum et supremum genus est ratio vel idea exemplaris aeterna in Deo. Secundum genus est ratio communis creata in causis superioribus, ut intelligentiis et orbibus caelestibus. Tertium genus universalium est forma communis fundata in suis individuis. Et illa, inquit Lincolniensis, sunt genera et species de quibus loquitur Aristoteles. Quarto: forma communis in suis accidentibus, apprehensa ab intellectu infimo, est universale. Sed quintum modum universalium - pro signis vel actibus intelligendi - dimittit Lincolniensis ut sibi impertinens.' *De Universalibus*, Ch. 2, ll. 165-77.

³² Wyclif illustrates the point with the example of a dog and its master, the former knowing the latter, and hence knowing him (and being in general) to be: 'Et ita conceditur, quod sicut quaelibet bestia aliquid cognoscit distincte ita cognoscit ens esse in communi. Supposito namque pro praesenti quod bestiae componunt et dividunt et per consequens sillogizant discurrendo de particularibus et accidentalibus communibus, patet quod cognoscunt ens esse in communi, cum sequitur: canis cognoscit magistrum suum, ergo cognoscit ad minimum illum esse... Et per consequens cognoscit ens esse, et certum est, quod in communi...' *De Ente in Communi*, p.7, ll. 6-15.

than to understand things merely in terms of their accidents), and hence to form some conception of the transcendent.³³ With the particular, described by Wyclif as the first in the ascending order of being, the mind understood Being in the transcendent, the first in the descending order of being.³⁴ The apprehension of accidents, though it represented the lowest form of knowledge, led the disciplined mind to the apprehension of substances in their universal aspect, since substances and accidents were inseparable in nature. The nominalists, by confining their attention to individual and accidental being, and by denying the reality of universal natures, were effectively removing a link from the chain of being connecting man and the world to the higher forms of created being (the 'intelligences' or angels) and the uncreated essence of God. Though they possessed the faculty to conceive of universal natures (what Wyclif called the *agent intellect*), they were little better than the beasts who lacked such a faculty, as Wyclif tells us in *De Ente in Communi*:

The most general word for an animal is not synonymous with our transcendent, just as the most general word of the moderns is not synonymous. Some of [these moderns] say that all being is substance, others that all being is a substance or a quality, and [they speak] similarly of the other parsimonious divisions of today's philosophers. Such would not rather concede that the truths beyond the genus are entities than that a man is an ass.³⁵

The nominalists' position is not unlike that of the materialistic scholars traditionally scorned in Platonic-Alexandrian exegetical and mystical writings. Though the particular nature of their failings is specific to the fourteenth century, the results are very much the same: a failure to achieve a proper understanding of the truth underlying the natural symbols of the created world. Such a failure led inevitably to a blindness to the mysteries of the Bible, whose text, for realist exegetes like Wyclif and Grosseteste before him, contained the whole of the book of nature.³⁶ Much of Wyclif's anti-nominalist rhetoric, in both the philosophical and the theological *summae*, is thus conspicuously shaped by the

³³ 'intenciones universales substanciarum et rationes universalium cum actibus reflexis deficiunt brutis, et sic cognoscunt substancias in suis accidentibus, et ita conceditur quod omnis anima bruti est multiplicata quamvis corruptibilis.' *De Ente in Communi*, p. 8, ll. 11-15.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

³⁵ '...verbum communissimum bruti non est synonomum cum transcendente nostro, sicut nec verbum communissimum modernorum, quorum aliqui dicunt omne ens esse substanciam, aliqui quod omne ens est substancia vel qualitas, et sic de quotlibet divisionibus avaris hodie philosophantium. Tales autem non potius concederent veritates extra genus esse encia quam hominem esse asinum.' *De Ente in Communi*, p. 9, ll. 5-13.

³⁶ See James McEvoy, 'The Sun as *res* and *signum*: Grosseteste's Commentary on *Ecclesiasticus* Ch. 43, vv. 1-5', *Recherches de Theologie Ancienne et Medievale*, 41 (1974), pp. 38-91. McEvoy cites a passage from Grosseteste's *Hexameron* which makes precisely this point: 'Continet igitur in se haec scriptura totum quod continet natura, quia post mundi creationem non est nove speciei seu nature adieccio.' (p.51 n. 39)

language of the broader (and older) tradition of 'otherworldly' philosophy and biblical secrecy.³⁷ Dionysius' warning to the readers of his *Mystical Theology* to turn their minds away from the particulars of material existence, and to guard their own knowledge from those who dwell on such particulars, is a useful illustration of this influence. Though written many centuries earlier, it is apparently directed against precisely the same kind of theologian as the 'modern' philosopher so often targeted by Wyclif:

But see to it that none of this comes to the hearing of the uninformed, that is to say, to those caught up with the things of the world, who imagine that there is nothing beyond instances of individual being and who think that by their own intellectual resources they can have a direct knowledge of him who has made the shadows his hiding place.³⁸

2. ANALOGY AND TRINITARIAN DOCTRINE: THE ARGUMENT OF *DE TRINITATE*

Among the earliest applications of the principles of analogy in Wyclif's writings is to the concept of the Trinity, a concept, he claims, which finds its analogue in the nature of universals. This idea, which is among the most pervasive and consistent of any in Wyclif's writings, formed the bedrock of his defence of analogical interpretation of the Scriptures and the liturgy. It also provided Wyclif with the opportunity to paint the nominalists in blacker colours still, by associating them implicitly with recognized christological heresies. The topic is introduced in the fourth chapter of *De Ente Primo in Communi*, in which he chastises philosophers who abuse the concept of analogy to refute his own arguments about the nature of God. The counter-arguments he presents set the parameters for his later and more detailed discussions of the subject in *De Universalibus* and *De Trinitate*. Philosophers, he suggests, mistake the nature of the Trinity by tracing a parallel too closely between created and the uncreated being. They suggest that God is Himself a universal, and the three divine persons its singulars, implicitly denying the unity of the prime being. They also misunderstand the nature of the Incarnation, arguing that God, in becoming man, would become subject to the laws of genera and species, which is impossible. Neither of these arguments are tenable, Wyclif argues, since God is a unity.

³⁷ I have borrowed this very apt term from A. O. Lovejoy's classic study of realist philosophy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study in the History of an Idea* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), p.26.

³⁸ 'Τούτων δε ὄρα, ὅπως μηδείς τῶν ἀμυήτων ἐπακούσῃ· τούτους δέ φημι τοὺς ἐν τοῖς οὐδαίνοις ἐνισχημένους, καὶ οὐδέν ὑπὲρ τὰ ὄντα ὑπερουσίως εἶναι φαναταζομένους, ἀλλ' οἱ οὐκ οἰομένους εἶδέναι τῆ καθ' αὐτοὺς γνώσει τὸν θέμενον «σκοτός ἀποκρυφὴν αὐτοῦ».' *De Mystica Theologica*, 1.2 (*Corpus Dionysiacum*, vol. 2, ed. Günter Heil and Adolf Ritter (New York, 1991); English translation by Colum Luibheid, Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1987)).

The persons of the Trinity share the same substance; they are not the subjective parts of a more general category 'divinity'. Similarly, God does not inherit human nature as a consequence of the Incarnation. Rather, a single person, Christ, has two natures, human and divine. Only the former is subject to the rules of genus and species.³⁹ None of these arguments is apparently being directed against nominalist scholars, though the view that the three divine persons are singulars has close parallels with the tritheistic heresy begun in the twelfth century by Roscelin. Though Wyclif nowhere mentions Roscelin, elsewhere he does speak disparagingly of tritheistic theories of the nature of the Trinity.

Some similar misconceptions are considered in *De Universalibus*. Once again, the dangers of misunderstanding the function of analogy are carefully explained, with detailed reference to Trinitarian teaching. Particular emphasis is placed on the negative aspect of the analogical method, this time with an explicit gesture towards Dionysius. We are warned of the dangers of tracing parallels too closely between created and uncreated natures. Only with a proper understanding of universals, Wyclif suggests, can we avoid mistaken conclusions about the nature of their analogy with the Trinity:

...if it is said that postulating universals misleads on the topic of the Trinity, and takes away the merit of faith, we must reply by denying both.

Thus, first of all, we must take note of the rule of Blessed Augustine, in *Against Simplicianus*, about tropic and symbolic utterances, which guide us to whatever speculative knowledge we can have of God. The gist of his rule is that in such cases we are to take whatever there is in the analogue of perfection and propriety – as Blessed Denys says in the *Divine Names* – and refrain from attributing to God whatever there is of imperfection and impropriety. And Augustine gives as an example those figurative locutions which are called anthropomorphisms.

Thus, in *On the Trinity*, VII, he guards against the error of any heretic ignorant of the truth about universals, who might think that there was an entire parallel between the divine nature and the nature of universals so that the divine nature was a genus or species. Such a person would fall into errors unless assisted by the truth about universals.⁴⁰

³⁹ See *De Ente Primo in Communi*, pp. 91-5.

⁴⁰ 'Et, si dicatur quod positio universalium abducit a materia de Trinitate et tollit meritum Fidei, dicitur negando utrumque. // Unde, pro primo notanda est regula Beati Augustini, *Conta Simplicianum*, de locutionibus tropicis et symbolicis quibus manducantur ad Deum utcumque speculariter cognoscendum. Et est sententia regulae ista quod in talibus capiendum est illud quod perfectionis et convenientiae est in suo analogo - ad modum loquendi Beati Dionysii in *De Divinis Nominibus* - et dimittendum est illud quod est imperfectionis vel disconvenientiae Deo tribuere. Et ponit Augustinus exemplum de figurativis locutionibus figura quae 'antropospatos' dicitur. // Ideo, *VII Trinitate*, satis provide evacuat errores haeretici vel ignorantis veritates universalium, qui, credendo quod esset omnimoda convenientia inter naturam divinam et naturam universalem - et sic natura divina esset genus vel species - incideret, sine occasione data a veritate universalium, in errores.' *De Universalibus*, Ch. 5, ll. 158-177.

The parallel Wyclif draws between analogical interpretation of the Trinity and the analogical basis of figurative language is an important indication of the pervasiveness of this simple logical principle. It also highlights the importance of the concept of symbolism to Wyclif's understanding of the universe. The doctrine of universals, like scriptural metaphors, acted as a bridge between the known properties of the created world and the ineffable simplicity of divine nature. The process of ascent was not purely negative, however. As Wyclif goes on to explain, the process of negative contemplation of the nature of universals freed the mind to consider its positive resemblance to the nature of the Trinity:

There is however a parallel between the divine nature and a specific nature on the supposition that, for example, the species of man had only three suppositis, namely Peter, Paul and John. This is clear from three things.

First, just as the specific nature is what each one of these suppositis is, and none of them is any other, similarly the divine nature is what each of its suppositis is, and none of them is any other.

Secondly, just as there is not more than one human species, even though there are many suppositis each of which belongs to the same species, similarly there is not more than one divine nature, though there are several suppositis each of which has the same nature.

Thirdly all sophistic difficulties on the topic of universals fail in a similar manner on the topic of the Trinity, as is clear if you put the parallels side by side.⁴¹

The doctrinal and political advantages of Wyclif's defence of analogical reasoning begin to become clear in this passage. Though it is by no means clear whether nominalists in particular are being considered in the concluding remark, it is certain that such a remark would have done nothing to enhance their credibility. To deny or misunderstand the reality of universals in any way was to run the risk, if the principles of analogy were correct, of making a similar mistake in respect of the Trinity. Wyclif goes as far as to claim, in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* that an understanding of the latter was impossible without a belief in the former.⁴² The implications of these suggestions would appear to be that any philosopher who was not a committed realist was also by extension a heretic. His own philosophical beliefs, on the other hand, because necessary to the understanding of

⁴¹ 'Convenientia autem est inter naturam divinam et naturam specificam, verbi gratia, specie hominis habente, exempli gratia, tantum tria supposita, scilicet Petrum, Paulum et Iohannem, ut patet ex tribus: // Primo in hoc quod sicut natura specifica est singulum horum suppositorum et nullum illorum est reliquum, sic natura divina est singulum suorum suppositorum et nullum illorum est reliquum. // Secundo in hoc quod sicut non sunt multae species humanae, licet sint multa supposita quorum quodlibet est eadem species, sic non sunt multae naturae divinae, licet multa sint supposita quorum quodlibet est eadem natura. // Tertio in hoc quod omnes argutiae sophisticae in materia de universalibus deficiunt proportionaliter in materia de Trinitate, ut patet iuxtaponendo quascumque consimiles.' *De Universalibus*, Ch. 5, ll. 178-194.

⁴² See Ch. 5 (section 4.1), below.

orthodox Trinitarian and christological doctrine, had the benefit of divine sanction. Because the doctrine of the Trinity and the Incarnation could be defended from the Scriptures, so, he believed, could the necessity of universals.

The analogical relationship between the nature of universals and the nature of the Trinity is analysed in greatest detail in the final tract of the *Summa de Ente, De Trinitate*. The comparatively large number of references to *De Universalibus* in this work (eleven out of the twenty-seven references to earlier and later works) is perhaps the best testimony to the truly analogical nature of Wyclif's own thinking. In the first chapter, he urges upon his readers the necessity of seeking analogues to the Trinity in the created world. He begins by mentioning Augustine and other distinguished (predominantly realist) philosophers (Anselm, Dionysius, Richard and Hugh of St Victor⁴³) who claim that the human soul (in which may be found intelligence, memory, and will) is an image of the triune divine nature:

It is assumed by the blessed Augustine, the venerable Anselm, master Lincolniensis, Richard and Hugh of St Victor and other philosophers and theologians who have considered the matter, that God is proved to be triune by the image of the Trinity shining forth from the soul...⁴⁴

Knowledge arrived at analogically is clearly a form of knowledge which attains to certainty in Wyclif's eyes. Earlier in the same chapter, he explains how natural knowledge and faith must work together to arrive at the desired proof. This insistence on the necessity of faith is a key element in the theory of knowledge as it is presented in both the philosophical and the theological writings, whether that knowledge be natural knowledge or knowledge arrived at from a reading of the Scriptures. Wyclif's perception of harmony in the workings of reason and faith was traditionally understood as proof of his place among the *antiqui*. The philosophy of the *moderni*, by contrast, and of William of Ockham in particular, was portrayed by mainstream intellectual historians as a threat to this ancient synthesis. Though recent accounts have insisted on a less absolute divide between the two, it remains the case that the relationship between reason and faith for the nominalists was less straightforward than it had been for Augustinian thinkers like Wyclif. Though reason could still be appealed to as proof of matters of faith (such as the existence of God), its scope was

⁴³ Richard and Hugh studied at the school of St Victor in Paris, which was founded by the realist William of Champeaux (1070-1121), a student of St Anselm. Both discussed the nature of the Trinity (and its analogy with the mind/soul) at length, Richard in *De Sacramentis Christianae Fidei*, and Hugh in his six-volume treatise on the subject (*De Trinitate*). See Haren, *Medieval Thought*, pp. 111-14. See also Smalley, *The Study of the Bible*, pp. 83-97, on the origins and early development of the Victorine school.

⁴⁴ 'Assumptum patet de beato Augustino, venerabili Anselmo, domino Lincolniensi, Ricardo et Hugone de Sancto Victore et multis aliis philosophis et theologis qui putaverunt se probare deum esse trinum per imaginem trinitatis relucemem in anima...' *De Trinitate*, ed. Allen du Pont Breck (Colorado: University of Colorado Press, 1962), p. 2.

certainly narrower. The discourses of logic and exegesis, moreover, had become relatively isolated from one another in the age of Ockham, leaving less room for rational analysis of questions of belief.⁴⁵ Wyclif's appeal to faith in his discussions of analogical hermeneutics in *De Trinitate* and elsewhere, therefore, has tended to highlight further the inconsistencies of realist and nominalist theories of knowledge.

Wyclif lists numerous other natural analogues to the Trinity, some of which, he suggests, are better able to lead the mind to knowledge than others.⁴⁶ In the ninth chapter of *De Trinitate*, in a discussion of the properties of analogical terms applied to God, he broaches the issue of the relationship between terms and things. There is a danger amongst modern thinkers, he argues, of taking properties of terms as a point of departure, rather than the things which they signify, which are prior in nature. Such thinkers would certainly have included the nominalists, for whom terms, and not things, were considered to be the primary objects of knowledge. Wyclif goes on to mention the heretical doctrine of Sabellianism, according to which the three persons of the Trinity were seen to be only notionally distinct. Sabellianism had its origins in the early Christian church, but has been associated with the twelfth-century nominalist thinkers Roscelin and Abelard.⁴⁷ Though neither of the latter are mentioned, there is clearly an attempt being made to associate their fourteenth-century counterparts with the same idea. Both, as we learn in the following passage, seek to privilege the sign itself above the reality which it signifies, confusing the order of signification:

In truth, [a man] does not understand diversity of signification unless he first has an understanding of the thing. For this reason he should first learn to believe in the sense imposed upon the sign before he begins to distinguish the signification of the terms. Those disregarding that order impose upon catholics [the fact] that they [themselves] only baptize terms using a diversity of names in that matter, while nevertheless there is no diversity in the things signified, as the Sabellians have said, positing a Trinity solely in relation to signs.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ On the isolation of exegesis from logical analysis, see Courtenay, *Schools and Scholars*, pp. 368-369.

⁴⁶ See esp. p. 68ff.

⁴⁷ See especially Normore, 'Tradition of Medieval Nominalism', p. 204. Normore highlights the fact that both Roscelin and Abelard were accused of Sabellianism in their own time. For a discussion of Roscelin's Trinitarian teaching and its relation to his philosophical nominalism, see Constant C. Mews, 'Nominalism and Theology before Abelard: New Light on Roscelin of Compiègne', *Vivarium* 30, 1 (1992), 4-33 (esp. pp. 6-12).

⁴⁸ 'Sed revera non intelliget illam diversitatem significacionis nisi primarie habuerit noticiam rei. Ideo oportet addiscentem primo credere sensum suprapositum antequam concipiat distincionem significaciones terminorum. Unde deficientes in isto ordine imponunt catholicis, quod solum baptizant terminos utentes nominibus in illa materia pro diversis, dum tamen non sit diversitas in signatis sicut dixerunt Sabelliani, ponentes trinitatem solum per relacionem ad signa.' *De Trinitate*, p. 100, ll. 5-12.

The connection between the Sabellian heresy and nominalism is made clearer as Wyclif goes on to discuss the nature of the identity between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The view of the Sabellians, he suggests, is the most dangerous of all the heresies concerning the Trinity, given the ideas of the moderns, who deny truths and universals.⁴⁹

Wyclif's attempt to link Sabellianism with nominalism (or at least, with anti-universalism) is one of the numerous examples of his reliance upon older forms of anti-heretical rhetoric to further his modern philosophical – and ultimately political – cause. It is made the more interesting by Calvin Normore's recent attempt to redefine early medieval nominalism in terms which relate more closely to the problem of the Trinity than they do to the problem of universals with which it is traditionally associated.⁵⁰ Whether or not Wyclif's claims had any legitimacy within the context of his nominalist contemporaries must remain open to question. There would certainly be no possibility of bringing charges of Sabellianism against Ockham, whose views on the three persons of the Trinity appear to have been quite orthodox (he maintained, that is, that the three, whilst representing a single essence, were *really* distinct). He would nevertheless have rejected Wyclif's suggestion that there could be any form of *analogy* (and hence, of ontological continuity) between the soul and the divine essence. The basis of such a rejection will be considered in detail in section 4, below.⁵¹ Before presenting the main divisions between Ockham and Wyclif in respect of analogy, however, we must explore more fully the nature of the analogical terms themselves. This will be the purpose of the following section, in which the distinction between 'proper' and metaphorical analogy will be introduced. This distinction, as we shall see, had a fundamental bearing on the question – so important to Wyclif – of the relationship between language (or signs) and reality.

3. 'PROPER' AND METAPHORICAL ANALOGY

As a linguistic, as well as a metaphysical phenomenon, analogy brought with it some familiar linguistic problems. Among the most important of these was the question of whether the terms 'literal' and 'metaphorical' could be applied to analogical expressions,

⁴⁹ See *De Trinitate*, p. 100, ll. 18-22.

⁵⁰ 'Tradition of Medieval Nominalism', p. 204.

⁵¹ See esp. n. 72, below.

and if so, in what contexts. The answer to this question, for Wyclif, was certainly ‘yes’, an answer which was to have important consequences both for his understanding of the scriptural senses and his attitude towards the nominalists. In the ninth chapter of *De Trinitate*, he lists the principal ways in which terms can denote a comparison or relationship between God and creatures:

Some [terms are consistent with God] necessarily and absolutely, such as ‘omnipotent’, ‘omniscient’, etc; some eternally but contingently, such as ‘knowing’, ‘pitying’, ‘willing’, ‘ordering’, ‘caring’; and some contingently in time, such as ‘causing’, ‘creating’ or ‘governing Lord.’ And it is certain that these terms describe God primarily and directly, since otherwise they would not be predicated truly of God. They describe nothing other than God, and therefore they describe Him precisely.⁵²

Such terms are not, Wyclif claims, like many analogical expressions, applicable to God metaphorically, but are literally (‘most properly’) true. If they were metaphorical, then we would have to concede, counter-intuitively, that they were not more properly attributes of God than wrath, anger, and jealousy:

It is not valid to say that such locutions are figurative, as when grammarians suggest anthropomorphism, a figure of speech, when a human attribute such as austerity, severity, regret, anger, rage, etc. is assigned to God. For if all things which are not *per se* consistent with God are thus attributed figuratively to Him, then it should no more be conceded that God knows, wills, ordains, causes, etc. something outside himself than it is conceded that He rages or is angry. The consequence is impossible, since [God] knows, wills, causes and ordains things outside Himself most properly, but He does not properly become angry, because then He would properly be mad; or rather, if these things were properly and *de virtute sermonis* to be attributed to God, there is no reason why in the same way any positive denomination of a creature should not properly and *de virtute sermonis* be attributed to God.⁵³

⁵² ‘...quedam [nomines conveniuntur deo] necessario et absolute ut omnipotens, omniintelligens et cetera; quedam vero eternaliter contingenter, ut omnem creaturam noscens, misericors, omnem creaturam volens, ordinans, diligens; quedam ex tempore contingenter, ut dominus, causans, creans, gubernans, etc. De omnibus ergo terminis certum est quod dicunt deum directe et primarie, quia aliter non vere predicarentur de deo, et nihil aliud a deo dicunt, ergo precise illum dicunt.’ *De Trinitate*, pp. 97-8. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 118.

⁵³ ‘Nec valet dicere quod huiusmodi locuciones sunt figurative ut grammatici ponunt antropospatos figuram locucionis quando humana passio attribuitur deo ut austeritas, severitas, penitudo, irasci, furere, et similia. Si enim omnia que non per se competunt deo sunt sic figurative sibi attributa, tunc non magis de virtute sermonis concedendum esset deum scire, velle, ordinare, causare, et cetera, rem adextra quam conceditur ipsum furere vel irasci. Cosequens impossibile cum propriissime scit, vult, vel causat et ordinat res adextra sed non proprie furit, quia tunc proprie esset furibundus, ymo si proprie et de virtute sermonis talia essent deo tribuenda, non est ratio quin per idem quelibet denominacio positiva creature esset deo proprie, et de virtute sermonis tribuenda.’ *De Trinitate*, p. 98.

The criterion Wyclif employs for determining whether a given linguistic expression is metaphorical or literal is not a rigid one. What is clear, however, is that the distinction is applied to analogical usages, ruling out the possibility that metaphor is being conceived as a category distinct from analogy. There is no correspondence, either, between literal and metaphorical and the division Wyclif draws between intrinsic and extrinsic attributes of God in *De Intellectione Dei*. Though all intrinsic attributes ('immensity', 'eternity', 'omnipotence', 'omniscience', etc.) are literally predicated, the examples of extrinsic attributes are also among those elsewhere identified as literal: 'perfection', 'goodness', 'knowledge', 'power', 'intelligence', 'will', 'ordination'.⁵⁴ Metaphorical attributes such as 'severity', 'anger', 'regret' and 'rage' would presumably also be classified as extrinsic.

Perhaps the most important clue to the meaning of metaphor and figuration is provided in the tenth chapter of *De Trinitate*. Following a general discussion of the different modes of predication (univocal, equivocal, analogical), Wyclif claims that no term which signifies primarily and principally the being of the ten primary genera (namely the categories) can be predicated of God unless it is predicated figuratively.⁵⁵ He goes on to describe the nature of literal predication:

Other terms signifying primarily analogues which encompass every genus are predicated without figuration, such as 'essence', 'goodness', 'unity', etc. Thus figuration ends in such locutions, so that that which is signified of perfection is abstracted by intellection and attributed to God; but that which is signified of imperfection by the sign is cast aside and distanced from God. And thus whenever we use this method, we use a figure either with the name 'substance', or with the name 'justice', 'goodness', 'strength', 'form' and similar kinds. For all such terms can principally signify something which cannot be consistent with God. They can, however, by frequency of use, principally signify God, as can the terms 'to know', 'to understand', 'to will', 'justice', 'power' and similar terms signifying perfection in creatures. If terms work in the first way, then we are using a figure in abstracting perfection simply; if they work in the second, then there is no use of figures.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ *De Intellectione Dei*, Ch. 1 (*De Ente*, ed. M. H. Dzwiecki (London: WS, 1909), pp. 48-9).

⁵⁵ 'Ulterius quo ad locuciones figurativas scripture, videtur mihi quod quicumque terminus primo et principaliter significat ens decem primorum generum non predicatur nisi forte figurative de deo.' *De Trinitate*, p. 120

⁵⁶ 'Alii autem termini significantes primarie analogia que circumveniunt omne genus praedicantur sine figura tali ut essentia, bonitas, unitas, etc. Ad hoc desinit figura in talibus locucionibus ut abstrahatur apud intellectionem illud quod est perfectionis simpliciter significatum per tale signum et attribuatur deo; illud vero signatum signi quod est imperfectionis abiciatur et removeatur a deo. Et sic quandocumque utimur ista arte utimur figura sive cum hoc nomine substantia vel cum hoc nomine iusticia, bonitas, virtus, forma, cum quibuscumque similibus. Omnes enim tales termini possunt principaliter significare quod non potest deo competere; et possunt ex frequentia usus principaliter significare deum, et communiter etiam isti termini

The three examples of terms which are not used figuratively are recognizable as members of the class of *transcendentals*. Such terms were held to be unique by scholastic philosophers in that their *signata* were not confined to one category or another (hence Wyclif's suggestion that they 'encompass every genus').⁵⁷ To use such a term was therefore a partial solution to the problem of the divine nature being beyond the ten categories. Because such terms were transcendent, they were by their very nature more closely consistent with God, whose essence represented the unifying principle to which all of the ten categories could ultimately be reduced.⁵⁸ The terms were, nevertheless, not restricted in their predication to God alone, as the passage from *De Trinitate* makes clear. As with all terms predicated of God, they had to be carefully divested of their human associations. At the end of the passage, Wyclif seems to be suggesting that such terms, together with any of the terms signifying perfection in creatures ('knowing', 'understanding', 'willing', 'justice', 'power'), have the potential to signify God without figuration. There is an apparent distinction, therefore, between the *signata* of such terms and the ways in which they signify (or are understood). A similar distinction is made by Thomas Aquinas, who, in his *responsio* to the question of whether we can say anything literally about God, distinguishes between signified perfections and the way in which their signs signify (*modus significandi*):

We have to consider two things... in the words we use to attribute perfections to God, firstly the perfections themselves that are signified - goodness, life and the like - and secondly the way in which they are signified. So far as the perfections signified are concerned the words are used literally of God, and in fact more appropriately than they are used of creatures, for these perfections belong primarily to God and only secondarily to others. But so far as the way of signifying these perfections is concerned the words are used inappropriately, for they have a way of signifying that is appropriate to creatures.⁵⁹

scire, intelligere, velle, ista iustitia, potentia et similes termini significantes perfeccionem in creaturis. Si primo modo faciunt tunc abstrahendo perfeccionem simpliciter utimur figura, si secundo modo faciunt, tunc non est hoc usus figurarum.' *De Trinitate*, pp. 120-1.

⁵⁷ Wyclif lists the three most common examples of transcendentals, to which many others were often added. On the nature of transcendental terms see Ralph McInerny, *A History of Western Philosophy: Philosophy from St Augustine to Ockham*, vol. 2 in the series (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970), pp. 356-7.

⁵⁸ 'tota multitudo predicamentorum reducibilis est ad Deum. Nam omnia novem predicamenta accidentium reducuntur ad catenam substancie ut suum principium, et totum genus substancie oportet causari a quadam natura extra ipsum, ut patet ex dictis; ergo conclusio.' *De Ente Praedicamentali*, p. 14, ll.16-20. Cf. p. 3, l. 26ff., in which Wyclif argues that God is the 'simple prime of each genus'.

⁵⁹ 'In nominibus igitur quae Deo attribuimus, est duo considerare, scilicet perfectiones ipsas significatas, ut bonitatem, vitam, et huiusmodi, et modum significandi. Quantum igitur ad id quod significant huiusmodi nomina, proprie competunt Deo, et magis proprie quam ipsis creaturis, et per prius dicuntur de eo. Quantum vero ad modum significandi, non proprie dicuntur de Deo; habent enim modum significandi qui creaturis

The problems inherent in any attempt to see beyond the ten categories of being are never adequately resolved by Wyclif, who, like Dionysius and Aquinas before him, returns to them with a lingering scepticism. In the tenth chapter of *De Trinitate*, he goes as far as to claim that no term can ever signify God primarily, since every common name signifies many things beyond its primary significate, and every individual name signifies individuating properties alongside the primary thing signified. Only by a process of abstraction – and hence not in primary or ‘pure’ terms – is it possible for creatures to arrive at a knowledge of God.⁶⁰ Transcendental terms, which minimalize any connotation of categorical properties, are a close approximation to primary signification, but are not perfect.

Transcendentals are not the only terms which resist identification with a single category. In the first chapter of *De Ente Praedicamentali*, Wyclif considers the nature of categorical (‘predicamental’) being in general, and lists a number of entities which cannot be defined in categorical terms. The first of these are God and the transcendentals (unity and an indivisible point⁶¹ are given as examples of the latter), which exist, he suggests, beyond the ten categories. The second are privations (‘uncaused’, ‘without a beginning’, etc.), which are not formally any of the ten categories, though they do, Wyclif concedes, have accidental being in substances. The third are what are termed ‘accidental aggregates’ (‘aggregata per accidens’), of which no examples are given (though which must be assumed to be complexes of accidental properties, considered together). The fourth represent the familiar class of negations, things past, things to come, and things which exist potentially. These, it is suggested, can be said to belong to a subject (and hence to be accidents) according to intelligible being (‘esse intelligibile’), but not according to existential being (‘esse existere’).⁶² In *De Trinitate*, privations alone are listed alongside transcendentals as

competit.’ *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 13, art 3.

⁶⁰ ‘...videtur mihi probabile pro nunc quod non sit nobis possibile habere aliquod nomen primarie significans deum, quia omne nomen commune appellat multa et ita non solum significat seipsum et significatum primo sed et communia et inferiora contenta sub communi, et quodlibet nomen singulare significat proprietates individuantes et seipsum cum re principaliter significata, ymo cum non contingit nos cognoscere deum hic nisi abstractivae, et per nullam noticiam nostram abstractivam potest pure cognosci.’ *De Trinitate*, p. 115

⁶¹ Wyclif elsewhere excludes the indivisible point from the class of transcendentals. Cf. *De Ente in Communi*, p. 88

⁶² ‘...patet quod restringendo ens predicamentale ad illud, quod per se est in aliquo decem praedicamentorum, sunt quotlibet encia, quorum nullum est formaliter ens predicamentale, ut patet de Deo, unitate et puncto, cum aliis principiis extra genus. Secundo patet idem de quotlibet privacionibus, que, quamvis non sint aliquod 10 generum formaliter, tamen omnia sunt accidentia substancie, cui nata est forma in esse, cuius est privacio. Tercio patet idem de aggregatis per accidens, de multitudinibus et multis similibus, quae oportet omnem loquentem ponere, ut patet tam de artificialibus quam naturalibus. Quarto patet idem de pretericionibus, futuricionibus, potenciis et negacionibus, que, quamvis dicerentur accidentia vel posteriora ipsis subiectis secundum esse intelligibile, tamen non possunt dici accidere alicui substancie secundum esse existere.’ *De*

terms adequate to describe God primarily (and hence most literally). Other simple terms, including the name 'God' and even the Tetragrammaton, Wyclif claims, fall short in their attempt to signify the divine nature primarily. Like more obviously figurative expressions ('rock', 'lamb', 'lion', etc.), these can signify God only secondarily, and by a process of careful negation and abstraction:⁶³

Elsewhere I have said that the term 'God' signifies God primarily, but it seems to me now that it is probably possible to say that it does not primarily signify uncreated nature or being... Any terms which connote simple things in signifying God... and terms such as 'first of beings', 'best of beings', etc., do not signify Him primarily. Indeed, if any [terms] primarily signify, the most likely are expressions composed out of transcendental and privative terms, such as the following: 'being without cause', 'being without a better', etc. For God is analogically and not purely univocally a being, but is nevertheless most properly a being, as it appears from Exodus III, 14. Other things, by attribution to Him, are entities. For this reason it seems that the term tetragrammaton is not maximally consistent with God.⁶⁴

This is an extreme view, though it does not seem significantly to diminish the rôle of metaphorical analogy as a theological tool. This form of analogy, after all, was indispensable for an understanding of scriptural language, so often shrouded in earthly images. In the eleventh chapter of *De Trinitate*, Wyclif presents a defence of metaphorical analogy which appears to bring it closer to its literal counterpart:

I do not see why any positive denomination cannot be figuratively consistent with God. Hence God is called 'mighty' and 'jealous' in Exodus 20:5, and the same is true of many other names which are metaphorically consistent with God, as is clear from consideration of the Scriptures. We should, nevertheless, understand a term in one way when its primary significate is consistent with

Ente Praedicamentali, p. 5, ll. 1-16.

⁶³ *De Trinitate*, p. 115, l. 17ff.

⁶⁴ 'Ulterius dico quod iste terminus deus significat primarie deum, et videtur mihi pro nunc probabiliter dici posse quod non primo significat naturam vel ens increatum... Termini... quicumque simplices connotant in significando deum et termini tales, primum encium, optimum encium, etc., non significant primarie ipsum, ymmo si aliqui primarie sic significant potissime sunt termini compositi ex transcendente, et termini privatiui ut sunt tales termini, ens incausatum, ens carens meliori, etc. Deus enim analogice et non pure univoce est ens, propriissime tamen est ens, ut patet Exodi III, 14 et quaecumque alia per attributionem ad ipsum sunt encia. Ideo videtur mihi quod iste terminus tetragrammaton non esset deo maxime conveniens.' *De Trinitate*, pp. 115-16. Earlier in the same chapter, Wyclif makes a similar point: no term can primarily and precisely (i.e. without further connotations) signify God, since any term such as 'being' or 'good', by virtue of its generality, signifies more than God, and the terms 'God' and the Tetragrammaton connote things consistent with God in a posterior sense. (*De Trinitate*, p. 109, l. 15ff.)

God analogically, and in another when its primary significate cannot be consistent with God, but there are analogous properties found in such a sign, as in a lion there is regal and invincible dominion over all the other beasts. That analogue is therefore antonomastically consistent with God. Therefore God is called 'lion' in Scripture, and it is clear what is figurative in the expression and what is not.⁶⁵

The two modes of understanding highlighted here have their origins in Aquinas, who in the *Summa Theologiae* distinguishes very clearly between analogates signified literally, and those arrived at metaphorically.⁶⁶ The distinction is fundamentally a linguistic, rather than a metaphysical one, applying to modes of signification rather than to the analogates themselves. To this extent, as Paul Ricoeur has argued, metaphor and analogy can be regarded as opposing, rather than as complementary systems in Thomistic philosophy, the one being proper to poetry and the other to theology.⁶⁷ The effects of this opposition are perceptible throughout Wyclif's philosophical and exegetical writings, though are more obvious in the former than in the latter. Whether literal or metaphorical, all Scriptural uses of analogy were, of course, being used in accordance with divine intention (ultimately). Wyclif is here apparently attempting to reconcile the two on another level by demonstrating the rationale behind such divinely-sanctioned metaphors. This is a significant point to note, since there was no place in nominalist logic for metaphors of this kind. Such metaphors existed, the nominalists could hardly deny, but were of no use in bringing the mind closer to God. The difference between univocal and analogical theories of meaning, therefore, was also a difference between a mode of understanding which tolerated metaphor and one which did not. The consequences for their understanding of the Scriptures (or rather, Wyclif's interpretation of their understanding of the Scriptures) were profound, as will become clear from what follows.

⁶⁵ 'Nec video quare non quelibet denominacio positiva posset deo figurative competere, unde deus vocatur fortis, zelotes, Exod. XX,5, et sic de multis nominibus que translative deo conveniunt, ut patet respicienti scripturam. Aliter tamen oportet nos intelligere terminum quando primarie significatum eius competit deo analogice et aliter quando primarium significatum non potest deo competere sed proprietas analogica reperta in tali signato ut in leone est regale et invincible dominium super alias bestias. Illud ergo analogum antonomastice competit deo. Ideo deus vocatur leo in scriptura, et patet que locutio est figurativa et que non.' *De Trinitate*, pp. 124-5.

⁶⁶ *Summa Theologiae* 1a. 13, 3. See McInerny, *Logic of Analogy*, p. 146.

⁶⁷ *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*, tr. Robert Czerny (London: Routledge, 1977), pp. 272-80.

4. 'SED CONTRA ILLUD SIC': NOMINALIST OBJECTIONS TO ANALOGICAL INTERPRETATION

The nominalists, as we have seen, were the automatic victims of the carefully drawn analogy between the nature of universals and the nature of the Trinity. But who were the philosophers Wyclif attacked for misunderstanding the nature of analogy itself? It is less easy to assume that these were predominantly nominalists, particularly given the very general terms in which Wyclif describes them. It would be tempting to suggest that they need not have been nominalists at all, nor even representatives of a specific school of thought. It did not take a nominalist, after all, to misconstrue or deny the theory of analogy.

Some of the misguided thinkers mentioned by Wyclif, such as those who drew an exact parallel between universals and the Trinity, are no less likely to have been over-zealous realists than stumbling nominalists. What, then, is to be gained from assuming that it was, in a good number of cases, the nominalists Wyclif had in mind, and how is their approach, as Wyclif presents it, to be seen as distinctively 'nominalistic'?

First, we should be aware that for Ockham and the nominalists, the principles of analogy were simply untenable. As well as conferring a false harmony on elements of the created order, they were seen to dissolve the absolute and necessary divide between the natural and divine realms. Accordingly, nothing could be characterized as 'analogous' in nominalist philosophy, even in a purely logical sense. To suggest that terms such as 'being' were applied to God and man in an equivocal sense, however, was felt to be equally unsatisfactory, since human and divine being were clearly understood in terms of a common concept. The terms were therefore, they claimed, being used *univocally*, but not in a way which implied any real identity or continuity between referents.⁶⁸ Ockham accordingly characterizes such terms as univocal in the third degree. Second degree univocity implied identity on a generic level, as when diverse species of animal were designated by a common name. This form of univocity was similar to the univocity of the realists, except that for the latter, of course, the generic referent was a real, rather than merely a conceptual category. Terms which were univocal in the first degree designated substances or accidents which were the same essentially, and hence implied the closest correspondence between referents. The main differences between nominalist and realist views are summarized diagrammatically below:

⁶⁸ The assumption that 'being' was predicated univocally of God and creatures was not peculiar to Ockham and his followers. Like a number of Ockham's ideas, it originated with Scotus, and was adopted by Scotists throughout the fourteenth century. See Stephen D. Dumont, 'The Univocity of the Concept of Being in the Fourteenth Century: John Duns Scotus and William of Alnwick', *Mediaeval Studies*, 49 (1987), 1-75. See also Timotheus Barth, 'De Argumentis et Univocationis Entis Natura apud Joannem Duns Scotum', *Collectanea Franciscana*, 14 (1944), 5-56.

Wyclif		Ockham	Gloss
Univocity	→	Univocity ₁ Univocity ₂	essential likeness generic likeness: 'animal' as applied to all species
[no counterpart]	→	Univocity ₃	conceptual likeness
Analogy	→	[no counterpart]	proportional likeness between things
Equivocity	→	Equivocity	single term applied to different concepts (nominalism) or things (realism)

Modes of Predication in Ockham and Wyclif

In the absence of analogy, the concept of participation was simply redundant. The unity and plenitude represented by the divine was simply of a different order from the generic and accidental properties of created beings. To describe God as anything at all was therefore meaningless unless the terms were understood to be univocal on a conceptual level only:

The first and second univocation the saints deny of God, the first because nothing essential in God and in creatures comes under the same concept, the second because nothing accidental comes under the same concept in God and creatures. Just as the essence of God is dissimilar to that of creatures, so likewise are the wisdom of God and the goodness of God... However, the third univocation is admitted even by the saints, and both by those who hold univocation and those who deny it. Even the philosophers admitted such univocation in God...⁶⁹

The difficulty with this idea would appear to be that no term can be more applicable to God than any other, making all predication pointless. Ockham solves the problem by arguing that, though all created beings are equally dissimilar to their creator, nevertheless certain beings, by a process of abstraction, can lead the mind towards cognition of the divine:

...to abstract from the imperfection in the wisdom of the creature is nothing else than to abstract from an imperfect creature a concept which does not refer more to creatures than to what is not a creature, and then the result is attributable to God by way of predication... For if such a concept could not be abstracted from

⁶⁹ 'Primam univocationem et secundam negant Sancti a Deo. Primam, quia nihil accidentale est eiusdem rationis; secundam, quia nihil accidentale est eiusdem rationis in Deo et creatura. Sicut enim essentia Dei est dissimilis essentiae creaturae, ita sapientia Dei et bonitas sua... Tertiam univocationem ponunt etiam Sancti et tenentes univocationem et negantes eam, et etiam posuerunt talem in Deo.' William of Ockham, *Reportatio*, III, q. viii (Boehner, ed. and trans., *Philosophical Writings*, pp. 107-8).

a creature, then in this life we could not arrive at a cognition of God's wisdom - e.g. that God is wisdom - through the wisdom of a creature any more than, through the cognition of a stone, we obtain a cognition that God is a stone... Therefore, notwithstanding the fact that the distinction between the wisdom of a creature and the wisdom of God is as great as the distinction between God and a stone, and though in neither case do we have things of the same kind, nevertheless from created wisdom we can get by abstraction a concept common [to God and creature], but not from a stone.⁷⁰

This brief account of the nominalists' alternative to analogy does not amount to a proof that the erroneous claims and propositions cited by Wyclif were intended as parodies of nominalist arguments. It does, however, have some important implications for our understanding of those claims. Since, for example, the nominalist theory of univocity depended on a process of abstraction beyond specifically human (beyond the so-called 'intrinsic modes' of being proper to a given concept),⁷¹ it ruled out a whole series of propositions which equated an aspect of creation with God symbolically.⁷² Within the Ockhamist scheme, therefore, there was no place for a metaphorical understanding of the universe of the kind Augustine, Dionysius and Wyclif were suggesting. Any proposition which drew an analogy between God and a creature had to be read as a mistaken application of the principles of second degree univocity, or as a case of equivocity. Propositions of the latter kind, of course, were as good as meaningless, and could even be construed as

⁷⁰ '...abstrahere imperfectionem a sapientia creaturae non est nisi abstrahere conceptum sapientiae a creatura imperfecta, qui non plus respicit creaturam quam non creaturam, et tunc illud quod resultat attribuendum est Deo per praedicationem... Nisi enim posset talis abstrahi a creatura, modo non plus per sapientiam creaturae deveniretur in cognitionem sapientiae divinae, puta quod Deus sit sapientia, quam per cognitionem lapidis devenitur quod Deus sit lapis... Unde non obstante quod tanta sit distinctio inter sapientiam creaturae et sapientiam Dei sicut inter Deum et lapidem nec sunt plus eiusdem rationis ex parte una quam alia, tamen a sapientia creaturae potest abstrahi conceptus communis, a lapide non.' *Reportatio*, III, q. viii (*Philosophical Writings*, p. 112).

⁷¹ The *intrinsic* modes of being proper to a concept were any of those modes which qualified it in some way without altering its nature in a quidditative sense. Human wisdom and divine wisdom, for example, entailed different modes of being, but were not understood to impart any generic or quidditative difference to wisdom *in itself*. To arrive at a concept common to the two required that they be considered according to their *extrinsic* modes, beyond any of the potential differences or peculiarities implied by the intrinsic modes of being. It was impossible, however, to consider substances such as stones in these terms, whose intrinsic modes were inseparable from their fundamental definitions. Hence Ockham's remark that it would be impossible to abstract a concept common to God and creature from a stone. See the discussion in Matthew C. Menges, *The Concept of Univocity Regarding the Predication of God and Creature according to William Ockham* (St Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1952), pp. 81-111.

⁷² An important exception is the proposition which likens the Trinity to the three aspects of the soul. Ockham rejected the popular argument about the soul being an image of the Trinity on the basis that the distinction between intelligence, memory and will was merely a distinction between accidents (rather than aspects of a single essence). It was, nevertheless, possible to assign a concept univocally to the divine and human natures in respect of each of the three. Unlike the argument based on analogy, this presupposed no real continuity between the two natures. See *Ordinatio*, bk 1, dist. 3, q. 10. *Scriptum in Librum Primum Sententiarum: Ordinatio*, ed. Stephen Brown and Gideon Gál (St Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1970), pp. 555-56.

examples of contradiction (one reason, perhaps, why Wyclif is so keen to deny the possibility of *real* contradiction).⁷³ Only literal analogies were allowable, since only these could be rewritten in terms of third degree univocity.

Any philosopher, therefore, who complained of equivocation or contradiction (as many, according to Wyclif, did) was only doing what was most consistent with nominalist logic. So, too, it would appear, were the ‘grammatical’ exegetes Wyclif chastises later in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* for refusing to see beyond the verbal sense of certain scriptural passages. Wyclif’s insistence, throughout *De Trinitate* in particular, on the need to construe theological language in analogical, rather than univocal terms, can only have been targeted only at the nominalists, since univocal predication of a single term of God and man was impossible from a realist perspective (since God and man do not share the same real essence). Conceptual univocity as the nominalists understood it was equally implausible, since any conceptual category presupposed a real one. This latter point, almost certainly directed against nominalist arguments, is made particularly clearly in the ninth chapter of *De Trinitate*, in which Wyclif considers whether it is ever appropriate to use figurative language of God. It cannot be said, he argues, that terms must always be used properly of God, much less that they can ever be used univocally of both God and creatures. This is so because ‘the sign is not univocal in any case [of language being applied to God], unless on account of univocation in the significate’ (*signum non est univocum aliquibus nisi propter univocationem in signato*), which is impossible in realist terms. Equivocity, the nominalists’ solution, is equally inappropriate, since then there would be no degree of similarity or continuity between God and creature, making all enquiry pointless.⁷⁴ This, Wyclif claims, would make all Scripture false and grammatically insoluble.⁷⁵ This latter remark is a strong indication that the nominalists are indeed likely to have been in Wyclif’s mind when he ridiculed exegetes and grammarians for rejecting metaphorical expressions.

In the light of this evidence, there is reason to suppose that the nominalists were indeed among those Wyclif was criticising for misconstruing or simply neglecting the principles of analogy. It is quite likely, too, that they were either the direct or the indirect targets of derisive remarks in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* about exegetes who refused

⁷³ Hence his logical maxim ‘in aequivocis non est contradictio’. The expression is used in various places. See Ch. 3 (section 1), in which Wyclif’s interpretation of the concept of contradiction is examined in detail. See also Ch. 5 (section 4.1), in which the principle of non-contradictory equivocation is applied explicitly to the procedures of scriptural interpretation.

⁷⁴ ‘Nec est verum, quod aliquod signandum equivoce illis conveniat, quia nihil potest aliquo modo illis esse commune, ergo non equivoce.’ *De Trinitate*, p. 99, ll. 18-20.

⁷⁵ ‘Falsa ergo foret scriptura et insalvabilis per grammaticam, ymo cum quolibet conveniunt deo et creaturis, equivoce illis conveniunt...’ *Ibid.*, ll. 20-22.

to accept the metaphorical language of the Scriptures. The application of the principles of analogy to Bible interpretation of was in many ways the natural conclusion of Wyclif's philosophical and theological project. By claiming to interpret them analogically, he was placing not only scriptural truth but also the truths of his own readings beyond the realm of doubt. The readings of the nominalists, on the other hand – if indeed they applied their logic consistently to the study of the Bible – could claim no authority beyond the literal world of particulars and the contingent truths of language. There was, that is, no *natural* truth behind any of the claims they were making. Whilst on the one hand, therefore, the advent of nominalism may have posed a serious threat to realist views of natural and biblical authority, on the other it provided thinkers like Wyclif with the best means of defending themselves.

5. FROM THE BOOK OF NATURE TO THE BOOK OF LIFE: SIX KINDS OF KNOWLEDGE

The theory of analogy, and the hierarchical conception of being on which it rested, brought into play specific presuppositions about the nature of knowledge. The goal of analogical reasoning, after all, was to bring the mind closer to an apprehension of the divine. In the final chapter of *De Ente Primo in Communi*, Wyclif presents a detailed restatement of his basic theory of knowledge. The being of God, he argues, is the first One and hence the first knowable. There is, however, as we were told in the first chapter of *De Ente in Communi*, a multiplicity of different forms of knowledge. He lists six different kinds, in a rough hierarchy, all of whose primary objects are God himself.⁷⁶ God, that is, is the 'principal known' in each case. Not all forms, nevertheless, gives an equally clear understanding of the divine nature, and it is no surprise to discover that nominalistic modes of cognition are not rated highly in this respect. Just as Wyclif sought to marginalise any truth which was not 'natural' (as we saw in the preceding section), so he paid little attention to forms of knowledge based on the experience of particulars. In either case, he effectively rendered impotent modes of enquiry which failed to privilege (or to recognise) realist metaphysical values.

Lowest in the hierarchy of knowledge is *notitia confusa*, by which things beneath the transcendent are known. From this, Wyclif argues, it is clear that the being of God is truly known before any other thing, since if anything else is known by this form of knowledge,

⁷⁶ Cf. Wyclif's discussion in the third chapter of *De Ideis* (written probably slightly later than *De Ente Primo in Communi*), in which he considers the six ways in which we may know creatures. (fo. 45rb-45va.)

God's being is also known in the same way. And since God's being, like knowledge of God's being, is the cause of all other forms of knowledge, this form of knowledge is also prior (in its effect) to all others.⁷⁷ *Notitia Confusa*, though Wyclif makes no mention of the fact here, is the same as the nominalists' 'confused' understanding of particulars. Second is *notitia distincta*, by which the *viator* knows God distinctly in this life, and which is perfected in the ultimate blessedness towards which he is directed. Real universals (though not their nominal equivalents), as Wyclif argues elsewhere, can be known distinctly. Particulars, transitory and changeable, cannot. Since the primary end of blessedness is prior in the intention of nature to the means to that end, a distinct knowledge of God is prior to all other kinds.⁷⁸ The third form of knowledge is *cognitio secundum intentiones innatas*. This, Wyclif argues, is communicable to nature insofar as nature intends or points towards ('appetit', literally 'craves') it. God is the first known in this form of knowing, too, since He is intended principally. Animals and all corruptible things therefore know God by natural knowledge ('notitia naturalis'), but only the blessed can know God by elicitation or *notitia elicta*. There are, then, two possible ways of understanding nature:

It is... either to be denied that nature acts in accordance with some end, and therefore intends nothing, or is passive, or it is to be conceded [that nature acts thus], so that we should speak analogically of natural knowledge, as the philosophers speak. For it is certain that Aristotle, in the first [book] of the *Physics*, did not understand a single nature, which is God, but some nature in common.⁷⁹

From this familiar realist view of nature and 'intention' (a view which informs, as we have seen, Wyclif's understanding of analogy and predication) Wyclif draws three conclusions. First, that universals exist; secondly, that it is necessary for a complex expression to have a *signatum*; and thirdly, that every natural active thing requires an end. He goes on to consider the fourth form of knowledge, which takes the name *notitia* in its most proper sense. This is knowledge of a thing *per causam*, whose primary object (the final cause of the thing) is God. It is not possible, Wyclif argues, for any person to have a more perfect

⁷⁷ '...loquendo de cognitione confusa qua cognoscuntur res sub transcendente, patet quod deum esse est vere prius cognitum quam aliquod reliquorum, quia si aliquod reliquorum noscitur illa noticia deum esse noscitur illa noticia. Et cum hoc tam deum esse quam eam ejus noticia est causa cujuscunque alterius noticie, ergo est prius naturaliter quam alterius notitia.' *De Ente Primo in Communi*, p. 103.

⁷⁸ *De Ente Primo in Communi*, p. 104.

⁷⁹ 'Vel igitur negandum est naturam agere propter finem et sic nichil intendere, vel appetere aut a se inclinari, vel niti, vel hoc concessio oportet racionaliter analogice loqui de noticia nature ut loquuntur philosophi, quia certum est quod Aristoteles in primo *Phisicorum* non solum intellexit naturam, que est deus, set in communi quamlibet naturam.' *De Ente Primo in Communi*, pp. 105-06

kind of knowledge than this ('qua notitiam non est possibile perfectiorem in genere inesse homini'). Citing Aristotle in support of his claim, he goes on to suggest that knowledge of the thing caused presupposes an understanding of its primary causative principle:

It appears that in this kind of knowing it is not possible to have knowledge of a thing caused without a precognition of its primary origin, as nobody has a perfect knowledge by understanding the cause of man's being unless he understands why or on account of what end man is. Thus, among other subtle arguments of the philosophers, this is the more ingenious: to know of what thing the cause is to be determined, and to know to resolve any caused thing into its causes and the whole multitude of causes into one simple final cause which is the first and the ultimate cause.⁸⁰

Wyclif does not conclude from this that an understanding of *any* sequence of causes is ultimately to be resolved into an understanding of divine causality: in certain cases, such as one man's murder of another to satisfy an appetite for revenge, it is erroneous to ask 'what is the cause?' and then to name God as the final cause of individual human action.⁸¹

Wyclif lists four problems arising from a consideration of causality: the problem of the ordering of cause and effect into a sequence of 'proximate' causes; the question of whether there is a finite or an infinite sequence of causes separating man and God; the difficulty surrounding the 'completeness' of causality (is it ever true to say that a thing caused has a complete cause which, once in place, allows the thing itself to come into effect?); and lastly, whether anything caused, however modest or ugly, is reducible to the beneficence of God as a final cause.⁸²

The fifth kind of knowledge, which Wyclif labels *notitia intuitiva*, is one means by which the *viator* has an understanding of God as the final cause of the book of nature. God, he argues, is the principal thing known by *notitia intuitiva*, since He is the end in accordance with which we learn anything in this life ('notitia intuitiva deum esse est principalissime cognitum, cum illa notitia sit finis gratia cuius quicquid addiscimus hic in via').⁸³ This form of cognition is among the most primitive, and involves no discursive

⁸⁰ 'Patet... quod illo genere cognoscendi non est possibile cognoscere principiatum nisi precognito primo principio, ut nemo perfecte cognoscit noticia propter causam quod homo est, nisi cognoscat quare vel gratia cuius finis homo est. Unde inter alias subtilitates philosophorum est hec artificiosior: scire cujus est causa querenda et scire resolvere quodlibet causatum in ejus causas et totam multitudinem causarum in unam simplicem finalem que est prima et ultima.' *De Ente Primo in Communi*, pp. 106-7.

⁸¹ *De Ente Primo in Communi*, p. 107, ll. 5-11

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 107, ll. 11-19.

⁸³ *De Ente Primo in Communi*, p. 108, ll. 2-4.

reasoning; it is hence of a relatively indistinct kind.⁸⁴ It is divided into three categories, corresponding to the body, the spirit, and the intellect. Wyclif does not elaborate further on its nature, but goes on to consider the final, and in many ways the most important form of knowledge, *notitia fidei*. This is described as deriving ‘from authority or internal instinct, without intuition or natural deduction’ (‘de autoritate vel instinctu interno sine intuitionem vel naturali deductione’).⁸⁵ By *notitia fidei*, as by all other forms of knowledge, God’s being is the principal thing known. It is clear, Wyclif goes on to explain, that God’s existence is the most easily knowable thing, since every predestinate person from the beginning has elicited the ‘transcendent intention’, and knows after knowing anything that he will have learnt of his God. Continuing the theme of *notitia fidei*, he follows this explanation with an important passage on the Book of Life, the truths of whose pages are a source of illumination to every man:

God is the immense Book of Life in which all truths are included. Accordingly, just as one person learns a book by sight alone, insofar as he recognises the object itself, [so] another [studies it] by learning distinct letters and syllables, another by learning to read, another by understanding the meaning of the text according to its literal sense or another [sense], of which the modes of learning vary by degrees. Thus how much more properly is the Book of Life learned, since it does not sustain inked letters accidentally as an animal hide does, but bears all truths beneath the word essentially, which is its great strength. None of these can be seen unless [the book] has been seen itself, not only objectively, but by the force of its illuminating light, for in this respect it illuminates every man coming into this world, as it is said in John I.⁸⁶

This is among the most explicit anticipations of the ideas Wyclif’s later views on the Book of Life (identified with the intelligible form of the Bible, and hence with divine intention in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*) and the process of reading. As in the *Summa Theologiae*, he draws a careful distinction between reading as it was taught in primers or alphabets (through which the student was taught to identify – though not to understand – letters and syllables), grammars (whose focus was the reading process itself), and exegetical and

⁸⁴ ‘Vocatur... noticia intuitiva noticia sensus de veritate objective sibi presenti sine distinciori noticia prius cogniti a qua sensus elicit illam noticiam discursive.’ Ibid, ll. 5-8.

⁸⁵ Ibid., ll. 21-22.

⁸⁶ ‘Deus... est inmensus liber vite in quo sunt omnes veritates incluse. Ideo sicut unus discit librum solo visu in quantum ipsum cognoscit, alius discendo distincte literas et silibas, alius discendo legere, alius cognoscendo signatum scripture secundum sensum literalem aut alium que discencie possunt secundum gradus quotlibet variari. Sic longe proprius addiscitur liber vitae, cum non sustentat accidentaliter litteras linitas ut pellis, set essentialiter portat omnes veritates secundas verbo que est virtus sua quarum nulla potest videri nisi ipso viso non solum objective set virtute sui luminis illustrantis, quia quantum ad hoc illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum, ut dicitur Johannis primo.’ *De Ente Primo in Communi*, p. 109.

interpretative writings (which dealt with the various senses of the text),⁸⁷ and the reading of the Book of Life, which transcends the physical text. Though there is a vast difference between recognizing a book as an object and reading it according to a set of interpretative rules, or even between learning to identify letters and syllables and learning to read with reference to some form of intention, these were all – at least implicitly – equally inadequate, by themselves, to an understanding of *divine* intention. The act of reading, therefore, like the act of knowing, should be directed away from the particulars and accidents of the material world. Though such objects could certainly lead the mind towards God, as Wyclif's hierarchical understanding of being and universal natures illustrates, they were insufficient in themselves to allow the viator access to the supreme book of truths:

Therefore may God witness that I do not see why the material book, composed out of hide and tablets, with other things irrelevant to learning is any longer studied; indeed, far more properly and generally are truths *de vi vocis* learned from the Book of Life.⁸⁸

This relegation of the 'material' book to the realms of theological irrelevance is a distinctive Wycliffian move. A similar gesture is made in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*.⁸⁹

In the context of Wyclif's theory of knowledge as a whole, it is entirely consistent with his Dionysian repudiation of the finite and the transitory, and serves as a very explicit affirmation of his understanding of the necessity of faith and divine illumination. It also brings into focus the nature of the divine being to which all the other forms of knowledge direct themselves. Each of these latter forms, as Wyclif suggests, can bring the individual towards an understanding of God. Some of them, however, such as the distinct knowledge one can have of universals, are clearly more highly valued than others. These forms of knowledge, as is to be expected, are generally those which take a primary analogate as their object. The relative values of the different kinds of knowledge, as they are established in the *Summa de Ente*, are emphasized throughout Wyclif's later theological writings, and play a particularly significant rôle in his understanding of the reading of the Scriptures. The progression from the material pages of the Bible to the infinite and immaterial ideas of the divine mind in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* very clearly mirrors the progression towards an understanding of the Book of Life as it is presented here.

⁸⁷ On the teaching of reading in the later Middle Ages, see Nicholas Orme, *English Schools in the Middle Ages* (London: Methuen, 1973), esp. Chs. 2 and 3 on elementary and grammatical education. See also the excellent recent study by Suzanne Reynolds, *Medieval Reading: Grammar, Rhetoric and the Classical Text* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 7-44.

⁸⁸ 'Ideo deum, contestor, non videro, quare liber materialis integratus ex pelle et tabulis cum aliis in pertinentibus ad doctrinam addiscitur quin longe proprius de vi vocis discuntur veritates et generaliter liber vite.' *De Ente Primo in Communi*, p. 109, ll. 20-24.

⁸⁹ See Ch. 5 (section 1.1) below.

The analogical principles of being and knowledge outlined in the *Summa de Ente* supplied the basic hermeneutic paradigm of Wyclif's philosophy of Scripture. The application of analogy to the interpretation of Trinitarian doctrine, moreover, and the distinction which is drawn between literal and metaphorical analogy, highlight issues which have a prominent place in theological and hermeneutic debates of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*. Though Wyclif is not specific about the nature of those who ignore or misapply the rules of analogy, there are good reasons to suppose that they would have included philosophical nominalists. Failure to observe these rules, as we have suggested, by no means presupposed a commitment to nominalist metaphysics, but nominalists represented the only group of thinkers whose philosophy made such a failure inevitable.

It is surely no accident, moreover, that Wyclif chooses to examine at such length the analogy between the Trinity and real universal natures. This analogy, as we have seen, enabled him to hold nominalism implicitly to account for known Trinitarian heresies. The relationship between analogy and Wyclif's theory of knowledge, which was summarised in the preceding section, brings the wider significance of analogical reasoning more sharply into focus. Though not all forms of knowledge rely on analogical reasoning, the relationship between human known and divine known, between natural truths and truths inscribed in the Book of Life, between things known through 'confused' and through 'distinct' knowledge, is fundamentally an analogical one. The theory of knowledge and the theory of analogy are in effect mutually dependent: higher and lower forms of knowledge are related analogically, but it is the theory of knowledge itself which gives value to the analogical process (primary analogates, knowledge of which is the goal of analogical reasoning, are known on the basis of a higher form of cognition).

The pervasiveness of the principle of analogy, both in the *Summa de Ente* and *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, is testimony to its significance in Wyclif's philosophical and exegetical programmes. In *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, as we suggested in the Introduction, analogy was to become an invaluable tool not only in exegetical practice, but also in the analysis of three fundamental textual concepts: the book, the author, and authority. On both levels, it served to reinforce Wyclif's distinctive conception of truth and textuality, and to marginalise materialistic and nominalistic approaches to interpretation. The relationship between truth and textuality will be considered further in the next chapter, in which Wyclif's theories of propositional meaning and temporal reference – as presented in the *Summa de Ente* – will be introduced. These controversial theories, like the concept of analogy itself, were to become fundamental to Wyclif's exegetical programme. Unlike analogy, however, they were much criticised within the academy (as we shall see in Chapter 4), providing us with positive evidence of active nominalist (or anti-realist) opposition to Wyclif's hermeneutic teachings.

CHAPTER 3

PHILOSOPHY AND SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETATION 2: THE TRUTH OF PROPOSITIONS

1. MODES OF PREDICATION AND THE LOGIC OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

The principles of analogy and participation formed the framework of Wyclif's realist theory of scriptural signification. They are not adequate in themselves, however, to explain the philosophy of his hermeneutics, which rested on an elaborate and distinctive theory of predication. The analogy of names, as we have shown, necessarily presupposed an analogy between modes of being: the logic of terms was always secondary to the logic of things in themselves. The implications of this idea, one of the hallmarks of Wyclif's realism, do not become clear until his theory of predication has been taken into account. Only then can his views on truth, falsity and logical fallacy – those views, he would have us believe, which were so frequently misapprehended or denied by his opponents – be fully understood.

The most comprehensive and systematic account of the theory of predication is offered in *De Universalibus*, composed when the basic tenets and idiosyncrasies of his philosophical position were relatively well established.¹ In the first chapter, he presents a threefold definition of the nature of universals and of the nature of predication. The two definitions are complementary, and are presented, Wyclif claims, for the sake of eliminating errors relating to universals. Each is divided between a nominal and a real definition, the former being strictly a derivative of the latter, which is the proper object of study. Thus, in the case of universals, there are universals by *causality*, by *community* and by *representation*. Universals of the first kind are causes in the sense elaborated in *De Ente in Communi* and *De Ente Primo in Communi*, and hence refer to a common cause of several effects. The most universal cause is God, beneath which there is a hierarchy of created

¹ Many of the views it presents are thus anticipated in his earliest writings, but are not always fully elaborated. It is possibly for this reason that *De Logica* (unquestionably a very early work) is often, despite its distinctive realist leanings, overlooked. For the sake of completeness, therefore, significant points of continuity or discontinuity between the theory of predication presented in *De Universalibus* and that of the earlier philosophical works will be noted briefly.

causes (e.g. genera and species, the immediate causes of created natures).² The second kind are the natures ‘shared by their suppositis’. These are generic and specific natures, the ‘forms’ in which all creatures participate. This presumably includes forms *ante rem* (as real causes), and *in re* (as common natures abstracted mentally from particulars).³ The definitions, Wyclif concedes, must allow for some overlap. The third category contains conceptual universals, signs of the first and second kind only. These, Wyclif suggests, are universals only equivocally (as the name ‘man’ applies equivocally to a man and his portrait), and are hence of no real concern to the philosopher.⁴ For the corresponding modes of predication, Wyclif supplies definitions based on the two etymological senses of *praedicare*, namely ‘to declare’ or ‘to preach’, and ‘to predicate’ (as in logic). Our attention is carefully drawn to the ambiguity of the term when used in its second sense, which can refer either to linguistic or to real forms of logical predication:

The Latin word for ‘predication’ has three different meanings. In the first place it is equivalent to ‘preaching’, meaning the discourse of those who exhort to good; it is in this sense that the apostle Paul, in Galatians 2, says ‘The faith of Christ is preached among the Gentiles’. In the second place it means the predication of one term of another. This is the sense much talked about by modern writers, who think that there is no other. But in fact this kind of predication is modelled on real predication, the third kind of predication which is being [participated in] or is said of many things in common. It is in this manner that every actual universal is predicated of its inferiors in nature.⁵

² ‘Primum est universale causatione, ut Deus est causa universalissima et post eum res universales creatae secundum ordinem, quo originatur a Deo.’ *De Universalibus*, Ch. 1, ll. 9-11.

³ ‘Secundum est universale communicatione, ut puta res communicata multis suppositis, ut natura humana et aliae naturae generales et specifica.’ *De Universalibus*, Ch. 1, ll.12-14.

⁴ ‘Tertium est universale repraesentatione, ut signa priorum universalium, quae aequivoce dicuntur universalia, sicut homo pictus aequivoce dicitur homo.’ *De Universalibus*, Ch. 1, ll. 15-18. Cf. *De Ente in Communi*, in which this latter kind of universal is said to be universal by the secondary analogy according to which urine is said to be ‘healthy’: ‘Est... triplex universale, scilicet universale causacione, ut quelibet causa multorum, universale communicatione, ut commune quod est multorum singulum, et universale signacione ut terminus signans universale secundo modo dictum. Set istud magis remote dicitur universale quam urina dicitur sana.’ (pp. 54-5).

⁵ ‘*praedicari* aequivocum ad tria, scilicet ad sermocinari exhortantium ad bonum, et sic Fides Christi praedicatur in gentibus, ut dicit Apostolus, Ad Galatas 2. Secundo ad praedicationem termini de termino. Et ista est famosa modernis, qui putant nullam aliam esse, licet secundum veritatem ista exemplata sit a praedicatione reali, quae est tertium genus praedicandi et est participari vel dici communicative de multis. Et illo modo omne universale in actu praedicatur de suis inferioribus in natura.’ *De Universalibus*, Ch. 1, ll. 27-37 (I have slightly modified Kenny’s translation of this passage).

The ‘modern’ writers Wyclif refers to here would certainly have included Ockham and other anti-realists, for whom the form of participation of which he speaks, as we have seen, would have seemed a nonsense. Several key nominalist assumptions are clearly contradicted by the concept of real predication, which presupposes the existence of real universals *ante rem*. There is also the problem of the object of knowledge, which, both here and in the preceding discussion of the nature of universals, is very explicitly located with truths beyond the realm of logical discourse, and upon which such discourse is founded. Wyclif’s view that propositions exist in the things themselves is an extreme form of what is usually referred to as a *res* theory. A similar theory was held by Walter Burley, the distinguished Oxford schoolman and follower of Robert Grosseteste, whose views are known to have had an influence on many aspects of Wyclif’s philosophy. Burley is actually mentioned by Wyclif later in the first chapter of *De Universalibus*, in reply to an objection about the nature of real predication and real propositions.⁶ Many of the ‘modern’ thinkers, William of Ockham and Robert Holcot among them, defended a form of *complexum* theory, according to which the *act* of knowing or believing something (a proposition or ‘complex’) was itself the object of knowledge, and coterminous with the truth or falsity of that act.⁷ The philosopher was thus not required to look beyond the mental proposition to the reality underlying it. As Ockham explains in the Prologue to his *Expositio super viii Libros Physicorum*, ‘the object of knowledge is the whole proposition that is known’ (*objectum scientiae est tota propositio nota*).⁸ Burley is known to have opposed Ockham on issues relating to predication (most famously, on the question of ‘simple’ supposition⁹), and it is

⁶ ‘Ille autem, qui sciret fundare quod veritas ex parte rei, quam Deus componit ex subiecto et praedicato, sit realis propositio, ut ponit Magister Walterus Burleigh, negaret minorem argumenti.’ (the minor being that ‘res extra non sunt partes propositionis.’) *De Universalibus*, ch.1, ll. 88-92. On Wyclif’s connection with Burley and the latter’s influence in Oxford see Robson, *Wyclif and the Oxford Schools*, pp. 24-5, 98-9; Herbert Workman, *John Wyclif*, vol. 1, p. 117. On Burley’s theory of *propositiones in re* see Kretzmann et al., eds., *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, p. 207.

⁷ I am indebted here to the account of theories of objects of knowledge given in the *Cambridge History*, p. 205.

⁸ *Philosophical Writings*, p. 9. Cf. Ockham’s argument in the *Summa Logicae* that propositions cannot be composed of substances: ‘Propositio non est nisi in mente vel in voce vel in scripto; ergo partes eius non sunt nisi in mente vel in voce vel in scripto; huiusmodi autem non sunt substantiae particulares. Constat igitur, quod nulla propositio ex substantiis componi potest; componitur autem propositio ex universalibus; universalia igitur non sunt substantiae ullo modo.’ *Summa Logicae Pars Prima*, ed. Philotheus Boehner (New York: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1951-54), Ch. 15, ll. 107-112.

⁹ Simple supposition occurs when a term in a logical proposition supposits for a general significate (rather than an individual entity). For Burley (and Wyclif), this significate was a real universal; for Ockham, it was a common concept. See Stephen F. Brown, ‘Walter Burleigh’s Treatise *De Suppositionibus* and its Influence

unlikely that they would have remained silent over the issue of real predication. Wyclif himself must certainly have been conscious that this theory of predication would have found few adherents among contemporary anti-realists.

Wyclif divides predication into two principal categories: predication *per se*, in which the subject *per se* 'speaks' or 'says' its predicate (as a man or a woman 'speaks' his or her humanity by virtue of being human), and predication *per accidens*, in which each of the nine categories of accidents speaks its subject.¹⁰ The latter is passed over very briefly, though it occupies an important position in Wyclif's hierarchical theory of knowledge (in which knowledge of accidents leads to knowledge of subjects and hence to knowledge of their universal natures, etc.) Predication *per se*, which was to serve as a key principle in Wyclif's exegetical theory, and which was vigorously defended, is explained in detail. Every created thing, he argues, 'speaks' its *per se* cause (i.e. its species), and hence every inferior speaks its superior. He divides this form of predication into quidditative and qualitative predication, the former predicating a thing's quiddity ('thisness', namely its genus and species), and the latter a thing's differences and properties.¹¹ These real forms of predication, Wyclif concludes, are those which the 'more subtle grammarians accept', but which are still overlooked by many. In the passage which follows, he reiterates the main points of his argument about individual subjects 'speaking' their universal natures, this time making a more clearly directed attack against the nominalists:

Philosophers... are agreed that just as everything says itself, so also every inferior foresays its own superior, that is says it as subjectively precedent. So it attaches the real name of its superior alongside itself as subject, since every inferior has its superior attached to itself as a form. It is clear therefore that it is not a case of a term predicated inhering in a subject term; rather the form or universal characterisation, such as being a man, inheres in every single supposit of the human species. And this, according to the more subtle grammarians, is what being predicated is.¹²

on William of Ockham', *Franciscan Studies*, 32/10 (1972), 15-65 (pp. 24-25).

¹⁰ 'Praedicatio per se est quando subiectum per se dicit praedicatum, ut quilibet homo per se dicit naturam humanam specificam, quae est quidditas cuiuslibet hominis.' *De Universalibus*, Ch.1, ll. 41-44.

¹¹ See *De Universalibus*, Ch. 1, ll. 50-4.

¹² 'Constat namque philosophis quod, sicut quaelibet res dicit se, sic omne inferius praedicit, id est subiective prius dicit, suum superius, et per consequens praecopulat nomen reale sui superioris sibi tamquam subiecto, cum omne inferius habet suum superius sibi copulatum ut formam. Constat itaque quod terminus praedictus non inhaeret termino subiecto. Sed forma vel denominatio universalis, ut hominem esse, inest cuicumque

Wyclif's objection that a predicated term cannot inhere in its subject provides a very clear allusion to nominalist logic. The reference to the 'more subtle' grammarians seems once again to associate contemporary anti-realists with a naïve and materialistic understanding of the verbal arts. The problem of 'inherence' is one which Ockham explicitly addresses in the first book of the *Summa Logicae*, in terms which shed some important light on Wyclif's remarks. When we are told that predicates inhere in their subjects, he suggests here, we must assume that they are predicated *of* them in a strictly logical sense: We say that predicates are predicated of their subjects; but we also say that predicates are in, belong to, and inhere in their subjects. Such locutions should not be understood to imply that predicates really inhere in their subjects in the way that whiteness inheres in a wall. On the contrary these locutions are synonymous with 'predicated of'. They should not be taken in any other way.¹³

By 'subject' and 'predicate', Ockham is clearly referring to terms, as his earlier definitions in the *Summa Logicae* confirm. Wyclif is taking the nominalists at their word, just as Ockham suggests that one should not, when they suggest that a predicate term inheres in a subject term. Earlier in the *Summa Logicae*, Ockham is careful to distinguish between a real subject (*subiectum ad existentiam*), in which accidents may actually inhere (as whiteness may inhere in milk, for example), and a propositional subject (*subiectum ad praedicationem*), which a predicate term is predicated *of*.¹⁴ Crucially, only the latter could form part of a proposition. As is often the case in the *Summa de Ente*, Wyclif seems to be consciously mistaking opponents in this passage, or at the very least presenting half-truths about them.¹⁵ This is not to say, of course, that the nominalists were above criticism as

supposito humanae speiei. Et hoc, secundum subtiles grammaticos, est praedicari.' *De Universalibus*, Ch. 1, ll. 102-112.

¹³ 'Sicut autem praedicatum praedicatur de subiecto, ita dicimus praedicatum esse in subiecto et praedicatum convenire subiecto, et praedicatum inesse subiecto et praedicatum inhaerere subiecto. Quae non sunt intelligenda, ac si praedicatum poneretur realiter inhaerere subiecto illo modo, quo albedo inest parieti, sed omnia talia idem significant quod 'praedicari', nec aliter accipienda sunt nisi pro praedicari.' *Summa Logicae Pars Prima*, Ch. 32, ll. 1-7 (translated by Michael J. Loux as *Ockham's Theory of Terms: Part I of the Summa Logicae* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1974)).

¹⁴ Ch. 30, ll. 7-12.

¹⁵ It seems unlikely that any terminist or nominalist would have supposed that one term in a proposition *literally* inhered in another. Ockham would clearly have regarded such a supposition with as much contempt as Wyclif did, if for different reasons.

logicians: the fundamental difference between nominalist and realist theories of predication would have been difficult to reconcile even for the least partial scholastic thinker. Wyclif appeals to the writings of the Aristotle and Averroes to authenticate his claims. Modern philosophers would be in no danger of erring, he suggests, if they could perceive the true meaning of the expression 'to be predicated' (*praedicari*). Once again, we are reminded of the fundamental division between real and nominal predication (*praedicari* is interpreted as 'to be said of' and 'to be common to'/'to be participated in'):

...the terms used by the Commentator, on *Metaphysics* XII, section 15, to explain 'to be predicated' are as follows: 'to be said', 'to be common', or ['to be participated in']. These terms are also used by the doctors of metaphysics, although there are some who never leave the first stages of grammar, never turning the gaze of their minds away from signs. This is an attitude which arises from corrupt custom, and causes many errors in philosophy. These terms 'to be predicated', 'to be common', 'to be shared', in Aristotle, the Commentator, Porphyry and other theologians who follow them, were very aptly invented and very fully packed with meaning. It is a disgrace that people who profess to know their philosophy should let them slip from their memories just like children.'¹⁶

The notion of a predicate 'being said' of its subject, or of a subject 'speaking' its predicate is an important one in Wyclif's writings. It is given a slightly more theological flavour in *De Trinitate* (one of the last tracts of the *Summa de Ente*), a treatise which borrows extensively from *De Universalibus*, and is thought to have been written at about the same time.¹⁷ The relationship between predication and Wyclif's doctrine of analogy also becomes clear here, as the Platonic and Dionysian view of the world as a sign of the transcendent merges with the idea of the world 'speaking' its ideal and universal existence. As elsewhere, we are reminded of those who, failing to interpret speech analogically (as a metaphysical, rather than purely as a verbal process), confine themselves to the world of the material and the transitory. The reference is apparently a general one, though the

¹⁶ 'Termini... Commentatoris, XII *Metaphysicae*, commento 15, quibus exprimit 'praedicari', sunt tales: 'dici', 'communicari', vel 'participari', quibus etiam utuntur doctores metaphysicae, licet aliqui maneant continue in rudimentis grammaticae, dirigentes aciem mentis pure ad signa, quod, ex infecta consuetudine, causat multos errores in philosophia. Cum igitur isti termini: *praedicari*, *communicari* et *participari*, apud Aristotelem, Commentatorem, Porphyrium et alios theologos eos sequentes, fuerunt tam signanter inventi et tam compendiose onusti sententia, turpe est quod decidant tam pueriliter a memoriis philosophiam eorum profitentium.' *De Universalibus*, Ch. 1, ll. 113-125. (I have modified Kenny's translation.)

¹⁷ Thomson suggests that the *De Trinitate* was composed c. 1370, only slightly later than the *De Universalibus* (c. 1368-69). See *Latin Writings*, pp. 20-23; 30-32. On the relationship between the *De Trinitate* and the earlier tracts of the *Summa de Ente*, see Thomson, *Latin Writings*, p. 31.

emphasis on failure of analogical understanding, and on childish modes of enquiry (associated quite consistently, as we have seen, with anti-realism), makes contemporary nominalists, once again, into very natural targets:

Unless I am mistaken, nothing is more valid than that passage from the Blessed John, in the first of his gospels: *In the beginning, he says, was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.* And by this utterance, it is shown that it is not possible for anything to be unless it speaks, intends, shows and knows itself. But because many, understanding grossly and childishly, deny this supposition, restricting [instead] all speech to a verbal and sensible locution, it remains to urge upon their minds that there is another kind of speech, ...thus: the speech of a man is not ended with sensible signs, but with the insensible signifieds of those signs. And that speech cannot be spoken as a stringing together of words without afterwards being an assertion in the soul.¹⁸

Wyclif goes on to explain how the different levels of creation, from accidents upwards, 'speak' or reflect each other, ultimately stopping at the divine nature in which they all participate. The Dionysian idea of procession and return (of God 'proceeding' into His creation, which then 'returns' to God), hinted at in the metaphors of ascent in the earlier parts of *De Ente*, is used quite explicitly towards the end of this chapter, following a short quotation from Grosseteste's *Hexameron*. All aspects of creation, like the effects of an efficient or 'motive' cause, make their cause known (albeit imperfectly) by 'speaking' it:

...speech does not refer in a purely equivocal way to signification of the mouth, the deed, and the mind, but in a certain way analogically, applying firstly to God and consequently to His creatures who speak Him, as Lincolniensis says: *All the world is made as an artificial word, speaking the art, the word and the intention intrinsic to God, from Whom it proceeds.* Thus it appears that just as every efficient cause *per se* speaks what it causes, insofar as this is what it intends, so in the opposite sense all that is caused speaks its imperfection, and speaking its cause to this extent shows how far in this respect it proceeds from its cause.¹⁹

¹⁸ 'Et si non fallor, nulla est validior quam illa capta a beato Johanne in principio evangelii sui: I, 1. *In principio, inquit, erat verbum et verbum erat apud deum et deus erat verbum.* Pro quo declarando, supponitur quod non sit possibile quidquam esse nisi dicat, intendat, ostendat, et noscat seipsum. Sed quia multi grosse et pueriliter concipientes negant suppositionem restringentes avare omne dicere ad vocalem et sensibilem locucionem, ideo restat suadere rationibus quod sit aliud dicere, primo sic: dicere hominis non solum terminatur ad voces sensibiles sed ad significata insensibilia vocum, sed illud dicere non potest poni vocum prolacio sed assertio post in anima.' *De Trinitate*, p. 39.

¹⁹ 'Non est dicere pure equivocum ad ostensionem oris, operis et mentis, sed quodammodo analogicum primo competens deo et consequenter suis creaturis ipsum dicentibus, ut dicit Lincolniensis quod *tota mundi fabrica est unum artificiosum verbum dicens artem, verbum, vel intentionem deo intrinsecam a quo processit.* Unde patet quod sicut omnis causa per se efficiens dicit suum causatum, de quanto ostendit quantum in eo est quod

Wyclif's analogical understanding of the concept of speech reveals not only his indebtedness to Robert Grosseteste ('Lincolniensis'), but also his place in the Augustinian hermeneutic tradition. For Augustine, Grosseteste and Wyclif alike, God or divine intention is the ultimate end of all human knowledge or scientific endeavour. The book of nature, through analogical interpretation, is a sign of the divine. The divine, according to Augustine, is the only thing which signifies nothing beyond itself and which is strictly not a sign at all. Correspondingly for Wyclif, creatures signify their own natures (their genera and species), but also reflect the divine nature, which signifies or 'speaks' itself. In his definition of *per se* predication in *De Universalibus*, he argues that 'every thing necessarily says itself, as is clear in the case of God, whose word or eternal interior saying is the divine essence.' ('quaelibet res necessario dicit se, ut patet de Deo, cuius verbum vel dictio aeterna ad intra est divina essentia').²⁰ It is in this sense that creatures are said to speak God *analogically*: God speaks His own essence only, and He speaks it perfectly. The creature speaks Him imperfectly and secondarily, by virtue of its participation in a qualities which imitate the divine essence.

Speech, according to the broader interpretation, is the outward manifestation of divine intention. Only God, as the author or final cause of creation, can use speech in this way, as Wyclif's arguments about proportional analogy and real predication illustrate. This broad interpretation of speech is thus for Wyclif, as for Aquinas and Augustine, a key element in the understanding of Scripture, whose mysteries remain concealed to those who neglect the true meaning of speech, predication and analogy. Scripture is the best evidence, and indeed the only evidence needed, for the necessity of real predication. In response to an objection about this kind of interpretation in *De Trinitate*, according to which it is argued that if all creation speaks then many absurdities, such as stones shouting and dumb things talking, would follow, Wyclif presents a justification based on his own analysis of the texts of Scripture. Within the pages of the Bible itself, we learn, 'speech' is used

ab eius causa procedit.' *De Trinitate*, p. 45.

²⁰ Ch. 1, ll. 44-46.

analogically to lead us beyond its basic verbal associations:

To [this objection] it is said that speech is [here] being restricted to speech of the mouth. But often in Scripture 'speech' is used to mean speech simply [i.e. in its fundamental, non-verbal form], since the principle is the same as that of [verbal] speech. Thus all those things which Scripture figuratively attributes to God... are attributed fully to God, according to that part of the meaning which speaks imperfection simply, and to the creature according to anything proportional to itself, as when it is said that God has a face, fingers, or a hand.²¹

The notion of intention, and of intention underlying speech (implicit in the general observations about verbal and non-verbal speech in this passage) is one to which Wyclif returned throughout his writings, and which was fundamental to his understanding of all forms of natural and biblical symbolism. In his tacit appeal to intention as a means of resolving *apparent* verbal anomalies, Wyclif here anticipates very clearly the analytical procedures of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*. Intention was important, in particular, to his ideas about the nature of truth and falsehood, ideas which progressed naturally from his views on the meaning of predication. It was thus to become an indispensable weapon against the nominalists and others who located truth and falsity with mental or verbal propositions, and against those who (according to Wyclif) applied the criteria of the new logic to the interpretation of Scripture.²² In the third section of his discussion of predication in *De Universalibus*, he argues that truth and falsity of verbal propositions are

²¹ 'ad [hanc obiectionem] dicit quod loqui restringitur ad oris dicere; sepe tamen in scriptura dicitur locutio pro dicere simpliciter, quia idem est principium in locucione. Unde omnia quecumque scriptura figurative attribuit deo... plene attribuuntur deo, secundum illam partem rationis que sonat imperfectionem simpliciter et creature secundum aliquid sibi proportionale ut quando dicitur deum habere faciem, digitos, vel dexteram.' *De Trinitate*, p. 48.

²² Wyclif's views on intention separated him from the nominalists in a more obvious way, since universal essences, as truths, could also be seen in terms of intention. For the nominalists, such essences were intentions of the human soul; for Wyclif, they were ultimately intentions in the mind of God (*ideas*). See Robson, *Wyclif and the Oxford Schools*, pp. 171-176.

of no relevance to an understanding of predication in the real world. This latter kind of predication, we are told, is the true object of philosophical enquiry. By implication, once again, Wyclif here excludes nominalism from the realms of serious philosophical enquiry. Predication in the real world, he suggests, may be either 'formal' (*formalis*), 'essential' (*secundum essentiam*), or 'habitudinal' (*secundum habitudinem*). It is to these that the studies of the true philosopher (necessarily a realist) should be devoted:

[W]e must note carefully the three different kinds of predication, namely formal predication, essential predication and habitudinal predication. All such predication is principally in the real world. And this is why philosophers do not speak of false predication of signs, nor of negative predication, nor of predication about the past or the future, because that is not in the real world: only true predication is in the real, though truly in the real world one thing is denied or removed from another, as man from donkey and similarly with other negative truths. But only that which is formal is really predicated of a subject.²³

The differences between the three kinds of predication are examined at length, though are less important, at least in the context of Wyclif's hermeneutics, than the general principle of necessary truth underlying all of them. Formal predication is of the kind Wyclif introduces at the beginning of *De Universalibus*, in which a subject 'speaks' its genus and species, or an accident its subject. Essential predication is used to explain propositions such as 'God is man', 'fire is water' or 'the universal is particular', in which there is no *formal* identity or inherence, but which imply identity according to a different principle of being (God and man, Wyclif explains later, are the ultimate form and the supreme form of the same supposit, the Son).²⁴ Habitudinal predication is used to account for real relationships between subject and predicate which do not imply identity between them. Any such relationship, Wyclif explains, 'attaches to a subject without making it as such strictly changeable' ('ex qua adveniente subiecto non oportet ipsum ut sic esse proprie

²³ '...diligenter est notandum de triplici praedicandi manerie, scilicet de praedicatione formali, de praedicatione secundum essentiam et de praedicatione secundum habitudinem. Talis autem praedicatio principaliter est ex parte rei. Et hinc philosophi non loquuntur de falsa praedicatione signorum nec de praedicatione negativa, nec de praedicatione de praeterito vel de futuro, quia talis non est ex parte rei, sed solum vera praedicatio, licet vere ex parte rei una res negatur vel removeatur a reliqua, ut homo ab asino et sic de aliis veritatibus negativis. Solum autem illud quod est forma praedicatur realiter de subiecto.' *De Universalibus*, Ch. 1, ll. 157-169.

²⁴ *De Universalibus*, Ch. 1, ll. 280-7. For an explanation of the suppositional identity of God and man (in the Son), see Paul Spade's Introduction to Kenny's translation of the *De Universalibus*, pp. xli-xliii.

mobile’).²⁵ He gives examples of something being thought of, loved or acting as a cause of various effects, as in the case of God, who ‘is known and loved by many creatures, and brings about, as efficient exemplar and final cause, many good effects’ (‘Deus intelligitur et diligitur a quolibet creaturis et facit efficienter, exemplariter et finaliter multa bona’).²⁶

Truth in things is more important than the contingent linguistic truths with which modern philosophers concern themselves. Wyclif cites numerous instances in *De Universalibus* of philosophers going astray by attending to the truth conditions of verbal propositions. It is just these errors, Wyclif argues, which lead to misunderstandings of the Scriptures, or to misguided perceptions of ambiguity, contradiction or falsity within its pages. None of the latter, if the philosopher attends to the principles of real predication, are to be understood as realities. In his treatise on eliminating errors about truths (*Purgans Errores circa Veritates in Communi*), written shortly before *De Universalibus*, Wyclif lists three ways in which a sign may be true. For Wyclif, truth was principally a property of being itself, or of a relationship between cause and effect.²⁷ Here, as elsewhere, the truth of linguistic signs and propositions – the province of logicians and grammarians – is placed last in the order of priority:

Now a sign is said to be true in three ways, corresponding to the three modes of signifying, and false in three ways. In the first way, every being, insofar as it is such [i.e. a being], is true, as appears from the second book of the *Metaphysics*, Chapter 4. For it has being from truth as much as from entity... In the second way, it [is true insofar as] it represents its extrinsic cause, as smoke represents fire; and thus every creature represents God primarily; and so anything is naturally true on account of its being and its double primary representation. In the third way a sign signifies by human imposition, to which mode of signifying grammarians and logicians principally attend. And thus a proposition is true if its most primary significate has being in some way. And this happens in three ways in general: either because it has being, at the very least, intelligibly; or because it has actual being [i.e. existence in the temporal world], or thirdly because it has actual being beyond the sign, independent of it.²⁸

²⁵ *De Universalibus*, Ch. 1, l. 236.

²⁶ *De Universalibus*, Ch. 1, ll. 242-4.

²⁷ Cf. Wyclif’s remark in *De Trinitate* (cited above) about every cause ‘speaking’ its effect (*causatum*), which in turn speaks (as a truth) its cause.

²⁸ ‘Signum autem tripliciter dicitur verum, correspondenter ad triplicem modum significandi, et tripliciter esse falsum. Primo modo, omne ens in quantum huiusmodi est verum, ut patet 2 Metaphisice 4; tantum habet ens

Earlier in *Purgans Errores*, Wyclif defines truth broadly in terms of a correspondence between a proposition (*propositio*) and its significate (*signatum*). Falsehood is the lack of any such correspondence ('privatio veritatis signatae'), and as such is described as being *privatively opposed* ('privative opposita') to truth.²⁹ A proposition may be either true or false, therefore, but not both. In the case of the first two categories, however, falsehood cannot arise (since everything must be, and is likewise a sign of its cause). The only exception to this rule, Wyclif suggests, is if being is extended to include intelligible being, in which case a thing may be false because it lacks existence (though it is still true in the sense that it has intelligible being).³⁰ This has the immediate consequence of locating all falsehood or potential falsehood with human language, and with artificially imposed signification. As such, it is of concern only to grammarians and logicians, and not, as Wyclif is at pains to make clear in *De Universalibus*, to the philosopher. Wyclif's insistence here on considering all forms of being as truth conditions of propositions, rather than 'actual' being or existence alone, sheds some important light on his claim in *De Universalibus* that philosophers are not concerned with false, negative or tensed predication, since this is not in the real world. It also explains his sceptical attitude towards any philosopher who would suggest that tensed propositions in the Bible were false. From the narrow perspective of actual being, such propositions might easily appear false. No proposition, however, can be false in the broadest sense of the word, since no referent can be absent in both actual *and* intelligible terms. Wyclif lists these two opposing forms of falsity – which embody the principles of nominalist and realist metaphysics, respectively – alongside a third, less controversial category:

de veritate sicut de entitate... In secunda manerie representat quamlibet eius causam extrinsecam, ut fumus ignem; et sic quelibet creatura representat primarie deum, et sic quidlibet est naturaliter verum propter suum esse et suam duplicem primariam representanciam. Tertio modo significat signum ex inpositione humana, cui modo significandi grammatici et logici principaliter attendunt. Et sic est propositio vera, si primarium significatum suum quomodolibet habet esse. Quod contingit tripliciter in genere: vel quod habeat esse ad minimum intelligibile, vel quod habet esse actuale, vel tertio quod habet esse actuale extra signum, independens ab eo.' *Purgans Errores circa Veritates in Comuni*, p. 12, ll. 13-17; 20-32.

²⁹ '...falsitas iste veritati opposita est privatio veritatis signate; et neutra illarum potest esse reliqua, nec simul inesse eidem singulari, cum sint privative opposita.' *Purgans Errores circa Veritates in Comuni*, p. 12, ll. 3-6.

³⁰ 'Veritati vero, primo et secundo modo dicte, nichil opponitur, nisi forte, ampliando esse ad esse intelligibile, dicatur quod falsitas sit privatio existencie non date rei.' *Purgans Errores circa Veritates in Comuni*, p. 12, ll. 6-9.

And a proposition is false in three ways. In the first way, if it signifies in some way primarily and there is no primary significate corresponding to it, even according to intelligible being; and to be false in this way is simply impossible. In the second way, when a proposition lacks a primary significate according to actual being, although not according to potential being, as in 'here is my son'. And in the third way, if the proposition lacks a primary significate outside the proposition and its causes; and such propositions are called insolubles.³¹

If the distinction between intelligible and actual falsity is accepted, we must also admit that sign and *signatum* always correspond to some degree, even in 'false' propositions. This attenuated view of falsity, Wyclif claims, which makes all being necessarily true, is more real and more consistent with Scripture and the holy doctors than any other.³² Those 'children' who suppose that only propositions 'of the kind used in arguing' are true (which would include, presumably, the nominalists) are given a very unfavourable assessment. The daughters of Lot, Wyclif tells us, did not suppose there to be a man beyond their father, so were prepared to commit incest for the preservation of the species (Genesis 19. 30-38).³³ Presumably their failure is seen to lie in their neglect of the intelligible being of the human race, a failure which, if it does not make nominalism a direct cause of sin, at least presents it as a mode of understanding which might countenance the commission of sin. The use of the story of Lot is typical of Wyclif's appeal to biblical history to support his own anti-nominalist views, as well as to claim scriptural authority for the principles of realist logic. It also draws attention to the close parallel Wyclif draws between truth as a symbolic and a moral phenomenon, and between falsehood and sin.³⁴ There is, however, even in a true proposition, an element of falsehood and vanity, since God, as first being and first truth, is the only perfectly true being. This idea of perfect truth is expressed later in the same chapter in terms of the relationship between a sign and its referent (the *signatum*).

³¹ 'Et sic contingit proposicionem tripliciter in genere esse falsam. Primo modo, si representat aliquo modo primarie, et non est signatum primarium sibi correspondens, eciam secundum esse intelligibile; et esse sic falsum est simpliciter impossibile. 2 modo, quando proposicioni deficit primarie signatum secundum esse actuale, licet non secundum esse possibile; ut: hic filius meus est. Et 3 modo, si deficit proposicioni signatum primarium extra proposicionem et eius causancium, ut vocata insolubilia.' *Purgans Errores circa Veritates in Communi*, p. 13, ll. 1-10

³² *Purgans Errores circa Veritates in Communi*, p. 13, ll. 25-7

³³ *Purgans Errores circa Veritates in Communi*, p. 13, ll. 27-31

³⁴ Cf. *Purgans Errores circa Veritates in Communi*, p. 12, ll. 11-12, in which Wyclif claims that 'cum omnis carencia vel privacio sit falsitas, patet quod omnis peccator est falsus.'

The truth of verbal utterances, we are told here, is inferior to that of mental words or ideas, since verbal signs are less adequate to their *signata* than things spoken 'internally'. The Word of God, being the only utterance which is completely consistent with its *signatum*, represents the highest and most universal truth:

But from an understanding of Scripture it is to be noted, according to Lincolniensis in his book *On Truth*, that all truth is an adequacy or conformity of the word to the thing it signifies; and since that thing, word, utterance, or expression is truer, which is held silently within, than that which is spoken on the outside, the adequacy of a mental word or expression to truth is more proper than the adequacy of a sensible sign to the thing signified by it. Since therefore God necessarily and eternally speaks himself, it appears that his word, utterance or expression, by which he speaks himself is not only the most adequate and consistent, but is itself the highest adequacy or consistency in the abstract; and consequently it is the first truth.³⁵

The distinction between internal and external is one to which Wyclif returns throughout his philosophical and theological works. The notion of the internal utterance or text, as we shall see from the analysis of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* in Chapter 5, was crucial to his conception of sacred writing, textuality and intention.³⁶ Wyclif goes on to explain how the Word of God, coextensive with His nature and not accidental to Him, is itself an internal utterance, and hence the greatest truth. All other truths are true only insofar as they are consistent with (or analogous to) this first truth, a point Wyclif illustrates with the very characteristic realist image of multiple reflections of a single face in a mirror.³⁷ All truth has as its basis the notion of intention, since no word, utterance or vocal expression can be such an expression unless it is the reflection of an internal word ('verbum, dictio, vel locutio vocalis, non est huiusmodi, nisi quia similitudo vere locutionis vel verbi

³⁵ 'Sed pro intellectu Scripture notandum secundum Lycolniensem, in libro suo *De Veritate*, quod omnis veritas est adequacio vel conformitas sermonis ad rem quam significat; et cum verior sit illa res, verbum, sermo, dicio, vel locutio, que intus silet, quam que foris sonat, verius erit adequacio verbi vel dictionis mentis ad rem veritas quam adequacio signi sensibilis ad rem signatam. Cum ergo Deus necessario eternaliter dicit se, patet quod verbum suum, dicio vel locutio qua dicit se, sit non solum adequatum vel conforme, set ipsa summa adequacio vel conformitas in abstracto; et per consequens prima veritas.' *Purgans Errores circa Veritates in Communi*, p. 19, ll. 16-28.

³⁶ See the discussion of the processes of reading and writing in Ch. 5 (section 2), below.

³⁷ 'sicut ab una facie resultant multe similitudines, sic ab una prima veritate resultant multe veritates', *Purgans Errores circa Veritates in Communi*, p. 20, ll. 10-11.

intrinsici').³⁸ Moral rectitude thus consists both in conformity with divine intention, and in speaking in conformity with individual intention. Failure in either case (failure in the latter, of course, presupposing failure in the former), amounts to mendacity. This idea becomes particularly important in Wyclif's consideration of heresy in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*.

The connection between truth and intention lay at the heart of Wyclif's conception of scriptural logic (*logica Scripturae*), which itself played a central role in his defence of the 'literal' truth of Scripture in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*.³⁹ The rule of scriptural logic, according to which the word should always be consistent with intention, is anticipated in a passage in the fifth chapter of *De Trinitate*. Though Wyclif makes no mention of scriptural logic here, he draws on a passage from St Matthew's gospel which is said in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* to embody the principle of the logic of holy Scripture: 'Let your speech be yea, yea: no, no' (Matthew 5:37). Through this passage, Wyclif suggests, we learn of the primacy of the internal utterance (intention), and are reminded of the need to look beyond the physical word (the *verbum oris*):

It is often said that one person does not understand what the other is saying, and that if he hears the words he is ignorant of their signification. Thus our Saviour puts forward the following sentence in Matthew 5:37: 'Let your words be yea, yea: no, no', by which we are taught many things, but three notably. Firstly, to avoid duplicity in speech, by which he means lying, since he teaches that the word of the mouth should be consistent with the word of the mind. Secondly we are taught speculatively that every assertion is affirmative or negative... And thirdly we are taught that an expression, and consequently an utterance extends not only to the word of the mouth, but primarily and principally to the word of the mind.⁴⁰

The view of intention expressed here, and the conception of truth and ('real') predication

³⁸ *Purgans Errores circa Veritates in Communi*, p. 22, ll. 2-4.

³⁹ Wyclif lists scriptural logic among five key principles which lead the mind to truth. See the discussion in Ch. 5 (section 4.2), below.

⁴⁰ 'Sic eiam communiter dicitur quod unus non intelligit quod alius dicit, et si voces audiat ignorata ipsarum significatione. Unde salvator approbans istum sensum Matt. V, 37: *Sit sermo vester est, est, non, non*, ubi docemur summe compendiose notabilia tria. Primo, fugere duplicitatem in loquendo que ponit mendacium cum precipitur verbum oris concordare cum verbo mentis. Secundo docemur speculative quod omnis assercio est affirmativa vel negativa... Et tercio docemur quod sermo et per consequens dicio non solum se extendit ad verbum oris sed prius et principalius ad verbum mentis.' *De Trinitate*, pp. 40-41.

which depended upon it, changed little between the time of Wyclif's completing the *Summa de Ente* and his writing of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*. Indeed, the various charges he brings against contemporary philosophers in the earlier text, are often found repeated (sometimes with the same scriptural passages) in the later work. The distinctiveness of Wyclif's theory of real predication should also leave us doubt about the identity of the 'sophists', 'children' and 'moderns' who opposed, or simply misunderstood him. It is therefore highly significant that many of the examples of Scripture being misread in terms of logical falsehood or ambiguity, both in the *Summa de Ente* and *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, are corrected with a very explicit gesture towards the principles of real predication. The intimate relationship between the theories of real predication, scriptural logic and intention strengthens the case further for regarding Wyclif's hermeneutic adversaries as nominalists, at least as far as their metaphysical convictions are concerned. For the nominalist, after all, it was human, rather than divine intention which ultimately determined the structure of universal ideas (and truths).⁴¹ Failure to see beyond the properties of human signs (both verbal and mental) had effectively blinded the nominalists to the primacy of divine intention. Their world, in philosophical terms, was one in which the 'literal' truth of Scripture, as Wyclif understood it, could not necessarily be taken for granted. Wyclif's literalism, as we suggested in the Introduction, held that every part of Scripture, insofar as it was consistent with divine intention, was true. All parts were true, that is, *de virtute/vi sermonis* ('by the force of discourse').⁴² This expression is borrowed from the logical and rhetorical traditions, and has a long history; as is to be expected, Wyclif interprets it rather freely. Much of the controversy which surrounds his claims about the truth of Scripture could doubtless be interpreted in terms of the conflict between nominalist and realist conceptions of the *virtus/vis sermonis*. No nominalist, for certain, would have accepted Wyclif's intention-based interpretation.⁴³

⁴¹ See n. 22 (above).

⁴² Earlier, Wyclif had used the expression *de vi vocis*, thus claiming that literal truth existed at the level of individual words (*voces*), rather than higher discursive units (*sermones*). In response to criticism from John Kenningham, he modified this controversial claim. See Ch. 4 (section 2.3).

⁴³ The term 'literal' is a potentially misleading one. In the present context it refers to the meaning intended by the divine author, whether the expression is literal or figurative in terms of the actual language used. The expressions *de virtute sermonis* and *de vi vocis*, often used by Wyclif to describe true expressions taken from Scripture ('x is *de virtute sermonis* true'), has often been glossed as 'literal' in the sense 'intended by the divine author'. (See, for example, G. R. Evans, 'Wyclif on Literal and Metaphorical', p. 263.) It would appear to be more appropriate, however, to say that divine intention is a condition of a particular kind of literal (*de virtute sermonis*) truth, as the expression is also used to identify the basic sense of a word or

In *De Intellectione Dei*, the eighth tract of the *Summa de Ente*, Wyclif presents a very concise defence of scriptural truth which echoes many of the ideas expressed in *Purgans Errores*. It is fitting summary of the position developed in *De Universalibus* and *Purgans Errores*, and provides a valuable indication of the direction of his thinking immediately preceding his work on the *Summa Theologica*. Here, we learn of those who seek to find falsity in Scripture. Wyclif attributes this lack of understanding – in a characteristic move – to a confusion between signs and their *signata*. Though contradiction may indeed occur in signs, he suggests, there can be no contradiction in things (and therefore, presumably, no *real* contradiction). We cannot say, therefore, that either Scripture or its expositors are literally (*de virtute sermonis*) false:

Nor should we fear the sophistical examples with which some people set out to prove that Scripture and the doctors are false *de virtute sermonis*. Trusting their actions in such cases, certain of them equivocate and disagree, confusedly and imperfectly understanding those things which are signified. For nobody can possibly understand contradiction in *things*, even if we can understand each part of a proposition in terms of contradiction. Contradiction in signs, however, is possible, as when one sign is said in two ways of the same thing...⁴⁴

Misunderstanding of the nature of Wyclif's conception of truth and falsity, as this passage illustrates, was held to have arisen principally out of confusion over objects of knowledge (the very issue which, as we have seen, separated Holcot and Ockham from Burley and Wyclif). The true objects of the exegete's knowledge, as we are reminded throughout *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, are not signs but the things (ultimately, the intention) which they signify. The question of the possibility of false propositions occurring in Scripture is addressed with a greater sense of urgency in this later work, possibly as a result (at least in part) of the determinations presented against Wyclif's hermeneutic teachings by John

expression. In the passage cited here, for example, it seems likely that nominalist and realist interpretations of 'false *de virtute sermonis*' would be quite different. On the history of the expression *de virtute sermonis*, see William Courtenay, 'Force of Words and Figures of Speech: The Crisis over *Virtus Sermonis* in the Fourteenth Century', *Franciscan Studies*, 44 (1984), 107-128.

⁴⁴ 'Nec oportet timere instancias sophisticas quibus aliqui putant se probare quod verba scripture et doctorum sunt falsa de virtute sermonis. Credencium igitur actibus suis in talibus, quidam equivocant et desipiunt, confuse et imperfecte intelligentes significata, quia contradiccionem ex parte rei nemo potest intelligere, licet utramque partem posset intelligere in materia contradiccionis. Contradiccio autem in signis potest esse: ut puta, quando unum signum dicitur dupliciter de eodem eodem secundum idem...' *De Intellectione Dei*, p. 103, ll. 20-28. The text is edited by ed. M. H. Dziewicki in *Johannis Wyclif De Ente Librorum Duorum* (London: WS, 1909), pp. 49-112.

Kenningham.⁴⁵ By this time, it would seem, the basic principles of Wyclif's literalism (and his related conception of textuality) were well known throughout Oxford. It was almost certainly in response to Kenningham that Wyclif included within *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* a series of metaphysical principles (together constituting a five-fold *armatura*) to be used against those who seek to discover falsity in Scripture. Listed among them, as we shall see in Chapter 5, was the maxim 'in equivocation there is no contradiction', which rested on the same principles of logic as the argument cited here from *Purgans Errores circa Veritates in Communi*. These metaphysical guidelines can be read, as it will be argued in the final chapter, as veiled responses to Kenningham's critique of Wyclif's conception of being and truth.

Kenningham was also to challenge another key principle in Wyclif's defence against those who were claiming to have found falsehoods in Scripture: his theory of time. This was among the most distinctive products of Wyclif's realism, and was linked inextricably to his views about the nature of predication, truth and intention. Like these, it rested on a belief in the necessary reality of intelligible being, and played a central rôle in the defence of his literalistic theory of scriptural interpretation. In *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, he places it among the metaphysical principles to be used against contemporary hermeneutic opponents (describing it as the 'safest shield'). For Wyclif, every moment in time, whether past, present, or future, represented a reality. This view followed from his interpretation of the nature of accidental properties and states, and from his firm belief that time should be treated as an accident inhering in a subject. Only if subjects of past and future propositions were treated as realities could such a belief be sustained, a problem which Wyclif overcame by declaring them to be *intelligible* realities. It was this association between time and intelligible being which Kenningham felt to be fundamentally mistaken. Wyclif's distinction between intelligible and real time was reinforced by his conception of the relationship between time and eternity, both of which were held to be visible to the divine author of Scripture. The modes of predication within the pages of Scripture, Wyclif believed, were consistent with his extended view of time, which thus provided an indispensable tool for any serious exegete. The development of the theory of time in the *Summa de Ente* and the logical works, from its status as an accident to its reality as an

⁴⁵ On Kenningham's objections to Wyclif's metaphysical and hermeneutic theories, see Ch. 4, below.

intelligible, will be examined in the following section.

2. TIME AND TEMPORAL PROPOSITIONS

The view of time which Wyclif defends in the *Summa de Ente* and the *Logicae Continuatio*, as we have suggested, is essentially an extension of his theory of intelligible being. The theory itself is introduced and developed within three tracts of the *Logicae* and the *Summa de Ente*. These are *De Tempore*, which offers the most detailed treatment of time (though remains unedited⁴⁶), *De Ente Praedicamentali*, which includes a substantial section on the nature of time, and the *Logicae Continuatio* (which includes a chapter on temporal and ‘hypothetical’ propositions). All three texts draw heavily on material from Aristotle’s *Physics*, and it now seems likely that Wyclif produced a collection of *dubia* on this text early in his career.⁴⁷ The text of the *Physics* itself had only become available to Latin scholars in the twelfth century (together with the last four texts of the *Organon*⁴⁸), and its influence – whether as an authority or as a major work of natural philosophy with which to disagree – is conspicuous in virtually all late-medieval writings on the nature of time.

Wyclif’s commentary, which would certainly shed valuable light on the early development of his ideas on time, has yet to be edited in its entirety, though many of the ideas contained within it must have been carried into the *Summa de Ente* with little change.⁴⁹ The other major direct influence, as elsewhere in Wyclif’s work, is Augustine. The fourteenth chapter of the eleventh book of the *Confessions*, another *locus classicus* for discussion of problems relating to the nature of time, is cited frequently in the three main tracts on time. It is through the Augustinian tradition, of course, that Wyclif’s theory of time inherits its

⁴⁶ The *De Tempore* survives in two British manuscripts, Trinity College, Cambridge B.16.2 (fo. 46ra-57ra), and Lincoln Cathedral C.1.15 (fo. 325ra-339va). There are numerous – mostly later – continental copies. See Thomson, *Latin Writings*, pp. 24-26. Prof. Allen Breck of the University of Denver undertook to produce an edition of the *De Tempore* some years ago, though it would appear that this project has since been abandoned.

⁴⁷ A surviving collection of this kind has been ascribed with reasonable certainty to Wyclif. The text, which is untitled in the manuscript (Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana lat. VI.173 fo. 1ra-58vb), is given the conjectural heading *Questiones et dubia super viii libros physicorum* by Willliell Thomson. See *Latin Writings*, pp. 12-14.

⁴⁸ See Ch. 1 (section 2.2), above.

⁴⁹ Thomson remarks on the compatibility of the material contained within the commentary with Wyclif’s ‘thoroughgoing realism’, and expresses surprise that, as a work on Aristotle – beloved, we are told, of contemporary nominalists – it has played such a minor role in modern studies of Wyclif’s philosophy. See *Latin Writings*, p. 13.

strong neoplatonic element, though as Beryl Smalley has pointed out, some of the strongest elements of realism in the theory can be traced back as far as Plotinus.⁵⁰ The interdependency of Wyclif's theories of time and intelligible being, moreover, place his ideas about time within the wider realist tradition descending from Pseudo-Dionysius (a figure who Wyclif knew well through the commentaries and translations of Robert Grosseteste).

2.1 Time as Accident: The Argument of De Ente Praedicamentali

The ontological status of time is a recurrent theme of Wyclif's treatise on the Aristotelian categories, *De Ente Praedicamentali*. His chief concern in this work is to establish whether any part of time, and in particular past and future times, can strictly be classified according to categorical definitions. The simple solution, by Wyclif's reckoning at least, would be to say that it cannot. Indeed, it is the problematic status of past and future, like that of other 'hypothetical truths' (possibilities and negations being the most important), that supplies the chief objection in *De Ente Praedicamentali* to the supposition that every being ('ens') is subject to the categories (i.e. that it is a 'predicamental' being). According to the standard Aristotelian definition, Wyclif reminds us, every predicamental being must be either a substance or an accident (the first category being substance and the remaining nine accidents). If time is not strictly an accident (as certain of Wyclif's contemporaries were arguing), then it is strictly not a predicamental being either, and the supposition that all beings are predicamental beings is disproved. Wyclif cites two important objections to this conclusion. The first draws on the claim made by Aristotle, in the *Categories*, that a single element in an incomplex expression signifies a substance or a quality ('singulum incomplexorum significat substantiam, qualitatem, etc.').⁵¹ The second, and the only one Wyclif unequivocally endorses, is based on his own extended theory of the nature of being:

Every intelligible thing exists, as is shown in the second book of my tract *On Ideas*. Therefore every intelligible has necessary and eternal being, and

⁵⁰ See 'The Bible and Eternity', pp. 73-4. Smalley goes as far as to suggest that 'Wyclif resembles Plotinus more closely than he does Augustine' (p. 74).

⁵¹ *De Ente Praedicamentali*, p. 1.

consequently every future or past is the accident of a thing, of which it is the past or the future, and from which it can be absent. Thus the author of the *Six Principles* divides 'when' into present, past, and future.⁵²

The first objection Wyclif rejects, arguing that it does not follow that an incomplex expression signifies a substance, quality or quantity, or that its primary significatum is one of the ten categories. Privations, multitudes, accidental aggregates and other such things, all of which are signified by incomplex categorematic expressions or terms (*categoremata*), are not themselves any of the ten categories. It is not the case therefore, that all incomplex categorematic expressions signify primarily one of the ten categories. Nevertheless, Wyclif suggests, they do signify the categories secondarily, since every privation, negation, preteration, futurity, potency or passion is in one of the ten categories. Therefore any term subordinated to a simple act of apprehending something signifies one of the categories. The second objection is conceded: every past, futurity or possibility, and any positive signifiable is an accident of its subject according to its *ratio intelligibilis*, though not according to its existential being. This is true of all of the hypothetical truths, none of which can inhere in their subjects in the temporal world of existence. An important consequence of this limitation, and one which Wyclif is at pains to make clear, is that the

⁵² '...omne intelligibile est, ut probandum est secundo libro, tractu de Ydeis, ergo omne intelligibile habet esse necessarium et eternum, et per consequens omnis futuricio vel praetericio est accidens rei, cuius est praeteritio vel futuritio, cum praesupponit subiectum, cuius est futuricio vel praetericio, et posset sibi deesse. Sic enim dividit autor Sex Principiorum quando in praesens, praeteritum et futurum.' *De Ente Praedicamentali*, p. 1. Cf. *De Tempore*, fo. 37ra (describing time as it is experienced in the world): 'In tractando de tempore sunt aliqua ex dictis superius capienda. Primum quod tempus est de genere accidentium. Sicut enim philosophi supponunt motum esse tamquam notorium, – cum desint illis probatio a priori et notiori qua concluderent motum esse sic – consequenter accipit totum genus hominum ex motus cuiuscumque notitia tempus esse, cum tam homines quam bruta et innata sollertia nosciunt tempus. Patet ex famosa confessione vulgarius quam etiam ex rationibus factis superius de distinctione accidentium quod tempus non est substantia sensibilis vel insensibilis assignanda, sed quedam mora ab ymaginativa concepta ex sensatione motus etiam ymaginationis nullo alio motu in particulari sentito'. (In preparing this transcription, I was fortunate in being able to consult J. A. Robson's rendering of sections of the same passage. Cf. *Wyclif and the Oxford Schools*, p. 157, n. 1.)

accidents themselves also have only intelligible being:

Nor is it inconsistent to concede that such accidents are eternal, just as proper attributes of eternal subjects. For just as subjects have eternal intelligible being, so do their accidents. It follows, then, from an inferior to its superior without impediment: this pastness or futurity is an accident of that intelligible being, therefore it is an accident.⁵³

The relationship between time and the subject in which it inheres (whether eternal or temporal) is a more complicated matter. In *De Ente Praedicamentali*, it is assumed that as an accident, albeit one with some unique properties, time behaves as any other accident.

Wyclif lists three ways in which 'accident' can be defined. According to the first, and most general, everything which is added to or inheres in another thing can be called an accident ('omne quod a posteriori adiacet vel inest alteri, potest dici sibi accidens.'⁵⁴)

Wyclif gives the example, cited from Augustine, of the distinction between the Son, who is incarnate, and the Father, who is not. The two are different (in this particular respect), because a property inheres accidentally in the former, but not in the latter.⁵⁵ Wyclif's second definition states that an accident inheres in its subject as one thing contingently existing in another, either eternally or temporally. Such an accident may either be in its subject, or absent from it (and hence not be an accident of that particular subject). The third definition, which is clearly perceived to be the most important by Wyclif, concerns the notion of change:

Thirdly, and most properly and strictly, a form inhering in a substance, through whose loss or acquisition [the substance] is changed, is called [an accident]. And the philosophers speak in this way, as is said at the end of the first tract. And this distinction appears in the [25th] chapter of the *Monologion*.⁵⁶

⁵³ 'Nec est inconueniens concedere accidentia talia esse eterna, sicut et proprias passiones subiectorum eternorum. Sicut enim subiecta habent esse intelligibile eternum, sic et eorum accidentia. Sequitur eciam ab inferiori ad suum superius sine impedimento: hec preteritio aut futuricio est accidens isti intelligibili, ergo est accidens.' *De Ente Praedicamentali*, p. 6.

⁵⁴ *De Ente Praedicamentali*, p. 7.

⁵⁵ 'Patet ista significacio per beatum Augustinum in Dialogo ad Felicianum; declarando quomodo filius est incarnatus, et non pater, sic scribit: 'Illud proprium est filio, quod per accidens sue noscitur evenisse persone.' *De Ente Praedicamentali*, p. 7.

⁵⁶ 'Tercio strictissime et propriissime quelibet forma inherens substantiae, per cuius adquisicionem vel deperditionem est ipsa mobilis, dicitur; et isto modo locuntur philosophi, ut dictum est in fine tractatus primi. Patet ista distinctio Monologion 27.' *De Ente Praedicamentali*, p. 8.

By Wyclif's three definitions, any moment in time can apparently be described as an accident, since the inherence of presence, pastness or futurity in a subject represents at once something added, something existing contingently and something which brings about change in its subject. Futurity, for example, is not something which naturally or permanently inheres in its intelligible subject. As such, it is presumably consistent with the first two definitions. Since a future subject is not the same as, for instance, a past subject, it also satisfies the third definition by bringing about, through its addition, an obvious change in its subject. There is clearly a difference, however, between intelligible and existential accidents. It is for this reason that Wyclif describes past and future accidents as inhering in an 'analogous' sense in their subjects:

Thus by understanding 'accident' analogically, nothing stands against our conceding that past and future are accidents of a thing according to intelligible being. For future and past being ['fore', 'fuisse'], and hence pastness and futurity contingently inhere in every idea, just as in God, who is essentially every idea. Therefore there are some such non-existents which can, in turn, at any time now inhere, or privatively be lacking formally and contingently: and these are properly accidents.⁵⁷

Wyclif goes on to describe accidents 'which can inhere after they have become absent, or be absent after they have inhaled [in their subjects]'.⁵⁸ These accidents are 'inconsistent' with their subjects ('repugnant suis subiectis'), since they either acquire them (in the first case) or lose them (in the second). As examples, he suggests *praeteritiones* and *futurtiones*, and other entities which 'can be called accidents in the second, extended way'.⁵⁹ There are also accidents which contingently inhere in their subjects, but whose subjects 'cannot begin or cease to be informed by them'. These include any non-existent which inheres in God, such as knowledge, will, ordination (as well as past and future instants, which are mentioned in this connection later in the text). What becomes clear from this is that Wyclif's definition of accident, if it is to encompass both existential and intelligible

⁵⁷ 'Sic ergo intelligendo accidens analogice nichil obest concedere pretericionem et futuricionem esse accidentia rei secundum esse intelligibile. Nam omni ydee, sicut et Deo, qui essentialiter est omnis ydea, contingenter inest fore aut fuisse, et per consequens futuricio et pretericio; ergo est dare talium contingenter inexistentium formaliter aliqua, que possunt vicissim, quociens libuerit, nunc inesse, et alias privative deesse: et illa sunt proprie accidentia.' *De Ente Praedicamentali*, p. 8.

⁵⁸ *De Ente Praedicamentali*, p. 8.

⁵⁹ *De Ente Praedicamentali*, p. 8.

accidents (and hence all possible moments of time), clearly has to extend beyond the nine Aristotelian categories. To restrict it to the latter, as he goes on to explain, would effectively render meaningless his views on the nature of past and future instants. According to the philosophers, there are therefore two different kinds of accident. The first corresponds to the standard definition inherited from Aristotle, according to which there are nine accidental categories. This, Wyclif suggests, is sufficient to describe any *actual* entity. The second is used to characterise subjects which exist beyond the created world. This, we are told, applies to any property which is predicated of God, but also describes past and future moments, which are likewise predicated only of uncreated entities (namely, intelligible beings of the past and the future):

An accident restricted to the nine genera of accident [i.e. the accidental categories] is an accidental form extending to a substance, and thus does not apply to anything which formally inheres in God, such as divine knowledge, past events, future events or any other such things which do not presuppose the existence of a created substance, but only to an accidental form which is present in or absent from a subject beyond its corruption. And it is in this way that the philosophers speak of accidents. Thus in the fifth book of the *Metaphysics*, Chapters thirteen and fourteen, the Philosopher divides being ['ens'] into being *secundum se*, as are the ten *figura* or categories, and being *secundum accidens*, which includes truths outside the categories.⁶⁰

Wyclif follows this short exposition by explaining how every genus, whether a *per se* category or a *per accidens* category, is ultimately subject to the 'intention' of nature. Privations and negations, he explains, are *per accidens* categories, 'since they are not positive natures, as every category should be.'⁶¹ As such, they neither constitute, nor are contained by, a category.

Wyclif's belief that time is an accident is by no means a peculiarity of his own metaphysical system alone. It stems, nevertheless, from a distinctly realist understanding of the universe, and clearly serves to bolster the basic assumptions of his Platonic-

⁶⁰ 'Accidens ergo contractum ad novem genera accidentalia est forma accidentalis substantie extenta, et sic non contingit alicui, quod Deo inest formaliter, ut scientie divine, pretericioni, futuricioni vel alicui huiusmodi, quod non presupponit existenciam substantie create, sed solum forme accidentali, que adest et abest substantie preter eius corrupcionem; et isto modo locuntur philosophi de accidente. Unde 5 Metaphysice 13 et 14 dividit Philosophus ens in ens secundum se, ut sunt decem figurae vel praedicamenta, et ens secundum accidens, cuiusmodi sunt veritates extra genus.' *De Ente Praedicamentali*, pp. 8-9.

⁶¹ *De Ente Praedicamentali*, p. 9.

Augustinian view of the universe. It is a view, moreover, which can strictly only be countenanced by a philosophy which admits an extended interpretation of the concept of being. Wyclif's four-level system, as we have seen, is one which required an absolute distinction between essence (*ens*) and existence (*esse*). For many of the *moderni*, this distinction was seen as an untenable one. William of Ockham had assumed that essence and existence were identical, and that positing two distinct modes of being was both extravagant and unnecessary. Though Ockham's exact views on the nature of time remain unclear, he is known to have been steadfastly opposed to the view that time could be treated as an accident. Exactly how real present and future times were to him is likely to remain a mystery, but it seems more likely than not that Ockham and his followers would have been included among those who are condemned by Wyclif for failing to see beyond the known reality of the present instant.

2.2 *The Reality of Time Beyond the Present Instant*

The time-as-accident argument rests on the assumption that all time, whether a present instant, past event, or future possibility, is a reality, and moreover that the reality of future and past instants is no less distinct than that of the present. In the final four chapters of *De Ente Praedicamentali* (grouped together under the heading *De Tempore*⁶²), Wyclif addresses in detail the problem of non-present instants. No theory of time is adequate, according to the argument he presents here, unless it extends beyond the reality of the present moment. This is among the earliest anticipations of the notion of temporal 'amplification' (*ampliatio temporis*), an idea which assumes a key role in the scriptural theory of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*. According to the definition supplied in the second chapter of the time tract in *De Ente Praedicamentali*, the very possibility of successive moments rests entirely on the existence (or rather, on the *being*) of non-present instants. Since any period of time or motion is divisible (a claim with which none would have disagreed), and since individual divisions cannot exist in the same instant, there must be instants outside the present:

⁶² See Ivan Müller's introduction to his edition of the *De Universalibus*, p. xxxiv.

From the same mode of speaking which we should employ concerning time and other successives, the amplification of the word beyond the present is known. For otherwise we should have to deny that any such successive could be, which is impossible for preordained things; and the consequence is clear from this. For if it is supposed that A is hourly motion, it appears that it should be successively divisible, and have all of its successive parts, but not in the same instant; therefore it should be the case that there are many [times] outside the present instant. For if anything is successive, it is successive according to its singular successive parts, which cannot be in the same instant. Therefore it remains the case that many of its parts reside outside the present instant.⁶³

Wyclif illustrates his point about time and motion with an allusion to Aristotle's demonstration that it is not possible for successive motion to take place within the confines of an instant.⁶⁴ If motion were in an instant, he suggests, then the instant would act as its measure (since, according to Aristotle, time is the measure or 'number' of motion⁶⁵). This, however, is impossible, since a successive divisible cannot be measured by a successive indivisible.⁶⁶ A similar impossibility results from the consideration of the beginning and end of a successive, which, if the successive were contained within an instant, would also have to be included. This would result in any presence or changed thing ceasing to be a successive in the same instant, which Wyclif suggests is impossible. The final reason he supplies is more obscure, and concerns the notion of quantification. If motion were contained in one instant alone, he argues, then we should have to concede for any successive that it loses an infinite number of parts, so that none of these can contribute to its quantification. The result is that the whole 'would not be a *quantum* in any degree' ('non esset actualiter quantum sub aliquo gradu')⁶⁷.

⁶³ 'Item ex modo loquendi, quem oportet habere de tempore et aliis successivis, patet ampliatio verbi de praesenti. Nam aliter negandum esset aliquod tale successivum posse esse, quod est impossibile iuxta preordinata; et consequencia patet. Nam posito, quod A motus horalis sit, patet, quod oportet ipsum esse successive divisibile, et habere omnes partes eius successivas, sed non pro eodem instanti; ergo oportet, quod extra instans praesens sint multa. Nam si aliquod successivum est, isum est secundum singulas eius partes successivas, quod non potest esse in eodem instanti; ergo relinquitur, quod mule eius partes hospitentur extra instans.' *De Ente Praedicamentali*, p. 189.

⁶⁴ *Physics*, 234a, 24 - 234b, 10.

⁶⁵ *Physics*, 219b, 3.

⁶⁶ 'Si motus esset in instanti, tunc esset in eo, ut mensurante, quia alius modus inessendi esset impertinens; sed nullum successive divisibile potest mensurari indivisibili succesivo; ergo nullus motus successivus est in instanti.' *De Ente Praedicamentali*, p. 189.

⁶⁷ *De Ente Praedicamentali*, p. 190.

Few of Wyclif's arguments on instants and successives are likely to have proved controversial, though tellingly, none strictly provides Wyclif with proof of his central claim about the reality of non-present instants either. Equally inconclusive – within the present context – is an argument cited from Augustine's influential exposition on time in the *Confessions*, through which Wyclif seeks to justify his contention that temporal words should be extended beyond the present moment.⁶⁸ Augustine, we are told, had himself suggested that words should be amplified beyond the present, and had made the significant observation that past and future instants were everywhere where present instants were:

From this consideration of the successive extension of time and its composition out of its parts, Augustine argues in the eleventh book of the *Confessions* for the amplification of words beyond the present. Thus, after a long dispute concerning the existence of the present time, the past and the future, he concedes correctly that if time is neither long nor measurable nor visible, this nevertheless is as much as to say that past and future times are everywhere where presents are.⁶⁹

In literal terms, Wyclif does not misrepresent Augustine here. We should be aware, however, that he remains silent about the most revealing aspects of his teaching. Words, for Augustine, could indeed be amplified beyond the present. This had to be the case, since time was spoken of *as though* it were extended ('for a long time', 'a long time ago', etc).⁷⁰ Such amplification, however, rested on the purely *psychological* processes of anticipation and recollection.⁷¹ The only time which had any reality, Augustine believed, was the indivisible present instant, which could not itself be extended. This conception of time has little in common with Wyclif's own, and highlights the difficulties inherent in the

⁶⁸ A detailed commentary on Book 11 of the *Confessions*, which highlights the significant properties of Augustine's theory of time, can be found in John. F. Callahan, *Four Views of Time in Ancient Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1948), pp. 149-187.

⁶⁹ 'Et ista consideracio de extensione succesiva temporis et compositione eius ex suis partibus movebat Augustinum 11 Confessionum ad ampliandum verbi de praesenti. Unde post longam disputationem de existencia temporis presentis, preteriti et futuri concedit bene, quod si tempus non est longum vel mensurabile nec visibile, hoc tamen dicit se scire, quod tempus praeteritum et futurum, ubicumque sunt, ibi presentia sunt.' *De Ente Praedicamentali*, p. 191.

⁷⁰ *Confessions*, Ch. 22. 28.

⁷¹ See esp. *Confessions*, Ch. 23. 36, in which Augustine concludes that time is measured in the mind alone. He had earlier reasoned that time was a form of *distentio* (Ch. 26. 33), but remained uncertain (until this point) as to exactly what was being distended.

assumption that temporal expressions must be matched by an objective (rather than a psychological) reality.

Throughout the remainder of Wyclif's exposition on the reality of non-present instants, this tension between properties of *significatio* and reality (namely, the real, rather than merely the verbal extension of time) manifests itself very clearly. Though he directs us towards the extension of temporal reality, it is consistently at the expense of an explicit acknowledgement of the linguistic context of the argument. We are urged not to follow the mistaken assumption, for example, that the verb 'to be' is restricted to the present. Indeed, it is only the weakness of the human intellect, Wyclif suggests, that leads us to interpret it in this very limited way. In both *De Ente Praedicamentali* we are told that by itself, and according to the literal force of the words (the *vis vocis*), 'to be' signifies no time at all. In the majority of temporal clauses containing this verb, tense is introduced adverbially; only through the working of our minds is it associated with the meaning of the verb itself.⁷² Few, presumably, would have sought to deny this argument, though fewer still would have subscribed to the theory of intelligible past and future instants on which it rests. It is for this reason, presumably, that Wyclif is so selective in his use of grammatical and logical authorities. Priscian's views on the signification of *esse*, for example, are presented in such a way as to lend apparent support to his conception of higher, non-successive modes of being. We learn nothing, nevertheless, of the metaphysical premises of these views:

There is no reason why the substantive 'being' ['esse'] should connote time. Therefore if it connotes [time] this is beyond the *vis vocis* and is a voluntary application of the intellect. Since therefore the intellect can indifferently elicit universal and singular intentions respecting the connotation of time, but is more inclined to elicit universal intentions, it follows that we should not take the verb 'is', signifying the present, to connote a single time. And this assumption appears from Priscian, in his eighth great book [of the *Institutiones Grammaticae*], Chapter 22, where he says: 'The present time is said, since in part it has passed and in part it is in the future. For time elapses in the manner of an unstable river, and can hardly have a point in the present, that is, in an instant, and its maximum part has passed or is in the future, with the exception of the substantive verb

⁷² See *De Ente Predicamentali*, p. 212 (cited below)

I am', which is the most perfect of all, from which nothing lacks.'⁷³

This passage supplies the clearest indication of the perceived connection between *ampliatio temporis* and a philosophy which privileges the universal, abstractive habit over the perception of the particular. Wyclif's complaint here is very typical, both in terms of its content and the manner in which it is presented. As in the case of his discussion of universal categories and intelligible beings elsewhere, the object of his assault is the human intellect itself, or rather, the perversity of its voluntary operations. The distinction between meaning perceived *immediate*, by the *vis vocis*, and meaning apprehended through the distorting lens of the individual mind, is precisely the same as that which he applies to the senses of scriptural language. In both cases, it is a resistance to the natural inclinations of the mind, as much as the mind's own inherent weakness, which is to blame for failure to arrive at truth. As elsewhere, difficulties are seen to arise not primarily as a consequence of verbal confusion, but rather out of the misapplication of established ideas. Wyclif's insistence on amplifying the sense of the verb 'to be' *beyond* the present time, therefore, does not constitute a defence of the principle of *ampliatio* (which was well known), but rather of a particular *kind* of *ampliatio*. *Ampliatio*, in the logical sense in which it was normally understood, referred simply to an extension of the verbal sense of an expression (which was usually, though not invariably, temporal).⁷⁴ In Wyclif, however, as we have suggested, it entailed a commitment to an extended ontology. It is for this reason, presumably, that he insists always on using the expression *ampliatio temporis*, rather than simply *ampliatio* or *ampliatio verbidictionis/termini*. Failure to apply the principle of

⁷³ 'Item non est de racione huius verbi substantivi "esse" connotare aliquod tempus; ergo si connotat, hoc est preter vim vocis ex applicacione voluntaria intellectus; cum ergo intellectus indifferenter potest elicere intenciones universales et singulares de connotacione temporis, sitque pronior ad eliciendum intenciones universales, sequitur, quod non oportet hoc verbum "est" de praesenti significans primarie connotare singulariter tempus. Assumptum patet per Priscianum in magno libro octavo capitulo 22, ubi sic: "Presens tempus dicitur, cum pars preteriit parsque futura est, cum tempus fluvii more instabili volvatur cursu, vix punctum habere potest in presenti, hoc est in instanti, et maxime eius pars preteriit vel futura est, excepto "sum" verbo substantivo, quod est omnium perfectissimum, cui nichil deest.'" *De Ente Praedicamentali*, p. 212.

⁷⁴ The concept of *ampliatio* would have been familiar to any scholastic logician, who would have used it alongside *restrictio* to describe the suppositional characteristics of terms in propositions. A term could be said to be 'extended' or 'restricted' to particular supposits (times or entities), depending on the context of its application. See Alfonso Maierù, *Terminologia Logica della Tarda Scolastica* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1972), pp. 139-194; De Rijk, *Logica Modernorum*, vol. 2i, pp. 584-87. It seems likely that *ampliatio* and *restrictio* were being used by logicians long before the scholastic period. Both are found, for example, in the *Sententiae ex Arisotele Collectae* attributed to Bede (*PL*, 90, col. 1017b). Neither in its early nor its later history, however, is the term *ampliatio* used in the extended metaphysical sense in which it is found in Wyclif.

ampliatio in the extended metaphysical sense, Wyclif believed, typified the tendency among contemporary logicians to privilege conventional meanings (or suppositional properties) of terms above their natural *signata*. As we have suggested, however, he was able to give no systematic proof that the amplification of a term was motivated by an extended conception of the metaphysics of time itself.

2.3 'Tempus' and 'Duratio': Wyclif's Distinction between Finite and Infinite

In attempting to justify his arguments about the necessary reality of non-present instants, Wyclif draws attention to the key distinction on which his theory of time rests: the distinction between *tempus*, or time as it is experienced successively by creatures, and *duratio*, everlasting or 'eternal' time. This is treated most fully in *De Tempore*,⁷⁵ though the brief discussion in *De Ente Praedicamentali* offers a coherent and revealing justification of this basic categorical division. In the nineteenth chapter, which forms the first section of the treatise on time, we are presented for the first time with the question of the reality of non-present instants. Wyclif cites two objections to the supposition that there are many things outside the present instant (*multa sunt extra instans praesans*), responding to each in turn. The first denies that successive being is possible, and likewise that anything can always be. Wyclif dismisses this at once – on the strength, we are told, of copious disproofs used elsewhere – as 'improbable'.⁷⁶ The second, which leads him into a protracted discussion of the relationship between time and eternity, suggests that if anything is that thing at any particular time, then it is always that same thing in all time.⁷⁷ By this mode of arguing, Wyclif reasons, it is conceded that all time is, but it is nevertheless unsatisfactory. First, because all temporal periods would be equal and infinite, so that any 'permanent' thing would be infinitely old. This contradicts Scripture, which measures the duration of temporal things according to degrees of greater and lesser magnitude. Likewise,

⁷⁵ See the discussion in Robson, *Wyclif and the Oxford Schools*, pp. 156-161; also Allen Breck, 'John Wyclif on Time', in Wolfgang Yourgrau and Allen D. Breck, eds., *Cosmology, History and Theology* (New York: Plenum Press, 1977), pp. 211-217.

⁷⁶ 'Prima [via] dicit quod non est possibile sucessivum esse, et sic nichil semper est. Sed quia alibi diffuse improbata est dicta evasio, ideo renuo illud modo tanquam improbabile.' *De Ente Praedicamentali*, p. 179.

⁷⁷ 'Secunda via concedit consequenciam, quod si aliquid aliquando est illud, semper est quod in omni tempore.' *De Ente Praedicamentali*, p. 179.

in the second place, any single successive instant would be infinitely long lasting, and any part of time would be equal to its whole.⁷⁸ By implication, such an argument effectively confuses the distinction between finite and infinite time. Wyclif illustrates this point with reference to God, whose eternal presence is nevertheless different from being present in any particular instant of time. Moments of past and future time – being intelligible, but not actual – are likewise different from any present moment:

God always was, is and will be, and nevertheless in no *part* of time always is, but in the whole of eternal time. Nor is it possible to end or begin always to be, as it seems, nor does it follow: in every instant, God is not always, therefore always he is not. For we should know that in every instant or time God is not always, which is false for the unique eternal time.⁷⁹

If non-present moments are to be understood as realities, then the distinction between successive and eternal time must be carefully observed. But how are we to understand the nature of successive time itself? In the *Logicae Continuatio*, time (*tempus*) is defined (following Aristotle) as the successive quantity that measures motion ('quantitas successiva mensurans motum'). Elsewhere, Wyclif tells us, he has described it as the duration of the world in mutable being ('duratio mundi in esse transmutabili'), which had its origins with the creation of the world itself.⁸⁰ This important relationship between time and the existence of the world is one which Wyclif, like the majority of his philosophical contemporaries, was keen to emphasize:

...time begins with the world and endures eternally with the world. Nevertheless, it is posterior by nature to the world or its motion. For although time pre-existed the creation of the world, as place [precedes] the inception of its location, it did not pre-exist the being of the world, but rather the contrary. And thus I believe that it is not possible for the world

⁷⁸ '...sic cuiuslibet temporanei etas vel periodus esset par cuilibet periodo, quia quelibet infinita, et sic quelibet res permanens esset infinitum senex vel antiqua, quod satis contradicit scripture mensuranti etates hominum et duraciones temporalium secundum plus et minus. Similiter per idem sequitur, quod omne tempus vel aliquod successivum esset infinitum diuturnum, et per consequens, cum tempus non habet aliam magnitudinem, omne tempus foret infinitum magnum, et sic quelibet pars quantitativa temporis esset equalis suo toto simpliciter.' *De Ente Praedicamentali*, pp. 179-80.

⁷⁹ 'Deus enim semper fuit, est et erit, et tamen in nulla parte temporis semper est, sed in toto tempore eterno. Nec potest desinere vel incipere semper esse, ut videtur, nec sequitur: in omni instanti, Deus non semper est, ergo semper non est, quia oportet capere, quod in omni instanti vel tempore Deus non semper est, quod est falsum pro unico tempore eterno.' *De Ente Praedicamentali*, p. 181.

⁸⁰ *Logicae Continuatio*, p. 161.

to be without time, and consequently it is possible for any motion indifferently to follow that time. For a creature cannot *be* [in] the world, unless it has its duration in mutable being, which its time.⁸¹

Implicit in this argument is the rejection of the Aristotelian view of time, which denies the necessity of an originary instant or an act of creation. Wyclif makes numerous more explicit and highly scathing references to this doctrine in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* and other later theological writings.⁸² His insistence on the created nature of time also gives some important indications of the perceived relationship between successive time (*tempus*) and eternity (*duratio*). Though the two are often presented as being fundamentally incompatible (this being a major source of confusion, if Wyclif is to be believed, among certain of his Oxford contemporaries), they do, nevertheless, come together at the beginning of the created universe. Earlier in the *Logicae Continuatio*, we are told that the first instant of the world follows immediately the instant of eternity, to which it is naturally posterior ('primum... instans mundi est post instans aeternitas, quia naturaliter posterius').⁸³

Alongside the other key strands in Wyclif's defence of the extended theory of time (namely, the arguments relating to temporal accidents and the reality of past and future instants), the fundamental distinction between time and eternity was invoked in a wide range of hermeneutic contexts in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*. Not to observe the distinction rigidly, Wyclif believed, was to leave oneself open to philosophical assault.

⁸¹ '...tempus incipit cum mundo et manebit aeternaliter cum mundo; posterius tamen est naturaliter quam mundus vel motus iugis. Licet enim praeexigebatur tempus ad creationem mundi, sicut locus ad inceptionem suae locationis, neutrum tamen praeexigebatur ad esse mundi, sed econtra. Et sic credo quod non est possibile mundum esse sine tempore, et per consequens quemcunque motum indifferenter potest consequi illud tempus. Non enim potest creatura esse mundus, nisi fuerit duratio eius in esse transmutabili: quod est tempus.' *Logicae Continuatio*, pp. 161-62.

⁸² See the discussion in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, i. 29-31.

⁸³ *Logicae Continuatio*, p. 158.

Most significantly, however, it also led to confusion over a fundamental exegetical principle: that of *ampliatio temporis*.

2.4 'Ampliatio Temporis' and the Study of Scripture

The relevance of temporal extension to the study of Scripture emerges most clearly in Wyclif's discussion of temporal propositions in the *Logicae Continuatio*. The extended conception of time, he claims here, is the only way of reconciling the meaning of scriptural utterances and sacramental language with a logical understanding of truth ('logical' being used here, of course, according to its wider, *analogical* meaning, rather than in the narrow sense of contemporary logic). It is introduced following the dismissal of two classical views of time (here described as *fabulae*), the one identifying it with substance, and the other, familiar from Aristotle, denying its reality altogether (since the present strictly either was or will be, but never is). The extended version of time, we are told here, is that which the philosophers and theologians use, and is supported by Aristotle in both the *Physics* and the *Metaphysics*. In the absence of such a theory, Wyclif argues, past and future instants would simply be at one with the present, and the idea of successive instants would have to be denied:

On account of such pieces of evidence I was first moved to amplify time, because I do not see how either a philosopher or a theologian could deny such successives. Nor do I see how they are continua, unless they are composed from existing parts. Therefore, just as the middle instant of an hour joins all middle instants in turn, so they are joined, causing time, continuation, priority, corruption, and knowledge, as the philosophers truly say. And otherwise not one instant or another could be superior or posterior to any other in terms of time, and thus the instant begins, marries and unites the parts of time which are in its measure.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ 'Est... modus loquendi philosophorum et theologorum loqui non sic arcte, sed extensive, ut patet 4 Physicorum, commento 88. Et ideo, 4 et 5 Metaphysice, de priori, 8 Metaphysice et commento 5, dicitur quod cena differt a prandio secundum partes, et conformis est applicatio, libro 9 et 14 et libro 12. Immo omnes scientiae sic locuntur. Unde propter tales evidencias fui primo motus ad ampliandum tempus, quia non vidi quomodo philosophus vel theologus posset negare huiusmodi succesiva. Nec capit ingenium meum quod sint continua, nisi componantur ex partibus existentibus. Sicut ergo medium instans illius hore copulat medientates omnes ad invicem, sic illa copulantur, causantes tempus, continuationem, prioritatem, corruptionem, scientiam, ut philosophi vere dicunt. Nec aliter aliquod instans vel aliquod aliud posset sees reliquo superius vel posterius quo ad tempus, et sic instans initiat, copulat, et unit partes temporis quae sunt suis mensuris.' *Logicae Continuatio*, 167-68.

Wyclif's rejection of the idea of temporal instants being continuous, rather than discrete entities, is revealing. Here, as elsewhere, he is clearly anxious to maintain an absolute distinction between the properties of eternal *duratio* and the passage of time in the created world. If instants were continuous, then they would have to be parts of the present, since there would be nothing to divide them from it. If priority and posteriority were thus to disappear, then time (*tempus*) would lose the very properties which distinguished it from eternity; all things would simply become part of an unchanging present. This is the view of time which Wyclif associates with contemporary 'continuist' philosophers. Until recently, the significance of his opposition to such philosophers – which would certainly go some way towards explaining the widespread hostility towards his theory of *ampliatio* – has gone largely unnoticed. Norman Kretzmann, in a revealing article on Wyclif's logic, seeks to rectify this situation by highlighting the extent to which Wyclif, as a defender of a view of time in which instants were discrete, minimal constituents, was in 'a tiny, embattled minority'.⁸⁵ It is certainly significant that among those who would have opposed him on this issue, many were also doctrinally opposed to his views on being, universals, and predication. John Duns Scotus, William Alnwick, William of Ockham and Adam Wodeham are among the most notable examples, all of whom, as we have argued, would certainly qualify as anti-realists, if not necessarily as nominalists.⁸⁶

Scriptural motivation for Wyclif's indivisibilism is not difficult to find within the pages of the logical writings and the *Summa de Ente*. Wyclif, as we have seen, insists that the Bible itself measures worldly things according to degrees of greater and less, implicitly lending support to the theory of indivisibilism and *ampliatio temporis*. A different example is provided by Kretzmann, who relates indivisibilism in Wyclif ultimately to his supposition that God must know all aspects of the created universe. This, Kretzmann argues, would be impossible, even for God, if time were continuous (and hence infinitely divisible), and would run contrary to the sense of Genesis, in which we learn that 'God saw

⁸⁵ Norman Kretzmann, 'Continua, Indivisibles and Change in Wyclif's Logic of Scripture', in Anthony Kenny, ed., *Wyclif in his Times* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 31-65 (p. 34).

⁸⁶ It should be noted that Kretzmann also lists the realists Walter Burley and Thomas Bradwardine among the opponents of indivisibilism. They were, however, in a conspicuous minority. See 'Continua, Indivisibles and Change', p. 35.

all the things that he had made.’ (1:31)⁸⁷ Ultimately, of course, indivisibilism is defended only as a means of upholding Wyclif’s contested views on the amplification of time. These views, by their very nature, found scriptural justification, since it was only through them that the literal truth of certain temporal passages could be upheld. In their absence, as Wyclif explains, any commitment to scriptural truth would be seriously compromised:

Otherwise [i.e. without the theory of *ampliatio temporis*] I do not see how the meaning of Scripture can be logically sustained and defended, when it says that we are all sons of Adam, [and] that Christ is the son of David and the son of Abraham, together with his children. For whenever one of us ignores a genealogy, and particularly typically a generation of this kind, it should be conceded finally that those said men, the patriarchs, *in magno tempore* would mediate generate those sons. Consequently, if anyone is the son of such a father, then he has such a father, and the [father] has such a son. From which it follows that relative things are convertible in time.⁸⁸

All that has to be remembered, as Wyclif concludes by suggesting, is that all things that were, or will be, *are* (in the amplified sense of the term). This dictum, repeated frequently throughout Wyclif’s metaphysical and exegetical writings, became effectively synonymous with the theory of *ampliatio temporis*. Wyclif’s theories of truth and temporal amplification, like the related principle of analogy, serve to highlight (and to preserve) the unique status of the Bible as a sacred text. Both rest on the assumption that the text is principally an *intelligible* entity, removed from the realms of human discourse. The intelligible nature of the Bible, as we have seen, had also been emphasised in Wyclif’s analysis of the Book of Life in *De Ente Primo in Communi*.⁸⁹ The metaphysical significance of these ideas, and their vulnerability to philosophical assault by anti-realists, first begins to become clear in Wyclif’s disputations with Kenningham, which took place shortly before *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* was composed. In the course of two

⁸⁷ This passage, according to Kretzmann, is used on numerous occasions by Wyclif. See Kretzmann, ‘Continua, Indivisibles and Change’, n. 54.

⁸⁸ ‘Nec aliter video quomodo potest logice sustineri vel defendi sensus scripturae, dicentis nos omnes esse filios Adam, Cristum esse filium David et filium Abrahe, cum eius seminibus; quia cum quilibet nostrum ignorat geneloyam particulariter exemplative generationem huiusmodi, oportet ad ultimum concedere quod dicti patriarchae in magno tempore mediate generar[e]nt illos filios; et per consequens, si aliquis sit filius talis patris, tunc habet talem patrem et alius habet ipsum filium. ex quo sequitur quod relativa sunt convertibilia in tempore.’ *Logicae Continuatio*, p. 169

⁸⁹ See Ch. 2 (section 5), above.

determinations, Kenningham seeks to undermine both the theory of *ampliatio temporis*, and the metaphysics of intelligible being on which this and Wyclif's theory of propositional truth depended. He is especially critical of the literalistic conception of scriptural meaning which the theories of real predication, truth to divine intention, and temporal amplification served to reinforce. The determinations provide us with the best surviving example of an anti-realist critique of Wyclif's hermeneutic theory. They were clearly perceived to pose a significant threat, both to the philosophy of the *Summa de Ente* itself and (more crucially) to the conceptions of textual meaning and authority which depended upon it. The relationship between the determinations and textual theory will be analysed in detail in Chapter 4, with particular reference to the definitions of truth and time highlighted above.

CHAPTER 4

CONTEMPORARY CRITICISM OF WYCLIF'S PHILOSOPHY OF SCRIPTURE:

JOHN KENNINGHAM, OC

Though there can be little doubt that Wyclif would have encountered opposition to his philosophical opinions during his time as a master in the Arts faculty, and certainly by the time he incepted in theology, the effect of such opposition, and its philosophical consequences, are difficult to gauge. The impact of philosophical disputation on exegetical practice is similarly obscure. It has been suggested that the 'sophists' and sign doctors so frequently disparaged in the *Summa de Ente* and *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, whose broad ideas consistently loom larger than any individual intellectual failing, might as easily have been men of straw as real people.¹ As Gillian Evans has pointed out, moreover, there is none of the logical casuistry of which Wyclif complains in commentaries surviving from the period.² Records of Wyclif's disputations in the Theology faculty, however, supply some important missing evidence. His protracted exchanges with John Kenningham, which raise some fundamental questions about the nature of scriptural meaning, provide perhaps the best indication that contemporary logic and its perceived abuses may well have posed as great a threat to his own exegetical ideas as his later writings suggest. Kenningham's ideas, moreover, though they were not influenced conspicuously by any single philosophical school, and though they were not always presented consistently, nevertheless bear a close resemblance to views traditionally associated with fourteenth-century nominalism (Courtenay's 'moderate' school).

The focal points of debate between Kenningham and Wyclif are three of the key philosophical themes of the *Summa de Ente* and the *Logicae Continuatio*: being, truth, and time. The realist interpretation of these ideas, as we have seen, formed the mainstay of Wyclif's exegetical theory, and supplied his basic means of defending the truth of Scripture *de virtute sermonis*. Kenningham's critical interpretation of Wyclif's ideas, as it is presented

¹ See, for example, Kenny, *Wyclif*, Ch. 1.

² G. R. Evans, 'Wyclif's *Logic* and Wyclif's Exegesis: the Context', *Studies in Church History*, Subsidia, 4 (1985), 287-300 (p. 287).

in the three surviving determinations against him, predictably led him to an exegetical method whose emphases were – for the most part – markedly different from those of Wyclif's own. Among the most outstanding features of his approach are an emphasis on the primacy of human authorial intention, a privileging of literal meanings over their metaphorical equivalents, and a general acknowledgement of the importance of *language* as a determinant of scriptural meaning. Though we should obviously be cautious about identifying any of these features, or all of them together, as the minimal elements of a 'nominalist' hermeneutic, they were, nevertheless, widespread in anti-realist exegetical writings throughout the fourteenth century. There were, of course, many reasons for this which had little or nothing to do with nominalism. Literalistic interpretation and the intention of the human author (consideration of the latter typically informing the former) had been emphasised increasingly by exegetes since the beginning of the scholastic period.³ Aquinas – himself a realist – had explained that the literal sense, being prior to all other senses, was strictly the only sense from which arguments could be drawn.⁴ His reasoning, and that of the literalists who followed him, was primarily *logical*, and would have been accepted or rejected on grounds essentially unrelated to the nominalist-realist debate. There are clear indications from Kenningham's arguments, nevertheless, that his own literalism had a firm basis in ontological assumptions specific to nominalist philosophy. This is also true, as will be argued below, in the case of William of Ockham and a number of other anti-realist thinkers whose exegetical methods are known.⁵

1. KENNINGHAM AS ANTI-REALIST

The clearest indication of Kenningham's likely philosophical allegiances is provided in the opening passages of Wyclif's first determination against him (1372).⁶ Here we are

³ See G.R. Evans, *The Language and Logic of the Bible: the Road to Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). On the relationship between literalistic exegesis and the growth of Aristotelianism in the twelfth century, see Smalley, *The Study of the Bible*, pp. 292-308.

⁴ '...omnes sensus fundentur super unum, scilicet litteralem. Ex quo solo potest trahi argumentum, non autem ex his quae secundum allegoriam dicuntur...' *Summa Theologiae*, Ia, I, 10, res. ad. 1.

⁵ Though Ockhamism and the name of William of Ockham are often associated with literalism, there has as yet been no comprehensive attempt to link nominalism with literalism *on philosophical grounds*.

⁶ This is the first of three determinations, the second of which is not extant. Thomson conjectures that the third is itself probably less than half complete. The three determinations, he suggests, were prepared as a response to Kenningham's brief *Ingressus* (discussed in section 3, below), and are likely to have been preceded by an initial determination and a response (to Kenningham's lost critique of this same determination). None of these earlier

introduced to the image of three philosophical nests, one logical, one natural, and one metaphysical. These, Wyclif explains, are the nests by which he and the other *pulli Christi* – ‘chickens of Christ’ – are nourished, and according to which, as we soon discover, his views on the nature of being, truth and time are to be defended.⁷ Each of the three nests embodies a familiar realist supposition, and each, as Wyclif later points out,⁸ has attracted criticism from Kenningham. The logical nest, he tells us, is that by which we know the reality of the universal categories of *genus* and *species*. It is through these that ‘Scripture frequently verifies its meaning.’⁹ This is the lowest of the three nests, and serves – as its nature would suggest – as the foundation. The natural nest, which is higher, is ‘that by which we know every substantial material form to be an accidental disposition of the said [divine] essence or nature’ (‘quo noscimus quamlibet formam substantialem materialem... esse dispositionem accidentalem dictae essentiae, vel naturae’).¹⁰ Wyclif presumably refers here to knowledge of the relationship between the eternal essence of an entity and its existential nature in the temporal world. Through this, he suggests, ‘we know that Scripture is literally true when it proposes that the body of a particular species is not *converted* into another, but in its own time it is, or will be, the body of a different species’¹¹. Essence and existence, if this proposition is accepted, may be seen to have a scriptural basis (insofar as its literal interpretation – on Wyclif’s reading – presupposes such a relationship), as well as to be necessary to a proper understanding of biblical language. In the wider context of Wyclif’s hermeneutics, it was also essential, as we have seen, to his theory of analogical predication, and to his views on the nature of time.¹²

works survives, but Thomson finds reference to Kenningham’s critique in the *Ingressus* itself. See *Latin Writings*, pp. 227-29.

⁷ FZ, p. 453. (Where more than one reference to the *Fasciculi* is given, the authors of the respective sections are supplied in parentheses.)

⁸ FZ, p. 454. For the text of Kenningham’s response to the ideas embodied in three philosophical nests, see FZ, pp. 14-42.

⁹ ‘...primus nidus in parte logicus est, quomodo cognoscimus universalia ex parte rei; ut genus et speciem, de quibus Scriptura verificat crebrius sensum suum.’ FZ, p. 453.

¹⁰ FZ, p. 453.

¹¹ ‘...sic intelligimus Scripturam esse veram et de virtute sermonis, quo poni corpus unius speciei nedum converti in aliud, sed fore vel esse pro suo tempore corpus disparis speciei.’ FZ, p. 453.

¹² See ch. 2, above; on the significance of the essence-existence distinction for Wyclif’s theory of time, see ch. 3 (section 2.1).

The highest of the three nests, and the one to which most attention is devoted by Wyclif and Kenningham, is the metaphysical. Through this, Wyclif explains, 'we know the eternity of God by his immensity, which stands at once in all past and future time' ('cognoscimus aeternitatem Dei ex eius immensitate coasistente omni tempore praeterito, vel futuro').¹³ As a consequence of this, we know that all things which were, or will be, are present to God,¹⁴ a point to which Wyclif returns repeatedly, and which, as we have seen, was a key postulate in his theory of *ampliatio temporis*. Its potential significance in the wider debate between nominalists and realists becomes clear when he explains that 'through this truth we resolve the confused questions relating to freedom of choice, necessity, and future contingents, and we are able to maintain that holy Scripture is true *de vi sermonis*, against the pompous subtleties of the sophists'.¹⁵ Each of these questions, which are examined in detail in Kenningham's third determination against Wyclif, is recognisable as one over which nominalists and realists were habitually divided. It is certainly significant that Wyclif places alongside them the arguments of 'sophists' who were denying the truth of Scripture *de vi sermonis*. It is fair to assume, moreover, that these are the same logicians who were castigated by Wyclif in the *Summa de Ente* and the *Logicae Continuatio* for their philosophical and exegetical errors.

If the literal truth of scripture is to be respected, Wyclif contends, all three nests must be preserved from corruption. Anyone who does damage to any one of them, does damage, we are told, both to Wyclif himself, and to every professor of the sacred page.¹⁶ In his *acta* against Wyclif's teachings, Kenningham declares his desire to follow his master's ideas, but finds himself ultimately unable to accept the principles embodied in the hierarchy of nests:

...it seems to me that my master builds nests on high, which I desire to follow, but cannot grasp, because neither is the house of Herod my guide in curious and subtle inventions, nor are the high mountains passable to me, with the deer, in arduous sentences and deductions, but rather my refuge is with the

¹³ *FZ*, p. 453.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ 'per illam veritatem solvimus perplexa dubia de libertate arbitrii, de necessitate, et de contingentia futurorum, et sustinemus Scripturam sacram esse veram de vi sermonis, contra pomposas argutias sophistarum.' *FZ*, pp. 453-454.

¹⁶ 'Quicumque ... diruperit aliquem horum trium nidorum, injuriatur nedum mihi, sed cuicumque sacrae paginae professori, quia indubie si aliquis istorum trium nidorum diruptus fuerit, consequens est Scripturam esse falsissimam de vi vocis.' *FZ*, p. 454.

hedgehogs, [on] the humble rock of solid truth.¹⁷

The logical and the natural nests are put to one side in the discussion which follows this evaluation, and it is unfortunate that they are considered only indirectly in Kenningham's two main determinations. Nevertheless, his very deliberate and unequivocal rejection of each of them is in itself a testimony to his own anti-realism, and has a strong bearing on many of the exegetical issues he later debates with Wyclif. The metaphysical nest, Kenningham suggests, is one that he would rather discover and understand, than destroy. The tone of his initial rejection soon returns, however, when he suggests that, were he to touch this nest, he would always be fearful of falling, since he can neither see its foundation, nor perceive any support for it in the text of the Scriptures.¹⁸ The ideas which the nest represents – the eternity of God and the eternal 'presence' of all things to God – brought with them a range of fundamental metaphysical assumptions, all of which highlight key divisions between realist and anti-realist scholars in the fourteenth century. The three key themes isolated above – being, truth, and time – are all considered in the context of this nest, whose nature and reality is the overarching issue in the two determinations which are to be considered here.

The themes of Kenningham's two determinations – the reality of intelligible beings and the amplification of time – are closely interrelated. The latter in an important way presupposed the former, since past and future instants, as we illustrated in the previous chapter, were held by Wyclif to be intelligible realities. Wyclif's defence of the theory of intelligible being in the latter half of the fourteenth century was less unique or extreme than it is often held to be, standing as it does at the end of a long history of such defences. Thomas Aquinas, William of Auvergne, and Henry of Ghent are among Wyclif's most notable predecessors in this respect.¹⁹ Before Kenningham, William of Ockham was among the best known opponents of the theory of intelligible being, though a strong tradition of similar opposition had also developed among the followers of Duns Scotus in the late thirteenth and

¹⁷ '...mihi videtur, Magister meus nidificat in excelsis, quem sequi cupio sed apprehendere nequeo, quia nec Herodis domus dux mihi est in curiosis et subtilibus adinventionibus, neque cum cervis montes excelsi mihi pervii sunt, in arduis sentiis et deductionibus, sed cum herinaciis refugium mihi est humilis petra solidae veritatis.' *FZ*, pp. 14-15.

¹⁸ 'Tertium... nidum non quaero dirumpere, sed potius invenire, et materiam eius agnoscere; quia alias si eum attingerem, ibi tamen quiescere non auderem, timens mihi de casu, quia non video fundamentum illius, nec aliquam in Scripturis suspicor esse materiam fortem, ipsum ex integro vere supportantem.' *FZ*, p. 15.

¹⁹ The most comprehensive survey of late-medieval thinking on intelligible natures is to be found in John Marenbon, *Later Medieval Philosophy*, pp. 93-187.

early fourteenth century. Though these were not strictly nominalists, many, such as William of Alnwick, opposed a significant number of the same philosophical doctrines.²⁰ Kenningham's arguments, though not strictly those of a nominalist, must therefore be seen to have had significant nominalist precedents. His contempt for philosophical extravagance, which is made manifest in his analyses of certain of Wyclif's metaphysical assumptions, would likewise have won him the support of any dedicated Ockhamist. Kenningham's response to Wyclif's realism in the two determinations will be considered in the sections following. The first analyses his treatment of the broad metaphysical notions of intelligible being and real (as opposed to linguistic) truth. It then examines the ways in which these two concepts informed Wyclif's controversial views on the literal truth of Scripture. The second isolates the principal philosophical objections which Kenningham brought against the theory of *ampliatio temporis*.

2. BEING AND TRUTH: RESPONSES TO PHILOSOPHICAL REALISM IN THE *DETERMINATIONES*

Though being was the subject of the last of Kenningham's three determinations (*De Esse Intelligibili Creaturae*),²¹ it arguably represented the most fundamental philosophical issue he confronted. Its close relation to philosophical ideas about the nature of truth (with which, of course, Wyclif supposed it to be identical) meant that it was also among the most controversial, especially within the context of biblical hermeneutics. Kenningham's critical readings of Wyclif's teachings in both of these areas were clearly perceived as a significant challenge, as Wyclif's own determinations against him make clear.²² The hierarchically-structured conception of being, after all, lay at the heart not only of Wyclif's theory of *ampliatio temporis*, but also of many of the other metaphysical and hermeneutic principles described in the *Summa de Ente*. Most importantly, as we have shown, it served to anchor the text of Scripture beyond the confines of conventional human language and sign systems, and to free it from the normal rules of truth and falsity.

²⁰ Alnwick, for example, is known chiefly for his rejection of analogical predication, and for his opposition to the teachings of Henry of Ghent, many of whose ideas were also explicitly opposed by Ockham.

²¹ *FZ*, pp. 73-104. I have assumed that the scribal designations 'secunda determinatio' and 'tertia determinatio' reflect accurately the order of delivery.

²² See especially Wyclif's first determination, *FZ*, pp. 453-476

2.1 The Problem of Being: Kenningham's *Determinatio de Esse Intelligibili Creaturae*

The nature of created being, if Kenningham's remarks in his final determination are to be believed, had been a frequent topic of discussion between Wyclif and himself during their debates in the Oxford theology faculty.²³ At the beginning of the determination, Kenningham declares (with characteristic humility) his intention to respond to the *valida argumenta* and *efficaces testimonia sanctorum* (arguments from reason and authority, respectively) presented by Wyclif in defence of his own theory of being.²⁴ It soon becomes clear that his main target is the theory of intelligible being (*esse intelligibile/esse cognitum*), by which, we are told, Wyclif strives to prove that all that was, is.²⁵ For the sake of clarity, Kenningham suggests, and so that his own responses may be made plain to his academic audience, he will repeat Wyclif's arguments in the form in which they arose.²⁶ The eight responses which follow thus fall roughly into two sections, beginning with glosses on Wyclif's explanations of the nature of intelligible being, and proceeding to problems which – according to Kenningham – arise from arguments based upon it. The arguments of this latter section relate primarily to the problems of contingency and necessity, both of which, on Wyclif's interpretation, relied heavily on an extended understanding of the nature of time and being.²⁷

The first of Kenningham's responses confronts the basic premises of Wyclif's argument about intelligible being. At the beginning of his argument, Kenningham tells us, Wyclif seeks to establish that the intelligible being of every creature is *essentialiter* the divine essence. There is nothing particularly controversial or idiosyncratic about this idea, though it is important to note that, in common with many of Wyclif's theories, it had its origins in the realist tradition of the preceding century.²⁸ Its premises are familiar from *De Universalibus*

²³ FZ, p. 73 (opening paragraph).

²⁴ 'Nuper autem in ultima determinatione sua fortificavit partem suam validis argumentis, et efficacibus sanctorum testimoniis, ad quae rogat Doctor quod clare respondeam. Et libenter volo, sed forte non sufficio.' Ibid.

²⁵ 'Arguit Magister meus primo de esse intelligibili sive cognito, nitens per hoc probare principalem intentum suum in hac materia, scilicet quod omne quod fuit est, et e contra.' FZ, p. 73.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ See Ch. 5 (section 5.1), below, in which the relationship between theories of future contingency and *ampliatio temporis* is considered in detail.

²⁸ Marilyn McCord Adams associates it, in particular, with Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, St Bonaventure and Henry of Ghent. Their theories of divine ideas, significantly, are regarded by Adams as being fundamentally opposed to those of their contemporary, William of Ockham. See Adams, *William Ockham*, pp. 1037-1042.

and *De Ideis*, and there are some important correspondences between these earlier tracts and the account supplied here by Kenningham.²⁹ The focus of Kenningham's criticism, however, is Wyclif's elaborate justification of his argument. The argument itself follows the standard syllogistic pattern, proceeding from the assumption that all things which are absolutely necessary are the divine essence, which forms the major premise, to the required conclusion:

Everything which is absolutely necessary is essentially the divine essence. Every intelligible being is absolutely necessary; therefore, every intelligible being of a creature is essentially the divine essence. The major premise, as the Doctor says, is well known among philosophers and theologians who oppose the theory of essential predication. The minor is proved thus: If God is, He apprehends intelligible being; but it is absolutely necessary that God is; therefore it is absolutely necessary that God apprehends every intelligible [being]. And if God apprehends every intelligible, then that intelligible being is. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary that every intelligible being is... But it is simply the same thing to be an intelligible being and to be intelligible, and so it is absolutely necessary that every intelligible is.³⁰

Kenningham argues that neither the major nor the minor premise of Wyclif's rational justification can be sustained. The major premise fails because the fact that God is, is not itself identical with God, since it is a truth which is caused by God.³¹ The minor fails, we are told, because Kenningham makes no distinction between a creature and its being, so that the intelligible being of a creature is the intelligible creature itself.³² Both of these arguments, though they do not draw conspicuously on any contemporary nominalist sources, are strongly suggestive of a nominalist metaphysic. The latter, in particular, recalls the nominalist position regarding essence and existence (*ens* and *esse*), which, as we have shown, were not

²⁹ *De Universalibus*, Ch. 7, ll. 35-38. Cf. *De Ideis*, Ch. 2 : ' "Deus est quaelibet creatura in esse intelligibili", quod est necessarium convertibile cum priori <sc. propositione "omnis creatura est Deus">' (Ed. Herold, fo. 43 va) See Ch. 2 (section 1), above.

³⁰ 'Omne absolute necessarium est essentialiter divina essentia; [omne esse intelligibile absolute necessarium est; ergo] omne esse intelligibile creaturae est essentialiter divina essentia. Major, ut dicit Doctor, est famosa apud philosophos, et theologos advertentes praedicationem secundum essentiam; et minor probantur sic. Si Deus est, Ipse intelligit esse intelligibile, sed absolute necessario Deus est; ergo absolute necessario Deus intelligit omne intelligibile. Et si Deus intelligit aliquod intelligibile, illud esse intelligibile est; ergo absolute necessarium est quod omne esse intelligibile est; ...sed simpliciter idem est esse intelligibile esse, et esse intelligibile; ergo omne esse intelligibile absolute necessario est.' *FZ*, pp. 73-4.

³¹ '[Potest responderi] uno modo negando majorem, scilicet quod omne absolute necessarium est essentialiter essentia divina. Probatur, quia Deum esse non est Deus, cum sit una veritas a Deo causata; ergo non est essentialiter divina essentia.' *FZ*, p. 74.

³² '...nego minorem; scilicet quod omne esse intelligibile creaturae est absolute necessarium. Et ratio est: ego non distinguo inter creaturam et suum esse, et ideo voco esse intelligibile creaturae ipsam creaturam intelligibilem, ut sit constructio intransitiva, esse ita, esse intelligibile, quod est creatura.' *FZ*, p. 74.

regarded as being really distinct.³³ Kenningham's other objection relates to the two levels of being below the intelligible, which are described here as potential being (identical, presumably, with Wyclif's concept of being in universal and particular causes³⁴) and actual being. These, he suggests, create problems if Wyclif's argument is accepted, since both, like intelligible being, are absolutely necessary by the criterion of necessary divine apprehension. This must mean that they, like intelligible beings, are essentially the divine essence, an idea which Wyclif himself, as Kenningham points out, would certainly have been reluctant to accept.³⁵ Kenningham's objection is revealing, since it undermines not only the theory of intelligible being itself (which, as we have argued, had no place in nominalist philosophy), but also the most significant distinction between this form of being and simple existence. In doing so, it possibly lends justification to Wyclif's earlier assertion that existence was the only kind of being which the nominalists appeared to recognize.³⁶ For Kenningham, at least, it was clearly a category which brought with it more problems than it solved. His objection, nevertheless, is possibly less sound than it first appears, as becomes clear when another of his responses – the third of the eight – is examined. Here, Kenningham cites a passage from Wyclif which appears to entail a denial of the assumption that every kind of being is absolutely necessary. God's necessary and immediate apprehension of the *intelligible* being of a creature – the basis of its absolute necessity – is simply not matched by an immediate apprehension of its existential and potential natures. Rather, it is precisely the function of the creature's intelligible being to make its other kinds of being accessible – in a secondary sense – to the divine intellect. It is in this sense that intelligible being 'terminates' – namely, provides an object or an end point for – divine knowledge:

Since it is impossible for any power to have distinct cognition of something unless there is a subjective known terminating its knowledge, it is clear that, since God knows all things, there are knowns which, in the idea of the object, terminate his knowledge. But this cannot be a creature [perceived]

³³ See ch. 2 (section 1), above. Ockham's position is conveniently summarized in the *Summa Totius Logicae*: '...aliquantulum disgregiando considerandum est, qualiter esse existere se habet ad rem: Utrum esse rei et essentia rei sint duo extra animam distincta inter se. Et mihi videtur, quod non sunt talia duo, nec 'esse existere' significat aliquid distinctum a re.' (I, c. xxxviii) Boehner, ed., *Ockham: Philosophical Writings*, p. 92.

³⁴ See *De Universalibus*, Ch. 7, ll. 43-53 (discussed in Ch. 2 (section 1), above).

³⁵ This is the case, Kenningham explains, because Wyclif would not allow that any creature could have necessary being outside God. See *FZ*, p. 76.

³⁶ *De Universalibus*, Ch. 7, ll. 54-6. See Ch. 2, above.

immediately according to its generic kind. Therefore there should be, internal to God, knows which immediately terminate divine knowledge.³⁷

This passage can leave us in little doubt of Wyclif's intention to maintain an absolute distinction between intelligible being and the two inferior forms which Kenningham mentions (the being of a creature 'according to its generic kind' is quite clearly the same as Kenningham's *potential* being). Here, moreover, Wyclif is explicit about intelligibles being uniquely part of the divine essence (they are 'internal to God'). Whether Kenningham is deliberately overlooking this point – which he later rejects – is unclear. What is certain, however, is that to acknowledge earlier that Wyclif had made it would have made his first objection more difficult to sustain. It would also have lent far greater coherence to Wyclif's argument about the real identity of intelligible beings and the divine essence. That such a point does go unnoticed, moreover, has important implications for our understanding of Kenningham's philosophy. Superficially, it could be seen to strengthen the case for treating Kenningham as a nominalist, since for Ockhamist thinkers, existential natures *were* immediately apprehensible by the divine intellect.³⁸ There was, in other words, nothing corresponding to Wyclif's intelligible beings intervening between the divine intellect and its temporal objects. Kenningham himself, however, is clearly being less radical than this. Wyclif's point about intelligible beings is inadmissible, he suggests, simply because there cannot be a plurality of divine ideas in an essence which is by definition simple:

I believe... that by such unmediated objects of divine cognition, [Wyclif] understands ideas or ideal concepts, whose multitude in God I do not admit, since God himself is one idea of all things, and [their] perfect similitude... We should not ask, however, in relation to that idea, whether it is or not; for it is certain most truly that it is. For if it were not possible for God know distinct things specifically without there being distinct ideas within him, equally it would not be possible for him to know those ideas perfectly, except through other ideas, since specific ideas are only distinguished as the species themselves. And thus there would be an infinite progression of ideas of ideas, which it is not proper to suppose. It remains therefore that in God, knower and known are in real terms the same, as are essence and idea, potency and

³⁷ 'Cum impossibile sit virtutem aliquam quicquam quomodolibet distinctum cognoscere, nisi sit dare cognitum subjective terminans ejus notitiam; patet, cum Deus cognoscit omnia, quod est dare cognita quae in ratione objecti terminent ejus notitiam. Sed hoc non potest aliqua creatura immediate in proprio genere; ergo oportet ad intra in Deo dare sic cognita quae immediate terminent divinam notitiam.' *FZ*, p. 78.

³⁸ For Ockham, divine ideas were identical with existential natures, which thus became the immediate objects of divine intuition. They were, however, absolutely distinct from the divine essence itself, a fact which would clearly lead any Ockhamist to reject unequivocally Wyclif's first argument. On the identity of existential natures and divine ideas in Ockham, see Adams, *William Ockham*, pp. 1050-1056.

object, and so on. For there is not within him a real multitude or distinction, but only [a distinction] of *suppositiones*.³⁹

The basis of this rejection – that the notions of divine simplicity and multiple ideas in the mind of are irreconcilable – is one with which few of Kenningham's contemporaries would have disagreed. His solution, moreover, and variations upon it, had been in common use – primarily among realist theologians – since the thirteenth century. Though Ockham draws upon the same objection in his own argument against the identification of divine ideas with the divine essence, there is nothing distinctively nominalistic about it. Indeed, Kenningham is using it for a purpose precisely opposite to Ockham's: to preserve the identity of divine essence and divine idea. There would appear, then, to be very little separating Wyclif and Kenningham on this issue, and certainly less than Kenningham would like to suggest. It is significant, furthermore, that the idea which Kenningham attributes to Wyclif – that intelligible beings are really distinct from each other – seems not to have originated in Wyclif's work at all. There is certainly no suggestion in the *Summa de Ente* that intelligible beings are to be construed in real terms as a plurality. What Kenningham appears to be doing here is a further example of the kind of *reductio ad absurdum* strategy which both he and Wyclif employ in their depiction of the philosophical enemy.⁴⁰ Though no realist is likely ever to have supposed that divine ideas – as identified with the divine essence – represented a multitude of distinct elements, Wyclif's insistence on seeing intelligibles as a kind of *being* might easily invite this exaggerated interpretation. It has to be remembered, after all, that although Kenningham clearly identifies God's single idea with the divine essence, this idea is a *reflection* of created natures (their 'perfect similitude'), rather than an aspect of their being. Though both Wyclif and Kenningham are opposed to Ockham in their understanding of the divine nature, therefore, Kenningham's anti-realism – and his fundamental opposition to Wyclif's metaphysical system – is in no sense compromised.

³⁹ 'Credo... quod per hujusmodi obiecta immediata cognitionis divinae intelligit ideas sive rationes ideales, quarum multitudinem in Deo non admitto; cum ipse Deus sit omnium una idea, et perfecta similitudo... Sed tunc de illa idea quaerere non oportet, numquid sit vel non; quia certum est quod verissime: si enim non possit Deus res specificè distinctas cognoscere sine rationibus distinctis a partè sui, a pari nec posset illas rationes perfecte cognoscere nisi per rationes alias, cum tantum distinguantur rationes specificæ sicut ipsæ species; et ita esset processus in infinitum de ideis idearum, quod non est convenienter ponendum. Relinquitur ergo quod in Deo sit realiter idem cognoscens et cognitum, essentia et idea, potentia et objectum, et ita de caeteris; quia non est in eo multitudo realis, vel distinctio, nisi suppositionum.' *FZ*, pp. 78-79.

⁴⁰ See my remarks on Wyclif's apparent exaggerations, Ch. 1 (section 4), above.

Kenningham addresses the problem of the relationship between knowledge and being in his fifth response. Here, he presents in explicit terms Wyclif's argument that God's intuitive cognition entails the 'presence' of the thing known:

Fifthly, the reverend Doctor argues thus: Everything which God knows intuitively is present, just as something which has actual being [is present], as Saint Thomas says. But God has intuitive cognition of everything which was or will be, as the united opinion of catholics suggests. Therefore, everything which was, or will be, is thus present. And consequently everything which was, or will be, is.⁴¹

Wyclif proves this argument, we are told, by suggesting that God sees Antichrist deceive many men, even though Antichrist is not now existing. He sees this deception in the present because the notions of beginning to know or beginning to see (which inevitably apply to human intuitive knowledge of things which have not yet happened) are contradictory to the necessary idea of divine simplicity. In Wyclif's own words (at least, as we have them from Kenningham), 'God sees Antichrist deceive many men because he will see in this way'.⁴²

Since God knows only the truth, it follows that Antichrist is, as are other beings and events which he knows.⁴³ Kenningham's response to Wyclif's argument is again of a fundamentally anti-realist nature. He begins by rejecting its major premise (namely, Wyclif's basic idea that everything intuitively known by God, *is*), and thus renders the conclusion (that all that was, or will be, *is*), on which the whole of the theory of *ampliatio tempus* rests, invalid. Wyclif's appeal to Aquinas is rejected on rather dubious interpretative grounds. When Aquinas speaks of *being* ('esse') in relation to non-existents, Kenningham suggests, he must certainly mean *being known* ('cognosci'). It is for this reason, he concludes, that everything which is intuited by God is seen to have actual being, since it is actually and truly known.⁴⁴ It is certainly true that in the section of the *Summa Theologiae* under scrutiny (1a.14. a9, resp.), the emphasis

⁴¹ 'Quinto arguit Doctor reverendus sic. Omne quod Deus intuitive cognoscit est praesens, sic quod habet esse actuale, ut dicit S. Thomas (*Summa Theologiae* I, q. 14, art. 9); sed omne quod fuit vel erit Deus intuitive cognoscit, ut dicit concors catholicorum sententia; ergo omne quod fuit vel erit, est sic praesens; et per consequens omne quod fuit vel erit, est.' *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, p. 94.

⁴² See n. 43, below.

⁴³ 'Deus videt Antichristum decipere multos homines, eo quod videbit sic, et nihil nec aliquid potest incipere scire et videre; sed Deus non videt ipsum decipere homines nisi sic, cum nihil scitur nisi verum, secundum catholicos: ergo Antichristum est, et sic de quolibet.' *FZ*, pp. 94-95.

⁴⁴ 'Quia... S. Thomas hoc videtur affirmare, dico, sicut prius, quod per esse intelligit cognosci; et ideo concedit omne intuitum a Deo esse actualiter, i.e. actualiter et vere cognosci.' *FZ*, p. 95. The reference here is confusing, since Aquinas nowhere suggests that non-existents have *actual* being (though they do, he realises, have being in the mind of God). On the status of non-existents in Aquinas' philosophy, see John F. Wippel, *Metaphysical Themes in Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1984), pp. 164-173.

is primarily on knowledge, rather than on being. Aquinas does, nevertheless, make the specific point that things which are known by the divine intellect, even though they may not exist, always have some *kind* of being.⁴⁵ It is all the more striking, then, that Kenningham should insist here on a rigid conceptualism in his interpretation. His response to the idea that God cannot begin to see, or begin to know, something, is equally revealing. Rejecting the thesis that God sees everything from eternity (as Wyclif would have argued), he suggests that such eternal knowledge would require that everything actually existed from eternity (since God knows only truth). Such an inference, of course, which is traced in the following passage, would only be possible within the context of a restricted metaphysic of the kind we find in Ockham (for whom, as we have seen, things in a state of actual existence, provided the objects of divine knowledge of the created world):

God cannot begin to know or begin to see anything in any way. But God knows now that I am now actually outside God, so it follows that he does not begin to know this. But just as God knows and does not begin to know, so he knew that same thing in such a way from eternity. Therefore from eternity God knew me now to be actually outside God. But God did not know me to be actually outside God, except when I *was* actually outside God, since nothing is known except the truth, according to catholics. Therefore, it was eternally true that I am now actually outside God. And so it can be proved of every creature that that creature, according to its existential being, is eternal, which I know that my master wishes to deny.⁴⁶

Though the primary target of this argument is the thesis that God sees everything in the eternal present, Kenningham is also implicitly challenging Wyclif's distinctions between being and existence, on the one hand, and time and eternity, on the other. These, as we have seen, were the elements in Wyclif's philosophy on which most of the others in some way depended, and without which his exegetical theory would have been rendered unworkable.

Once again, and in keeping with the dialectical conventions of the *determinatio*, the argument amounts to a *reductio ad absurdum* critique, rather than a coherent philosophical point. Though this must inevitably frustrate our own attempts to bring Kenningham any closer to

⁴⁵ '...Deus scit omnia quaecumque sunt quocumque modo. *Nihil autem prohibet ea quae non sunt simpliciter, aliquo modo esse.*' *Summa Theologiae*, Ia.14.9, resp. (my italics).

⁴⁶ 'Nihil nec aliquo modo potest Deus incipere scire vel videre; sed Deus nunc scit quod ego nunc sum actualiter extra Deum, ergo Deus non incipit hoc scire; sed quicquam et qualitercunque Deus scit et non incepit scire, istud et taliter ab aeterno scivit: ergo Deus ab aeterno scivit me nunc esse actualiter extra Deum; sed Deus non scivit me esse actualiter extra Deum, nisi quando fui actualiter extra Deum; eo quod nihil scitur nisi verum, secundum catholicos; ergo aeternaliter verum, fuit quod ego nunc sum actualiter extra Deum. Et ita probari potest de omni creatura quod ipsa secundum esse existere sit aeterna, quod Magistrum meum scio velle negare.' *FZ*, pp. 95-96.

a particular group, school, or ideology, the basic element of anti-realism here, as elsewhere, would be difficult to ignore.

This is equally true of the arguments about contingency and necessity presented at the end of the *determinatio*. The points against which Kenningham argues here had been debated throughout the fourteenth century, and were not solely associated with forms of philosophical realism. It soon becomes clear, nevertheless, that Wyclif's temporal realism, and the theory of intelligibles on which it rested, are to be the exclusive objects of Kenningham's critique. The first argument he considers relates to the problem of prophecy, and – specifically – to biblical acts of prophecy. In it, Wyclif suggests that any being which exists completely in the past (which is 'complete praeteritum'), and whose truth does not depend on the future (by which he means, 'whose truth is contingent'), was *necessarily*. Otherwise, it would not have being.⁴⁷ Superficially, this view is relatively uncontroversial. The necessity of past events, according to what Anselm had called *subsequent* necessity (namely, the necessity of events considered retrospectively), had been accepted by thinkers throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, including William of Ockham.⁴⁸ It has important consequences, on Wyclif's particular interpretation, for the relationship between a prophetic act and a future contingent event. According to the examples cited by Kenningham, Wyclif maintains that prophetic acts performed by Christ relate to events which are, will be, or have been, or else he has asserted a falsehood. In this sense, they are contingent, since their occurrence or non-occurrence is independent of the act of prophecy itself. The act of prophecy, nevertheless, remains – paradoxically, as Kenningham suggests – a necessity.

The reasons for this, as they emerge, at least, from Kenningham's own interpretation of Wyclif's philosophical system, resided inextricably with the theory of temporal realism itself. The basic assumptions against which Kenningham objected in the first part of the *determinatio* – that God intuitis all past and future times, that necessary divine intuition entails necessary being, that past, present and future are all 'present' to God – are once again

⁴⁷ 'Primo [Doctor] supponit tanquam datum ab adversario quod esse complete praeteritum, cujus veritas non dependet a futuro, necessario fuit, sic quod non potest esse quin fuit.' *FZ*, p. 96.

⁴⁸ On Ockham's interpretation of the notions of antecedent and subsequent necessity (necessity according to the *antecedent* and *consequent disposing will of God*, to use Ockham's own terms), see the introductory essay in Marilyn McCord Adams and Norman Kretzmann, trs., *William Ockham: Predestination, God's Foreknowledge, and Future Contingents*, pp. 17-20

encountered, as Wyclif's theory of the necessary past is explained in terms of its putative philosophical underpinnings:

God necessarily intuits every past or future [instant]. Everything which is completely in the past, whose truth does not depend on the future, is one of either past or future. Therefore, God necessarily intuits everything which is completely in the past, whose truth is not dependent on the future. And if God intuits anything, then that thing is, in the opinion of my Master. Therefore, something which is completely in the past, whose truth does not depend on the future, necessarily is. And it follows that therefore it was, because according to my Master, to be, to have been, and to be about to be are the same thing. Therefore every such past thing necessarily was, because it cannot be in any other way.⁴⁹

As it soon becomes clear, it is these underlying assumptions, rather than the thesis of the necessary past itself, which are the primary objects of Kenningham's criticism. Taking the example of Peter's denial of Christ – much discussed in scholastic analyses of foreknowledge and contingency – Kenningham demonstrates that Wyclif's system leads to an apparently impossible conclusion. Christ, he explains, predicted Peter's denial of him (Matthew, 26:34), but before the denial itself took place (Matthew, 26:70-74), the assertion of Christ was completely in the past, and did not depend on a future effect. Following Wyclif's logic, as Kenningham describes it, we have to conclude that Christ *necessarily* made this assertion. The denial itself, therefore, once the assertion had been made, either was or would be, and hence it was necessary, according to Kenningham, either for Peter to deny Christ, or to have been on the point of denying him. The difficulty with this, however, is that if divine knowledge of every future contingent is considered, the same can be argued in respect of any future event whatever, so that it becomes necessary that every such event happens. Wyclif's temporal realism is thus reduced by Kenningham, in a characteristic move, to a form of deterministic theology in which contingency – which it purportedly accommodates⁵⁰ – can have no place.

⁴⁹ 'Omne praeteritum vel futurum necessario Deus intuetur; omne complete praeteritum, cujus veritas non dependet a futuro, est praeteritum vel futurum; ergo omne complete praeteritum, cujus veritas non dependet a futuro, necessario Deus intuetur: et si Deus aliquid intuetur ipsum est, per opinionem Magistri mei; ergo complete praeteritum, cujus veritas non dependet a futuro, necessario est; et sequitur, ergo fuit, quia secundum Magistrum meum, idem est esse, fuisse, et fore. Ergo omne tale praeteritum necessario fuit, sic quod non potest esse quin fuit.' *FZ*, p. 99.

⁵⁰ See, for example, the arguments to this effect cited in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* (discussed in Ch. 5 (section 5.1), below).

The issue of necessary past instants brings with it another problem, this time relating to the perfection of the divine nature itself. Given Wyclif's supposition that the past is necessary, we are told, it must follow, with the passage of time, that possibilities initially open to God are successively foreclosed. This, however, entails a continuous diminution of God's *potentia* or *posse*, which as Kenningham explains, is rejected by Wyclif as an impossibility. The premise about possibilities being successively reduced through time must therefore also be rejected.⁵¹ *Posse* is treated by Wyclif as a set of true propositions of the form, *God can produce time a or b*. When Wyclif uses the term *posse*, however, he claims to be using it *formally* ('formaliter').⁵² Though Kenningham is not explicit about what is meant here, the term *formaliter* – as in the Scotistic theory of *distinctiones* – presumably occupies the middle ground between *realiter* and *per suppositionem*.⁵³ When Wyclif speaks slightly later of certain truths being destroyed in this way, therefore, he consciously – and predictably – avoids making any concessions to a theory of *real* destruction (annihilation). The thesis of absolute divine omnipotence is in this way apparently preserved: if God could at some time in the past produce a particular instant, then this remains a real possibility. Kenningham's opposition to the familiar premises of temporal realism, however, lead him in precisely the opposite direction. Wyclif, he suggests, is simply avoiding a necessary conclusion about the progressive destruction of *posse*. This conclusion, we learn, represents the *opinio communis*, according to which the past has neither being (since it lacks existence) nor potential being (since the reality of past possibilities would have been denied by all but the most committed realists):

If God can now produce the past instant *a*, then [he can] produce that instant; and if he can produce the instant itself, then it can be. In the same way, every past instant can be. This conclusion goes against the common opinion, as the Master says, because if any instant *was*, according to that [opinion], it *is* not. But for any instant designated 'past', it cannot be unless it *is* not. Consequently, it is impossible for it to be. And beyond this it follows that God cannot produce it, as once he could. But this my Master does not dare to say, namely that God destroys one intrinsic *posse* eternally, independent of the extrinsic.⁵⁴

⁵¹ ' "Data," inquit [Magister], "ista positione de necessitate rerum praeteritarum, sequitur quod continue secundum processum temporis Deus excidit a potentia vel a posse; et cum nullum posse potest acquirere, sequitur quod continue minorabitur in potentia vel posse; consequens impossibile; ergo antecedens." ' *FZ*, pp. 99-100.

⁵² 'Loquitur... Magister, ut dicit, de posse formaliter, ut est veritas talis, Deum posse producere *a* tempus vel *b*, vel aliam hujusmodi creaturam.' *FZ*, p. 100.

⁵³ On the concept of distinctions in Scotus and elsewhere, see Ch. 1 (section 4), above.

⁵⁴ '...si Deus nunc potest producere *a* instans praeteritum, tunc producere illud instans; et si potest producere istud

The argument presented here – if a tortuous one – can leave us in little doubt that Kenningham is himself one of those who, unlike Wyclif, regards past instants neither as beings nor potential beings. This would clearly be consistent with what his preceding arguments reveal, as well as with what can be gleaned more generally about his metaphysical system from the *determinationes*. It is supported later in the text by Kenningham's open refusal to deny that if an instant was, then it is not. Wyclif's own denial of this idea, we are told, is among many notable points presented in his own argument, but one of the few which is actually directed against Kenningham.⁵⁵ This would clearly suggest that Kenningham was not simply *among* those who regarded past instants as non-beings, but wished consciously to be identified with this philosophical position. His point is followed by a series of justificatory statements, which, though relatively brief, supply some significant further insights into the relationship between Kenningham's views on time and metaphysics. Neither time nor the instant, he argues firstly, is in real terms a creation of God, since neither is an absolute, positive being. This is proved, we are told, because God can annihilate and re-create any positive created thing, but he cannot re-create a past instant. It would be contradictory, moreover, for anything to be when it was, or to be about to be when it is.

It is within the context of his arguments about creation and annihilation that Kenningham's opposition to temporal realism receives its clearest expression as a philosophical position. His affirmation of the possibility of annihilation and re-creation very clearly has its basis in a fundamental anti-realism, and would certainly have been among those points to which his opponent was most sensitive. A belief in the possibility of annihilation has often been associated with late-medieval nominalism, particularly in the context of Eucharistic theology, though the reductivism of such an exclusive association is now quite generally acknowledged.⁵⁶ It would certainly be difficult to claim that Kenningham's views

instans, tunc illud potest esse; et per idem omne instans praeteritum potest esse. [Conclusio est] contra opinionem [communem], ut dicit Magister, quia juxta illam si aliquod instans fuit, ipsum non est; sed quocunque instanti praeterito signato non potest esse quin ipsum non est; et per consequens impossibile est ipsum esse. Et ultra sequitur quod Deus non potest ipsum producere, ut quondam potuit; quod non audet Magister meus dicere; scilicet, quod Deus depardat unum posse aeternaliter intrinsecum independens ab extrinseco, propter lapsum unius instantis.' *FZ*, p. 100.

⁵⁵ '...plura alia notabilia ponit Magister in hoc argumento, quae omnia non recito, quia nullum eorum facit contra me. Arguit enim contra tenentem opinionem quod si instans fuit, ipsum non est, cum hoc quod instans fuit creatura realiter a Deo producta; cujusmodi positionem non admitto de tempore vel instanti...' *FZ*, p. 100.

⁵⁶ A useful critique of such an association is to be found in William Courtenay's article, 'Cranmer as a Nominalist: *Sed contra*', *Harvard Theological Review*, 57 (1964), 367-380; reproduced in Courtenay, *Covenant*

on annihilation – whether associated with his own understanding of the nature of the Eucharist or not – in any way strengthen the case for treating him as a nominalist. These views do, nevertheless, associate him with a broader group of thinkers – many of them Scotists⁵⁷ – whose ideas were certainly opposed to the form of realist ontology we find in Wyclif. The origins of Kenningham's suggestion that time is not in real terms a creation of God are more obscure, though the suggestion itself is less controversial than it appears.⁵⁸ Its close connection with his views on annihilation and re-creation, moreover, would appear to place it within an established tradition of thinking.

Though Kenningham's perspective on contemporary metaphysics can furnish us with few certainties regarding local philosophical sources, mentorship or allegiances, his status as an opponent of late fourteenth-century realism (whether a 'nominalist' in the narrower sense or not) is not in question. His critique of Wyclif's position on intelligible being placed in doubt philosophical premises which, as we saw in Chapter 3, lay at the heart of Wyclif's understanding of the nature of truth. In the absence of intelligible being, 'real' truth (as Wyclif describes it in the *Summa de Ente* and *Logicae Continuatio*) could have no place in philosophical or hermeneutic discourse, and the authority of the intelligible text itself (which for Wyclif, as we have seen, was identified with the Book of Life) could not be defended.

The hermeneutic consequences of Kenningham's rejection of intelligible being are made clearer in his second determination (*De Ampliatione Temporis*), in which the principles of predication and truth *ex parte rei* are held up to scrutiny. This will be examined in the following section.

and Causality in Medieval Thought: Studies in Philosophy, Theology and Economic Practice (London: Variorum Reprints, 1984).

⁵⁷ This, at least, is Courtenay's assessment of the tradition of scholastics who supported annihilation as a theory of transubstantiation. See 'Cranmer as Nominalist', pp. 371-72.

⁵⁸ Kenningham's notion of uncreated time, for example, clearly has no connection with the Aristotelian conception of the history of the universe. Whereas Aristotle denies the necessity of an originary moment or point of creation, Kenningham simply excludes time from the act of creation itself. Time is still clearly seen to *begin* with the creation of the universe.

2.2 *Is Truth in Signs or Things? Kenningham's Second Determinatio*

The most revealing of Kenningham's statements on the nature and truth of propositions is to be found in his analysis of the relationship between signs and reality. In the eighth response against him, Kenningham tells us in the second of his major determinations,⁵⁹ Wyclif draws a distinction between sign (*signum*) and signified /significate (*signatum*). This in itself, of course, would not have been controversial. Kenningham's critique, however, centres around the assumption that any complex expression (a subject and its predicate, for example) has a corresponding truth underlying it. For any nominalist or terminist, as we have suggested, truth of this kind represented a logical or linguistic property, but not a reality:

The master distinguishes between sign and signified, as between the image [of a saint] and the saint [himself]; and justifiably, insofar as [such a distinction] relates to incomplex expressions, because the signified, or *significatum*, of the term 'God' is the highest good, and the origin of all sacredness. But in the case of complex truths, I have not been taught that their adequate *significata* are to be venerated, since the said propositions are themselves of greater value and truth than the complex truths which are signified by them; for God or a creature is no such truth.⁶⁰

Though Kenningham's position in this passage leaves some room for ambiguity, there can be little doubt that the theories of real predication and *propositiones in re*, the most distinctively realist aspects of Wyclif's philosophy (and essential to his theory of scriptural truth⁶¹), are the primary targets. It would be wrong, however, to assume that Kenningham's own beliefs about the objects of knowledge and belief were as extreme as those of Ockham, Holcot and Wodeham. At the end of the passage, he is careful to qualify his statements. Like Wyclif his master, he suggests, he himself distinguishes sign from *signatum*, though is unwilling to dismiss the sign so completely from his considerations. He clearly has little respect for the theory of the complex signified (the proposition *in re*), but is nevertheless

⁵⁹ FZ, pp. 43-72.

⁶⁰ '...distinguit Magister inter signum et signatum, sicut inter imaginem, et sanctum; et merito, quantum ad incomplexa, quia signatum vel significatum hujus termini *Deus*, est summum bonum, et omnis sanctitatis principium. Sed in veritatibus complexis aequata eorum significata non didici esse veneranda, cum sint majoris dignitatis et virtutis ipsae propositiones prolatae, quam complexae veritates signatae; quia nulla talis veritas est *Deus* vel creatura.' FZ, p. 65.

⁶¹ See Ch. 3 (section 1), above.

willing to concede that in certain contexts it may be worthy of attention.⁶² There is evidence elsewhere in the *Fasciculi*, moreover, that Kenningham was anxious to distance himself from the more extreme forms of *complexum*-theory (according to which *signifiabiles*, but not signifieds, could be complex) of the kind defended by Ockham and Holcot. In his third determination against Wyclif, for example, he speaks disparagingly of those ‘who do not suppose there to be truths *a parte rei*, beyond signs’ (‘qui non ponunt veritates a parte rei, praeter signa’).⁶³ There is, nevertheless, a fundamental inconsistency between Kenningham’s understanding of the nature of truth and that which Wyclif defends in the *Summa de Ente*. The nature of this inconsistency becomes clear when Kenningham turns his attention to metaphorical language, which, if Wyclif’s thesis about the priority of propositions *in re* were to be trusted, he suggests, would generate intractable interpretative problems:

Elsewhere I have argued that if every... figurative utterance were to entail conformity *ex parte rei*, then it would be said truly that a man is a tree, that flesh is grass, and so on in the case of similar examples, which properly speaking, cannot be verified.⁶⁴

Kenningham goes on to demonstrate his conclusions with reference to metaphorical passages taken from the Bible. In Isaiah, he explains, it is said that ‘All flesh is grass’ (40:6), and that ‘the people is grass’ (40:7). From Nicholas of Lyre, we learn that man living carnally is metaphorically called grass.⁶⁵ Likewise in Matthew, it is said that ‘the axe is laid to the root of the [tree]’ (3:10).⁶⁶ The tree, Kenningham suggests, is taken to be man, as we learn from Gregory, Jerome, John Chrysostom and Rabanus Maurus.⁶⁷ If Wyclif is willing to conclude that the blind see (Matthew, 11:5), and that therefore all that was, is (as he does, we are told, in his defence of the principle of *ampliatio temporis*), then why should he not concede that

⁶² ‘Distinguo ergo et ego, cum Magistro meo, inter signum et signatum; non tamen ita contemno signum, ut credam illud esse superfluum; nec ita extollo complexum signatum, ut putem illud esse quovismodo venerandum.’ *FZ*, p. 65.

⁶³ *FZ*, p. 75.

⁶⁴ ‘Ulterius allegavi quod si omnis... figurativa locutio inferret conformitatem ex parte rei; tunc vere diceretur quod homo est arbor, quod caro est fenum, et ita de similibus, quae proprie loquendo verificari non possunt.’ *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, p. 65.

⁶⁵ ‘Nam Isiae XL [6,7] scribitur, *Omnis caro fenum et Vere fenum est populus*; quod exponit doctor de Lyra de homine carnaliter vivente, qui fenum dicitur per metaphoram.’ *FZ*, p. 65.

⁶⁶ Kenningham here substitutes ‘ad radicem arboris’ for the ‘ad radicem arborum’ of the Vulgate. I have modified the translation accordingly.

⁶⁷ *FZ*, pp. 65-6.

the axe is laid against the root of the tree, and therefore that every man is a tree? If the first consequence holds, Kenningham reasons, then so too should the second. Since the first cannot be made to hold, then neither can the second.⁶⁸ Though there is no surviving rejoinder to these objections, they do shed some important light on Wyclif's arguments about real predication in the *Summa de Ente*. Kenningham's refusal to accept that metaphorical propositions are necessarily motivated by truths in the real world, despite his willingness to make some concessions to the theory of real predication, would certainly place him among those logicians and philosophers disparaged for their dismissal of real truths in *De Universalibus, De Trinitate* and *Purgans Errores circa Veritates in Communi*.⁶⁹

2.3 Literalism and Intention: Some Problems with the Realist Theory

In his rejection of the notion of real predication and of the philosophical premises underlying it, Kenningham was also implicitly denying Wyclif's controversial opinions concerning the literal truth of Scripture. Such a denial, of course, did not necessarily entail a rejection of Wyclif's claim that every part of Scripture was literally (*de vi vocis*) true.⁷⁰ Rather, it placed in question the foundations of Wyclif's literalism, and of the many arguments based upon it. Earlier in Kenningham's second determination, the nature of these foundations is considered in detail.⁷¹ For Wyclif, we are told here, every creature is true by virtue of the truth of its essence, and every being is a true thing. From this, it naturally follows that every part of Scripture is also true.⁷² Kenningham is apparently referring here to the basic premises of the theory of real predication, according to which, as we have seen, every creature 'speaks' its essence truly.⁷³ In this sense, Kenningham concedes, Scripture is obviously true, since every scriptural proposition has its being through God. To conclude

⁶⁸ 'Si ergo sequatur, caeci vident, ergo omne quod fuit est, quia in illa auctoritate sit ampliatio temporis, quare non sequitur a pari, Securis ponitur ad radicem arboris, ergo omnis homo est arbor? quia ibi ad hominem refertur significatio arboris. Certum est, quod si prima consequentia teneat, tenebit et secunda; et dato quod secunda non valeat, nec prima valebit.' *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, p. 66.

⁶⁹ See Ch. 3 (section 1), above.

⁷⁰ See the discussion of this claim in Ch. 3 (section 1), above.

⁷¹ *FZ*, pp. 53-6.

⁷² *Ibid.*

from this, however, that every impossible proposition is *literally* true, is mere sophistry, as he goes on to explain:

I wonder how my master, since he so often puts it to me that I argue sophistically, himself persists in such a strict sophism, as to say that every impossible proposition is true *de virtute sermonis*, because it has being through God. For from this way of thinking, many things follow which speak directly against the faith, such as that the Jews, when they blasphemed against Christ, spoke nothing but the truth of him; that the following proposition is verified of Christ: 'every man is most wicked and damnable'; [and] that everything false, and falsely attributed to any creature, is true of the son of God. The same applies to many other conclusions whose spoken sound is abhorrent to pious ears.⁷⁴

The truth of any of these passages would necessarily depend, for Kenningham, on some form of symbolic correspondence. It is for this reason, presumably, that he suggests that none of them is true *of* Christ ('de Christo'), even though their literal truth may depend on Christ. Wyclif's response to Kenningham's criticisms on this point was to urge that he himself, and other logicians like him, consider the meaning of Scripture *ex integro*, rather than according to its isolated parts. Scripture is true, in other words, not *de vi vocis*, but *de vi sermonis*:

...the Doctor claims that I have said that every part of holy Scripture is true: which I concede, but with a variation in the terms [used]. For where he says *de vi vocis*, I, using the term of Scripture, say that every part of Scripture is true *de vi sermonis*. And in respect of the passage 'You have a demon', I concede that it is true *de vi sermonis*. We should, though, bring together the parts of Scripture in turn, so that its sense is taken *ex integro*. The part 'You have a demon' signifies by being brought to the sense, 'The Jews spoke thus: *You have a demon*'. And this sense is sweet to pious ears, since they hear that Christ suffers many reproaches for us.⁷⁵

⁷³ See Ch. 3 (section 1), above.

⁷⁴ '...cum toties Magister mihi imponat quod arguo sophisticè, miror quomodo ipse stat in tam stricto sophismate, ut dicat omnem propositionem impossibilem esse veram de virtute sermonis, quia est ens a Deo. Ex hoc enim modo ponendi sequuntur multa quae sonant directe contra fidem, scilicet quod Judaei quando blasphemabant Christum non dicebant nisi verum de eo: quod ista propositio verificatur de Christo, Aliquis homo est pessimus et damnabilis: quod omne falsum, et false impositum alicui creaturae est verum de filio Dei; et ita de multis conclusionibus, quarum vocalem sonitum aures piæ vehementer abhorrent.' *FZ*, p. 53.

⁷⁵ '...capit Doctor quod dixi quamlibet partem Scripturae sacrae esse veram: quod concedo, sed vario in termino. Nam ubi ipse dicit de vi vocis; ego utens termino Scripturae, dico quod quaelibet pars Scripturae sacrae est vera de vi sermonis. Et ad illud *Daemonium habes*, concedo quod est verum de vi sermonis; tamen oportet conferre partes Scripturae ad invicem, ad hoc quod capiatur sensus eius [ex] integro: ita quod haec pars *Daemonium habes* signat, conferendo ad istum sensum, Judaei dixerunt sic, *Daemonium habes*, qui sensus piis auribus dulcescit,

This response has not been regarded favourably by Wyclif scholars, who have tended to perceive it as a rather clumsy attempt to retract an earlier, over-ambitious claim for Scriptural truth.⁷⁶ Kenningham seems to have regarded it in much the same way, suggesting that for him, the distinction between *sermo* and *vox* is meaningless in this context.⁷⁷ Once again, Wyclif's argument is reduced to little more than verbal trickery by Kenningham – something which, by definition, ran contrary to any divinely ordained system of logic of the kind Wyclif was claiming to have followed.

3. KENNINGHAM'S CRITIQUE OF *AMPLIATIO TEMPORIS*

Though real predication can properly be seen to have provided the foundation for Wyclif's literalist hermeneutic, it is not sufficient in itself to explain his most controversial pronouncements on scriptural truth. These, if Kenningham's reactions are a reliable gauge, were more often seen to have arisen from his extended conception of the nature of time.

Though by its very nature, academic disputation in practice left little room for concession or reconciliation, there can be no issue which divided Wyclif and Kenningham so absolutely as the amplification of time (*ampliatio temporis*). In the *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, temporal amplification is placed at the top of a list of thirteen early heresies propagated by Wyclif.⁷⁸

The extension of time beyond the present instant is also the nominal subject, as we have seen, of one of John Kenningham's four *determinationes* against Wyclif's teaching. Kenningham's objections – here and elsewhere in the *determinationes* – tie in closely with his views on the theory of intelligible being. This fundamental realist theory, as we suggested above,⁷⁹ supplied the metaphysical framework for Wyclif's theory of *ampliatio*. As elsewhere, Kenningham's objections were broadly consistent with Ockhamist thinking.

cum audiunt Christum pro nobis pati tot opprobria.' *FZ*, pp. 456-57.

⁷⁶ Smalley, for example, suggests that Wyclif 'withdrew, ungraciously' from his earlier claim regarding the *vis vocis*. See 'The Bible and Eternity', p. 86.

⁷⁷ 'Et accipio ibi istum terminum, de virtute sermonis, sicut communiter accipi solet iste terminus de vi vocis, non enim pono ibi a parte significationis aliquam differentiam, quamvis Magister meus discrepare videatur a me in hoc modo loquendi.' *FZ*, p. 20.

⁷⁸ *FZ*, p. 2.

⁷⁹ See opening section and Ch. 3 (section 2), above.

Wyclif's ideas about time are first explicitly challenged by Kenningham in the opening tract of the *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, in which he seeks to refute the claim, familiar from the lectures and *summae* of his master, that *anything which was, or will be, is*.⁸⁰ Such a precept, he suggests, is incompatible with the statements of Scripture itself. The prophet Jeremiah, for example, speaks the words, 'Our fathers sinned, and are not' (Lamentations, 5:7). If such a proposition is true, then it follows that some things were, and are no longer. This being the case, Kenningham concludes, it is impossible to maintain that all things which were, are. Our fathers sinned, and are not; therefore not all things which were, are.⁸¹ There is, therefore, a Scriptural basis for the formal rejection of temporal amplification. This is a carefully calculated assault, since Wyclif's views on the literal truth of every part of Scripture would have been well known by this time (as Kenningham's testimonies alone are sufficient to remind us). According to Wyclif himself, however, there need be no contradiction between the assumption that all things are (regardless of their particular relation to the present instant) and the statement of the prophet Jeremiah. In his later determination, Kenningham cites Wyclif's seemingly casuistic distinction between a denial of the latter – which would presumably entail a denial of the literal truth of Scripture – and a denial that it is in fact the case that our fathers sinned, and are not. Such a distinction, though entailing, according to Kenningham, numerous contradictions in itself,⁸² can only have been intended to resolve the apparent inconsistency between the principles of temporal amplification and the literal truth of the Bible. A further means of resolution is offered by Wyclif in the course of his other disputations with Kenningham. When Jeremiah states that 'Our fathers sinned, and are not', we are told, it is to be understood that they are not participating with us in our [worldly] imprisonment ('captivatio').⁸³ Kenningham replies that by the same evidence, it could then be said that God and the angels are not, because they, by definition, do not suffer with us ('non tribulantur nobiscum').⁸⁴ Though the latter proposition is true, the inference, according to Wyclif, is invalid. If it were not, then parallel inferences could be drawn to support it, which clearly they cannot. When Peter denies that he is a disciple of Christ, for example, he

⁸⁰ *FZ*, pp. 8-14

⁸¹ *FZ*, pp. 8-9.

⁸² *FZ*, pp. 52-3.

⁸³ *FZ*, p. 460 (Wyclif); p. 25 (Kenningham).

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

says 'I am not' (John, 18:25); it is impossible to infer from this, however, that God the Father, because he is not a disciple of Christ, is not.⁸⁵

The debate between Wyclif and Kenningham over the passage from Lamentations highlights the fundamental incompatibility of their respective views of time. What such a debate ultimately centred on, for Wyclif, was two very different perceptions of the nature of being. In Kenningham's philosophy, as we have seen, the distinction between essence and existence, which lay at the heart of Wyclif's particular form of temporal realism, was elided, and intelligible being, according to which past and future instants had their reality, was reduced to a conceptual category. The contrast between these two perceptions is made clearer when Wyclif attempts to validate the theory of temporal amplification with his own selection of eight scriptural passages. Each of these, like those analysed in the *Logicae Continuatio*,⁸⁶ can be glossed appropriately, Wyclif suggests, only if time is understood in an amplified sense. The first five are taken from St Matthew's gospel, and present similar problems of interpretation: 'The blind see', 'the lame walk', 'the deaf hear', 'the lepers are cleansed', 'the poor have the gospel preached to them' (11:5).⁸⁷ The first passage is the only one which receives detailed attention from either Wyclif or Kenningham, and Wyclif's interpretation is obscure. Earlier in time the blind see, he tells us, but afterwards with a vision opposed to their prior blindness.⁸⁸ Kenningham declares that neither from this, nor from any of the other four passages, either individually or collectively, does it follow that all that was, or will be, is. The amplification of time, he suggests, ultimately amounts to little more than a verbal operation:

It does not follow that the blind see, therefore all that was, is, even if the opinion of my Master is admitted (namely that earlier in time the blind see, but later with a vision opposed to their prior blindness). Indeed, from such authorities no further conclusion follows, except that Scripture extends the signification of terms to connote past and future times.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ *FZ*, pp. 460-61 (Wyclif); p. 25 (Kenningham).

⁸⁶ See Ch. 3 (section 2.4), above.

⁸⁷ *FZ*, p. 26.

⁸⁸ 'prius tempore caeci vident postreme, visione opposita priori caecitati', *FZ*, p. 466. Cf. p. 27 (Kenningham's citation of the same passage, with minor grammatical and orthographic variations).

⁸⁹ 'Non enim sequitur: caeci vident, ergo omne quod fuit est; etiam si admitatur opinio Magistri mei, scilicet quod prius tempore caeci vident, posterius visione opposita illi caecitati. Ex talibus enim auctoritatibus non plus sequitur conclusio..., nisi quod Scriptura extendit significationem terminorum, ad connotandum tempus

The sixth scriptural passage is taken from the Book of Amos, in which Amos declares, 'I am not a prophet, nor am I the son of a prophet,' and then adds, 'but I am a herdsman plucking wild figs.' (Amos, 7:14).⁹⁰ According to Wyclif, Amos cannot have meant by these words that he was not a prophet, since we read in the same chapter that he later performs an act of prophecy.⁹¹ When he claims to be plucking wild figs, moreover, 'nobody would dream that he was *then* plucking wild figs.'⁹² The two statements, rather, on Wyclif's reading, are to be interpreted according to specific senses, each of which, we are told, has the support of those exegetes who consider the text of Scripture in its entirety (with respect to *sermo*, rather than isolated *vox*):

It is taught that the [passage] from Amos, *I am not a prophet*, should be restricted to the sense, 'I am not a false prophet, as you, Amasias,' or to the sense, 'I am not naturally, in myself, by species or genus, a prophet.' For according to the proposition it is to be understood that he is not a prophet by his immediate father. Although it is certain, according to the scriptural *modus loquendi*, that Amos is the son of Abraham and the son of Adam, both of whom, just as his other fathers, are great prophets in their time. And lest it is thought that Scripture thus restricts [lit. 'imprisons'] words in this way everywhere, a third is added, which is to be amplified by an elegant alternation: *I am a herdsman plucking wild figs.*⁹³

Though only the last part of Amos's statement is said to depend on the amplification of time, the supposition that both Abraham and Adam are fathers, albeit not immediate fathers, of Amos, is crucially reliant on precisely the same principle. Wyclif's explanation recalls his

praeteritum vel futurum.' *FZ*, p. 27.

⁹⁰ The most detailed analysis of Wyclif's treatment of this passage remains that of Beryl Smalley, 'The Bible and Eternity', pp. 85-6.

⁹¹ 'Ideo quando allegavi auctoritatem Amos prophetae libri sui cap. vii, 14, ubi ait *Non sum propheta, nec filius prophetae*; per quam innuere videtur se pro tunc non fuisse prophetam, quia sensit sibi non adesse spiritum prophetiae; respondet Magister, et negat istum fuisse sensum dicti sui; immo nititur adducere eundem textum contra me, eo quod immediate post illud dictum legitur prophetasse, sicut patet in eodem capitulo...' *FZ*, p. 7.

⁹² 'Sexta auctoritas quam Magister adducit pro positione sua est illa de Amos, qui cum dixisset, *Non sum propheta nec filius prophetae*, statim subdidit *sed sum armentarius*, inquit, *vellicans sicomoros*, ubi nemo somniat [quod tunc evulsit sicomoros].' *FZ*, p. 28.

⁹³ '...patet conferentibus Scripturam in sua integritate... quod Scriptura juvat seipsam pro sensibus postillandis: ut illud Amos *Non sum propheta* docetur restrictum ad illum sensum, Non sum falsus propheta, ut tu Amasias, vel ad hunc sensum, Non sum naturaliter per me ex specie vel genere propheta; quia secunda propositio est intelligenda quod non est filius prophetae ex patre carnali immediate: cum certum est, ad modum loquendi Scripturae, quod Amos est filius Abrahae, et filius Adam, quorum uterque, sicut et alii patres sui, sunt prophetae magni pro tempore suo, et ne credatur Scripturam sacram utrobique sic incarcerare verba, addit tertio, pulchra alternatione amplificando, *Sed armentarius sum vellicans sicomoros.*' *FZ*, p. 461.

statement in the *Logicae Continuatio*, concerning the paternal relation of David and Abraham to Christ, and of Adam to all men, that *all relatives are convertible in time* ('relativa [omnia] sunt covertibilia in tempore').⁹⁴ Kenningham, following the *Glossa Ordinaria*, predictably argues for a very different interpretation. What Amos meant when he said that he was not a prophet was that the spirit of prophecy was lacking from him *at that moment*. It is therefore valid to infer, suggests Kenningham, that he was indeed not a prophet.⁹⁵ As to his claim to have been plucking wild figs, he might well have been using the present tense improperly, since the common people, through ignorance, we are told, often used the present tense in relation to frequent and habitual acts. He could have been simply recollecting his former occupation as a cattle-herd, with the expectation that he would return to it. It was never assumed, after all, that he had performed an act of prophecy, and his prophecy had, after all, been condemned.⁹⁶ The amplification of time here, therefore, as in the five passages from Matthew, can be reduced to a verbal process which strictly entails no real temporal amplification at all.

Implicit in Kenningham's treatment of all of the eight passages used by Wyclif is the assumption that past and future instants are not real categories. The amplification of being is reduced to an essentially logical or conceptual operation which, as in the case of propositional truth, is centred on the signification of terms rather than their *significata*. The philosophical underpinnings of this reduction are made explicit at the beginning of Kenningham's introductory treatise (*Ingressus*), following his initial rejection of the thesis that all things that were, or will be, are. It is suggested here that those authorities who support Wyclif, saying that all past and future things are present to God ('omnia praeterita et futura [sunt] praesentia Deo'), use the word 'present' equivocally.⁹⁷ There are, Kenningham argues, two distinct modes of predication associated with this term, the one objective and the other subjective. If 'present' is used objectively, in relation to the act of cognition ('in ratione cognoscendi'), then it is applied to something known immediately, by *intuitive* rather than by

⁹⁴ *Logicae Continuatio*, p. 169 (the passage is cited and translated in full in Ch. 3 (section 2.4), above).

⁹⁵ 'Dicit enim glossa ibidem sic: "Spiritus non semper administrat prophetiam prophetis, sed ad tempus; et tunc recte vocantur prophetae cum illuminantur. Quod ergo ait, *Non sum propheta*; intelligit modo.'" *FZ*, p. 7.

⁹⁶ '...quia Amos nunquam fuit assumptus ad praedicandum, erat armentarius et solebat vellere sicomoros, et verisimile sibi erat quod ad idem officium rediret, eo quod prophetia ejus contemnebatur: ideo pristinum statum recolens, et forte propinquum credens, dixit se esse armentarium vellicantem sicomoros.' *FZ*, pp. 28-9.

⁹⁷ *FZ*, p. 11.

abstractive cognition. It is accordingly to be characterized as a ‘respective’ term, signifying the apprehension of an intellective power.⁹⁸ Subjective presence, by contrast, refers to what is present *at this instant*, without any ‘respective’ connotation.⁹⁹ It is for this reason, Kenningham claims, that doctors do not speak of all things being simply present to us, but only to God, since all things are known perfectly to him alone. According to Kenningham’s two definitions, then, the human intellect intuitively perceives only what already occurs subjectively in the present instant, and can know the past or the future only by a process of abstraction. Its objective perceptions are therefore confined to the present instant. The divine intellect, however, perceives all instants intuitively. There is apparently nothing exceptional in any of these ideas, which would have been accepted by the majority of contemporary philosophers.¹⁰⁰ Where Kenningham adopts a distinctively nominalistic stance, however, is in his refusal to admit that the past and future instants known to God have any proper degree of being, or ‘subjective’ presence, to him:

According to this mode of speaking, it does not follow that *a* is present to God, therefore *a* is, any more than it follows that *a* is known to God, therefore *a* is. The exception is if the word ‘being’ is taken to refer to objective being, which would be an improper mode of speaking, and would be far removed from our proposition.¹⁰¹

This argument, as Kenningham suggests earlier in the same tract, can be proved in three ways. Firstly, by the necessary assumption that God knows all things equally perfectly, and hence that present and possible things are both perfectly known by him. This perfect knowledge of possible things, Kenningham argues, does not imply that those things actually *are*. It follows, therefore, that if something is possible but does not exist (‘*si a sit possibile non existens*’), then God has intuitive knowledge of that thing, but without the thing itself having any kind of being (‘*esse*’).¹⁰² Here, as elsewhere, Kenningham’s argument relies on the

⁹⁸ ‘Praesens vero obiective, sive in ratione cognoscendi, dicitur illud quod clare cognoscitur et immediate, non cognitione abstractiva sed intuitiva. Et sic iste terminus praesens est terminus respectivus connotans apprehensionem alicujus potentiae intellectivae.’ *FZ*, p. 11.

⁹⁹ ‘Subjective... praesens dicitur quod nunc est, vel in tempore praesenti, non includens respectum, nisi solam coexistentiam secundum tempus vel instans.’ *FZ*, p. 11.

¹⁰⁰ See, for example, Wyclif’s own comments on God’s intuitive cognition of all past, present and future things. *FZ*, p. 463.

¹⁰¹ ‘Et juxta istum modum loquendi non sequitur *a* est praesens Deo, ergo *a* est, plus quam sequitur, *a* est cognitum a Deo, ergo *a* est: nisi forte accipiatur *ly esse* pro *esse* obiectivo, quod improprie diceretur, et multum distaret a proposito nostro.’ *FZ*, p. 11.

¹⁰² *FZ*, p. 10.

assumption that any distinction between essence and existence (or potency and act) is, in real terms at least, meaningless. To this extent, the validity of the argument, for a realist thinker like Wyclif, would presumably be confined to a verbal level (the assumption being that 'esse' and 'existere' were being treated as synonyms).

4. ANTIQUITY, ETERNITY AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF AUTHORITY

Temporal amplification, as Wyclif's numerous exegetical examples illustrate, provided a convenient solution to the difficult problem of relating the finite and the worldly to the infinite and eternal. Only with a proper understanding of this relationship, according to the realist hermeneutic of the *Summa de Ente*, could the truth of Scripture be properly understood. Scripture was itself, however, in its ultimate form, eternal, and hence both anterior to, and older than, all worldly texts (just as eternity, according to the theory of time contained in the *Summa de Ente*, 'preceded' the first instant of time (*tempus*).¹⁰³). As such, it also represented the supreme textual authority, whose every part was literally true. Wyclif perceived this relationship between antiquity, truth and authority as one of simple causation: antiquity represented the primary cause of truth and authority in the Book of Life.¹⁰⁴ Such an apparently straightforward formulation predictably encouraged some difficult questions from Kenningham. If antiquity was the cause of authority and truth, for example, would we not then have to concede that the works of certain ancient poets, though impossible fictions, were also true?¹⁰⁵ Would not such an argument also be inconsistent with Augustine's claim that the writings of Enoch, on account of their great antiquity, held no authority for either Jews or Christians (*De Civitate Dei*, bk 18, Ch. 38)?¹⁰⁶ Wyclif responded characteristically by highlighting the distinction between antiquity in time and antiquity as eternity. Only in the latter sense, in which it was identical with the eternity of God, could antiquity be the cause

¹⁰³ See Ch. 3, above.

¹⁰⁴ *FZ*, p. 15; pp. 454-456.

¹⁰⁵ This is the first of four similar objections cited by Wyclif at the beginning of his first determination against Kenningham. See *FZ*, pp. 455-456.

¹⁰⁶ *FZ*, p. 15.

of authority and truth in the Bible. In its other sense, it was simply irrelevant.¹⁰⁷

Whether Kenningham had actually confused the two meanings of *antiquitas*, or at the very least ignored its most significant sense, as Wyclif was suggesting, is unclear. Such confusion would certainly be consistent with his conceptualist assumptions about past and future instants, as well as with his apparent hostility to realist metaphysics more generally. Though he denies that Wyclif's distinction does anything to invalidate his own arguments, he continues to use the term *antiquitas* in a way which effectively avoids the distinction altogether. In defending Augustine's suggestion about the writings of Enoch, for example, he makes the following point:

...Augustine said that their very great antiquity was the reason why the books mentioned above are not authenticated by the Church. And so my master assumed greater antiquity for them than Augustine supposed, for [Augustine] was speaking only of the antiquity of time, and my master speaks of the antiquity of eternity. Therefore, if on account of temporal antiquity these same writings are held to be suspect by the Church, by how much more [are they held to be suspect] on account of their eternal antiquity...¹⁰⁸

Kenningham is here apparently assuming that Wyclif would have accepted Augustine's argument for the non-authentication of certain apocryphal texts, but would then have concluded that the *eternal* antiquity of such texts served as its basis. This would obviously have run contrary to Wyclif's beliefs about eternity as the foundation of scriptural authority, and could easily be dismissed as a deliberate misconstrual of the basic premises of his argument.

In his second determination against Wyclif, Kenningham makes his criticism more explicit. In his reply to Kenningham's arguments, we are told, Wyclif maintains that 'the writings of certain saints are held to be suspect by the Church on account of their eternal

¹⁰⁷ 'Ne... laboremus in aequivocis, dico, antiquitas accipitur ad modum loquendi Scripturae et B. Dionysii pro aeternitate Dei, et aliquando accipitur pro senio, vetustate, vel veterascentia rerum entium. Prima antiquitas est causa quare Scriptura sacra est insolubiliter vera de vi sermonis, secundum quamlibet ejus partem; secunda autem antiquitas est sibi impertinens.' *FZ*, p. 454.

¹⁰⁸ '...Augustinus dixit quod nimia antiquitas fuit in causa quare praedicti libri non auctenticantur ab ecclesia. Et jam magister meus ponit multo majorem antiquitatem eorum quam posuit Augustinus, quia ipse non loquebatur nisi de antiquitate temporis, et Magister loquitur de antiquitate aeternitatis; ergo si propter antiquitatem temporalem habentur eadem scripta apud ecclesiam suspecta, multo magis propter antiquitatem aeternam...' *FZ*, p. 15.

antiquity' ('scripta quorundam sanctorum habentur apud ecclesiam suspecta, propter aeternam eorum antiquitatem').¹⁰⁹ Kenningham responds predictably to this unlikely piece of logic, denying that eternal antiquity can serve either as the grounds for rejection of apocryphal texts, or as the basis of scriptural authority. The first part of his denial rests on the premise that 'no text of any author is prior to, or older than, that same author' ('Nullum scriptum alicuius auctoris est secundum mensuram prius, vel antiquius eodem auctore').¹¹⁰ As the creation of a human author, Kenningham argues, Enoch's text cannot itself be eternal, since no such author is eternal. It is not possible, therefore, for the Church to regard the text as suspect on account of its eternity.¹¹¹ If it were known by the Church, on the other hand, that books such as Enoch's *were* eternal, then the Church would also know that they were true, rather than false, since no falsity is eternal.¹¹²

Though Wyclif would have agreed with each of these conclusions, which were not inconsistent, as we have seen, with his own metaphysical or broad exegetical assumptions, he would not have accepted so readily the premises on which they are based. Indeed, the premises themselves expose some of the major differences between nominalist and realist suppositions about the nature of authorship, intention, and authority. Whilst it was obviously true, for example, that no physical text could possibly be older than the human author who had produced it, the 'intelligible' form of that same text was by definition infinitely older. For Kenningham and the nominalists, of course, such an intelligible text did not exist. Even if they had been willing to concede that it could do, this text was clearly not the same thing as the text of the human author (though the latter could be a *sign* of the former), and so could not, presumably, have invalidated the major premise of Kenningham's argument.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ FZ, p. 43.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ '...tam Enoch, quam alius quiscunque sanctus, creatus est solum temporalis et non aeternus a parte ante; ergo nullius eorum scriptum aeternaliter est antiquum, et per consequens hujusmodi scripta non propter aeternam eorum antiquitatem habentur ecclesiae suspecta.' FZ, p. 43.

¹¹² 'Si notum esset ecclesiae quod tales libri sunt aeterni, et aequaliter antiqui, tunc eadem ecclesia sciret quod sunt veri, cum nulla falsitas sit aeterna; sed dato quod ecclesia sciret hujusmodi libros esse veros, tunc non haberet eosdem suspectos; ergo non propter antiquitatem aeternam suspecti sunt apud ecclesiam.' FZ, p. 44.

¹¹³ See the discussion of the theory of authorship presented in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* in Ch. 5 (section 1), below.

The second part of Kenningham's denial draws again on the apparently misguided assumption that Wyclif treated eternal antiquity simply as an extension of finite time. Wyclif had used the idea of eternal antiquity to defend the authority of the book of Enoch. This, Kenningham suggests, implies that the eternity of canonical and apocryphal texts is the same, which, according to Augustine's criterion for non-authentication, is impossible:

The antiquity of holy Scripture is the same as [that] of these apocryphal writings, namely eternity. But the reason why they are apocryphal is their great antiquity, as appears from Augustine. Therefore, holy Scripture does not hold its authority by virtue of this same antiquity. But my Master says the opposite...¹¹⁴

Though Kenningham's argument would have given Wyclif no reason to doubt his own convictions about the nature of authority, it would clearly have posed a threat to the broader acceptance of his views within the academy. In *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, he accordingly goes to great lengths to clarify his position on the philosophical bases of textual authority.¹¹⁵ The question of textual authority, and of the authorities of different forms of textuality – material and intelligible – lay at the heart of the debate between realist and anti-realist (or nominalist) hermeneutic theorists. We must still ask, nevertheless, whether it is entirely appropriate to speak of a 'nominalist' theory of textuality. This, of course, must depend partly upon our assessment of the philosophical standing of the textual theorists themselves, which will be the subject of the following section.

5. KENNINGHAM, NOMINALISM AND TEXTUAL THEORY

What emerges most clearly from the issues debated by Wyclif and Kenningham, despite the marked ideological divisions that separated them, is that neither 'nominalist' nor 'realist' – at least without substantial qualification – is adequate to describe either of them. The

¹¹⁴ 'Eadem est antiquitas Scripturae sacrae et talium apocryphorum, scilicet aeternitas; sed causa quare ista scripta sint apocrypha est nimia antiquitas eorum, sicut patet per B. Augustinum; ergo propter eandem antiquitatem Scriptura sacra non capit auctoritatem; cuius oppositum dicit Magister meus.' *FZ*, p. 44

¹¹⁵ See Ch. 5 (section 1.2).

reasons for this have less to do with the idiosyncratic nature of their respective approaches, which, as we have suggested, has been greatly exaggerated in historical accounts of the past century,¹¹⁶ than with the problematic status of the categories themselves – and others like them – more generally. This has not been helped by the tendency, in histories of the development of nominalist philosophy, to blur the distinction between terms such as ‘nominalism’, ‘conceptualism’, and ‘terminism’. At different stages of his argument, Kenningham could clearly be identified in terms of one or more of them, but there are also points at which the application of any of these categories would amount to a gross oversimplification at best. His rejection of the theory of real predication, for example, is clearly consistent with both nominalist metaphysics and the broad terminist emphasis on the primacy of the linguistic proposition as a determinant of truth. As we have seen, however, Kenningham, like Wyclif, was often at pains to dissociate himself from many of the more characteristic tendencies of terminist thought. Supposition theory and the general terminist preoccupation with the properties of terms, for example, are both treated by him as marginal – if not altogether dispensable – concerns for the serious philosopher or theologian.¹¹⁷

The elements in Kenningham’s thinking which bear the closest resemblance to nominalism generally, and to Ockhamism in particular, are those which relate to metaphysical, rather than to logical, problems. His understanding of the nature of being is perhaps the most obvious example, affecting, as it does, most other aspects of his philosophical system. Such an understanding is certainly anti-realist in its basic premises, and has much in common, as we have seen, with the ideas of earlier nominalists. His rejection of the assumption that universals were realities *ex parte rei* provides a superficial affirmation of his nominalist leanings. Though the problem of universals itself plays a relatively minor role in most of the debates between Kenningham and Wyclif, its underlying significance is never in doubt. Its fundamental position in Wyclif’s hierarchy of nests is the best indication of its perceived importance, as well as of the threat which could result from its abuse.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ See Introduction and Ch. 1 (sections 4 and 5).

¹¹⁷ In analysing Wyclif’s argument relating to the identity of intelligible beings and the divine essence, Kenningham speaks disparagingly of those ‘who do not suppose there to be truths beyond signs’ (‘ipsi... qui non ponunt veritates a parte rei’). See *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, p. 75.

¹¹⁸ Cf. the position of the theory of universals in Wyclif’s first hierarchy of scriptural defences in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* (discussed in Ch. 5 (section 5.1), below).

Though Kenningham's determinations are perhaps the best evidence we have that nominalism – or anti-realism – potentially posed as great a threat in the late fourteenth century as Wyclif suggests, their significance extends far beyond their basic philosophical orientation. At least as important is the recognition within them of what was at stake – in terms of textual and hermeneutic authority – for each of the respective philosophical parties. Wyclif's realism raised his own arguments and interpretative strategies effectively beyond the realm of doubt, whilst consigning those of his anti-realist opponents to the realms of irrelevance and inefficacy. Those who refused to admit the existence of intelligible natures were bound not only to misunderstand the nature of truth and predication, but were also blinding themselves to the true nature and significance of the Scriptures. The language of the Bible, and the logic which governed its composition and interpretation, were in their proper sense not subject to the laws of human interpretative communities at all. As Kenningham recognized, this effectively ruled out any possibility of meaningful debate with Wyclif:

[It is] quite difficult to find arguments against the opinion of such a doctor; for my arguments are nothing but wooden arrows to attack a nest which is outside the temporal world; they are as the stones of children thrown against the Pleiades; indeed, such is the comparison between a starred heaven and a spider's web, as is the difference between my reasons and the judgement of my master. Such grand words of the doctor, so solemn in meaning and style, come close to confusing me, for I know that neither Aristotle, nor the great Augustine said such things...¹¹⁹

Despite the manifest political advantages of a philosophical system which claimed to be founded on intelligible, pre-linguistic truths, any such system, as Kenningham clearly perceived, was itself potentially subject to the very constraints and conventions it sought to transcend. The desire Wyclif expresses in the *De Ente Primo in Communi* to dispense with the *liber materialis* completely,¹²⁰ and to attend to the eternal truths of the Book of Life, is one which was almost by definition unrealizable, as his own exegetical writings serve to illustrate. Many of Wyclif's own interpretative procedures, moreover, despite his numerous claims to the contrary, rest heavily on key assumptions about the nature of conventional signs

¹¹⁹ '...difficile satis [est] invenire colores contra opinionem tanti Doctoris; cum argumenta mea non sint nisi baculi arundinei, ad impugnandum nidum qui est extra globum temporalium, et quasi lapides puerorum projecti contra Pleiades; immo qualis est comparatio inter coelum stellatum, et telam araneae, talis est differentia inter rationes meas, et sententiam Magistri mei. Vere hujusmodi grandia verba Doctoris tam solemnibus in scientia et sermone paene confundunt me, quia scio quod nec Aristoteles, nec magnus Augustinus talia dixerit...' *FZ*, p. 67.

¹²⁰ See Ch. 2 (section 5), above.

and logical operations. This is true in particular, according to Kenningham, in the case of the concept of *ampliatio temporis*. What amplification amounted to for him, as we have seen, was not any extension of time itself, in the real world, but rather the extension of the simple signification of the words. Wyclif himself, therefore, could claim to be little better than the philosophers he was so eager to criticise:

[Wyclif] does not amplify time externally, because its amplitude is not determined by the power of [the word 'is']; nor does he amplify any signified truth, since every such [truth] is caused by God, and is limited by him alone... Therefore only the sign, in terms of its signification, receives such amplification. And thus my master seems to do an injury to himself by disparaging the doctors of signs.¹²¹

Without signs, Kenningham argues, the Church would not be able to administer the sacraments, and the faith could not be taught. The rule and judgement of the Scriptures could likewise not be exercised in any other way than through a series of signs.

Kenningham's attempts to reinstate language and logic as significant determinants of scriptural meaning highlight some of the most fundamental divisions between realist and anti-realist interpretative procedures. Among the most important of these are undoubtedly those which relate to the status of metaphorical language. Both Kenningham and Ockham, as we have shown, regarded metaphor as a secondary, indirect form of expression. Their particular reasons for doing so were clearly quite different, but were in each case compatible with the basic assumptions of nominalist thinking. Whether Kenningham would have endorsed Ockham's views in the form in which we find them must remain a mystery (since he nowhere addresses the issue of univocity and analogy explicitly),¹²² but it is certain that he could have rejected none of them easily on philosophical grounds alone. Kenningham's views on time and predication, moreover, which form the basis of his own rejection of metaphorical language, find clear support in Ockham's philosophical writings (albeit in a very different context).¹²³

¹²¹ '...tempus extra non ampliatur, eo quod amplitudo eius non subiacet potestati illius; nec ampliatur aliquam veritatem signatam, cum omnis talis sit causata a Deo, et ab eo solo limitata... Ergo solum signum quantum ad significationem recipit huiusmodi ampliationem: et sic Magister meus sibi ipsi facere videtur iniuriam, vituperando doctores signorum.' *FZ*, p. 64.

¹²² For Ockham's interpretation of metaphor see Ch. 2 (section 3), above.

¹²³ On Ockham's rejection of real predication, see Ch. 3, above.

This shared distrust of metaphor, not surprisingly, had comparable effects on the exegetical practice of the two philosophers. The strict literalistic method for which Ockham has become renowned,¹²⁴ for example, was also applied, with essentially the same emphasis, by Kenningham. In both the first and the second determinations, Kenningham suggests that, as expositors of Scripture, we should not seek to imitate the figurative expressions it contains, but rather to explain their meaning in plain language.¹²⁵ This insistence on working with the mediated literal sense, rather than with the immediate figurative meaning, is reminiscent of Aquinas's treatment of the literal sense in his *Summa Theologiae*. The literal sense, for Aquinas, encompassed both the meanings of literal passages as they stood (in the case of non-metaphorical language), and of figurative passages whose literal meanings had been arrived at by a process of translation (in the case of metaphor or grammatical figuration).¹²⁶ Only from this sense, Aquinas argued, which formed the basis of all others, was it possible to develop proper logical arguments.¹²⁷ Kenningham was more extreme than Aquinas, who did, at least, allow exegetes and preachers to use figurative language outside the context of strict logical argumentation.¹²⁸ Such usage, for Kenningham, led only to needless confusion.

Whether either Kenningham's or Ockham's literalism can be called a direct consequence of nominalist thinking must remain an open question. There were, after all, literalists (Aquinas himself being the key example) whose philosophical opinions were fundamentally incompatible with the basic assumptions of nominalism. Both Ockham and Kenningham, moreover, were working at a time of renewed logical rigour in the Schools, which exerted its own demands on exegetical procedures. Nevertheless, it is clear that there was, in each case, a firm philosophical basis for the negative assessment of figurative language. If nothing else, literalism was conveniently consistent with the more general premises of their respective epistemological systems.

¹²⁴ Ockham's literalism is discussed by Minnis, 'Authorial Intention' and 'Literal Sense', pp. 22-3.

¹²⁵ *FZ*, pp. 27-28; pp. 68-70.

¹²⁶ This latter kind of meaning was known as the *sensus parabolicus*, which was seen to be contained *within* the literal sense, despite being mediated figuratively: '...sensus parabolicus sub litterali continetur, name per voces significatur aliquid proprie et aliquid figurative; nec est litteralis sensus ipsa figura, *sed id quod est figuratum*' *Summa Theologiae*, ia. I, 10, res. ad 3 (my italics).

¹²⁷ '...omnes sensus fundentur super unum, scilicet litteralem. Ex quo solo potest trahi argumentum, non autem ex his quae secundum allegoriam dicuntur...' *Summa Theologiae*, ia. I, 10, res. ad 1.

¹²⁸ See *Summa Theologiae*, ia. I, 9, res. ad 1-3.

By focusing attention on the linguistic operations underlying both metaphorical and temporal expressions, and by highlighting Wyclif's own paradoxical dependence on the structures and conventions of language, Kenningham was effectively shifting emphasis away from the divine author and back towards human intention. This is a significant point to note, since it was a distinctive assumption of both nominalists and terminists, as William Courtenay has observed, that language and logic were fundamentally human, rather than natural structures.¹²⁹ As such, for Kenningham at least, they were also structures which were subject to the control of human authors and translators, as well as to the norms and expectations of individual linguistic communities. The interpretation of scriptural texts, no less than that of any other form of discourse, therefore depended crucially on a full understanding of the human customs and intentions underlying them. Not surprisingly, human intention is invoked frequently by Kenningham as a means of justifying many of his own interpretations of metaphorical passages from the Bible. His analysis of the problematic statement of the prophet Amos ('I am a herdsman plucking wild figs') is a very typical example, resting ultimately, as we have seen, on assumptions about the nature of popular language. The 'intentional' truth of a scriptural passage could often be defended when its literal meaning was false, as in the case of 'the blind see' (Matthew, 11:5).¹³⁰ In such cases, human intention, whether that of an author, translator, or speaker, supplied the basic means of preserving the truth of scriptural language. The intention of an author or translator could also be appealed to in cases of apparent grammatical inconsistency, such as those which were explained by Wyclif in terms of temporal amplification. For Kenningham, these could be explained as further examples of linguistic variation among speakers.

Kenningham's arguments, then, though they reveal some of the real dangers which nominalist assumptions might have posed for Wyclif's hermeneutic system, were not necessarily themselves informed by mainstream nominalist thinking. In real terms, this makes little difference to the claim that Wyclif was fundamentally opposed to anti-realist

¹²⁹ 'Antiqui and Moderni in Late Medieval Thought', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 48/1 (1987), 3-11 (p.7). Courtenay opposes terminism to the 'modism' of continental thinkers like Thomas of Erfurt, which rested on essentially realist assumptions about the nature of language. Though modistic logic did not last into the second half of the fourteenth century, the known hostility of the modists to both nominalism and terminism provides an interesting parallel to the later reaction of Wyclif and his followers.

¹³⁰ FZ, p. 28.

metaphysics, nor to our assessment of the philosophical coherence and consistency of Kenningham's critique of his opponent's teaching. The relationship between Kenningham's philosophical and hermeneutic convictions, moreover, can leave us in no doubt as to the subversive potential of particular forms of anti-realism (whether we choose to identify these as 'nominalisms' or not). His views on the nature of truth and time, as we have seen, served as the basis for his rejection of Wyclif's conception of literalistic interpretation. As such, they challenged not only a fundamental interpretative paradigm, but a much broader conception of textuality and authority. They threatened to restore to prominence all of those aspects of the interpretative process which Wyclif's metaphysic sought to deny or to obscure: human agency and intention, the active role of the interpretative community in the production of meaning, and the conventions (which modern linguists would describe as 'pragmatic') associated with figurative and other indirect forms of language.¹³¹ Wyclif was clearly sensitive to the implications of Kenningham's critique of his hermeneutic method, and to the threat posed by his rejection of the metaphysical principle of intelligibles on which it rested. This much is clear from his own determination against the Carmelite. In *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, Kenningham's arguments seem still to have been very much in his mind, as is suggested by the defensive rhetoric he employs in his discussion of intelligible natures, real universals and temporal amplification throughout this later tract. The relationship between Kenningham's remarks and the hermeneutic theory of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* will be considered in Ch. 5, which will focus on the philosophical connections between Wyclif's mature hermeneutic views and the material of the *Summa de Ente*. It will be argued that, besides representing an evolutionary progression, the exegetical concepts and strategies of the later work also stand as tacit concessions to key arguments in Kenningham's critique of realist hermeneutics.

¹³¹ Pragmatic considerations pertain to those aspects of meaning which rely on inferences of the speaker or the speech community. See Stephen C. Levinson, *Pragmatics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), Ch. 1.

CHAPTER 5

FROM THEORY TO EXEGESIS: SIGNIFICATION, INTERPRETATION AND TEXTUAL AUTHORITY IN *DE VERITATE SACRAE SCRIPTURAE*

Wyclif wrote *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, his major treatise on Scriptural interpretation, in 1378, at a point still relatively early in his theological career.¹ This was the fourth volume of his massive theological *summa*, composed immediately after his controversial thesis on dominion, *De Civili Dominio*. The political consequences of this work, and the hostile reaction of Pope Gregory XI to conclusions published within it, have tended to cast a shadow over Wyclif's philosophical activities in the Oxford theology faculty at this time.² The perceived relationship between Wyclif's metaphysical convictions and the strong element of antifraternality in the works published after *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, moreover, has further detracted from the philosophical significance of this text.³ The close interdependence of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, the *Summa de Ente* and the *Logicae Continuatio* has consequently attracted far less attention than it deserves, and still awaits a comprehensive and systematic investigation.

The present chapter will focus on the development of the key hermeneutic concepts explored in Chapters 2 and 3 – those of analogy, 'real' predication and the apprehension of textual and extra-textual meaning – and will investigate the plausibility of extending the claims made for anti-nominalist rhetoric in the early philosophical works to the texts of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*. It will be argued that, despite the very different contexts surrounding the production of the *Summa de Ente* and *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, the latter having been composed with the exegete, rather than the philosopher or speculative

¹ On the dating of the tractate, see Thomson, *Latin Writings*, pp. 55-7.

² On the papal response to the conclusions of *De Civili Dominio*, see Kenny, *Wyclif*, pp. 53-55; Workman, *John Wyclif*, vol. ii, pp. 293-313; McFarlane, *John Wyclif and the Beginnings of English Non-conformity*, pp. 83-88.

³ On Wyclif's hostility to the friars, which followed largely from their rejection of his controversial theory of eucharistic remanence, see Penn Szittya, *The Anti-fraternal Tradition in Medieval English Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 152-182.

theologian in mind,⁴ the assumptions of metaphysical realism continue to be perceived as principles fundamental to the hermeneutic process. The effects of this form of realism, moreover, can now be seen to extend beyond the confines of theological sign theory – within which the hermeneutic principles of the *Summa de Ente* were conceived – and into the domain of textual theory proper. The rules of analogy, to take the most obvious example, are employed in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* not merely as a means of interpreting theological propositions (as is to be expected), but also as an interpretative paradigm for the terms and concepts of the hermeneutic enterprise itself. This tendency was already visible in the *Summa de Ente*, in which we find analogy at work in the interpretation of fundamental hermeneutic and metaphysical terms such as ‘being’, ‘logic’, ‘truth’ and ‘universal’. In *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, however, the list is extended to include ‘author’, ‘authority’, ‘book’ and ‘sense’, all of which are found to be properly intelligible only in analogical terms. Exactly how such an extended system of analogical interpretation might have been received among contemporary exegetes must remain a matter for speculation. Unlike other aspects of Wyclif’s metaphysical teaching (his theory of universals, intelligible natures and ‘real’ predication being the most obvious), the principles of analogy were often invoked without any recourse to explicit theorization. This would clearly have made them less outstanding targets for intellectual debate or assault at the hands of theoreticians like Kenningham. There can be little doubt, nevertheless, that the analogical system of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* would have provoked hostile responses from contemporary academic opponents of Wyclif. The disparaging references to Oxford philosophers and logicians within the treatise are a good indication that he was still very acutely aware of the threats posed by such figures. In his defence of the principles of scriptural truth, moreover, he is quite explicit about the dangers of an anti-realist philosophical outlook. Beyond the predictable problems Wyclif identifies within it (most of which follow from arguments presented in the *Summa de Ente*), such an outlook would, of course, have made a nonsense of the analogical process.

⁴ By the end of the Middle Ages, in part as a consequence of the rise of Aristotelianism in the twelfth century, theology and exegesis were operating effectively as independent disciplines. The marked difference in emphasis between the *Summa de Ente* and *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, therefore, was far from unusual. See Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible*, pp. 293-4.

The principles of analogy will be analysed below within both their traditional, and their extended hermeneutic contexts. Within the latter context, the concepts of the book (*liber*), the author (*auctor*) and authority (*auctoritas*) will be examined in detail. The implications of analogism for two other key ideas in Wyclif's hermeneutic programme – those of intentionality and language – will also be considered, principally within the context of the scriptural philosophy developed in the *Summa de Ente* and the *Logicae Continuatio*. In the concluding section, Wyclif's metaphysical 'weapons' (*armaturae*), which draw conspicuously on the key metaphysical concepts of the *Summa de Ente* – those of ideas, universals, real predication and *ampliatio temporis* – will be presented and analysed in turn. The introduction of the 'weapons' in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* is among the most explicit gestures Wyclif makes towards nominalist hermeneutic methods in the tractate. Though no nominalist is mentioned, there can be little doubt that contemporary anti-realists such as John Kenningham – who had opposed Wyclif, as we have seen, on precisely those issues embodied in the 'defences' – would have been among the primary targets.

1. ANALOGY AND THE THEORY OF THE TEXT: *LIBER, AUCTOR, AUCTORITAS*

The questions of textuality, authorship and authority were seldom far removed from each other in scholastic theoretical discourse.⁵ In *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, the principles of analogy provide a further conceptual link between the three, as well as serving implicitly to validate the hermeneutic metalanguage of which they are a part. As in the *Summa de Ente*, Wyclif focuses consistently upon the errors which arise if the principles of analogy – and implicitly, those of realist metaphysics more generally – are misapplied or simply ignored. Once again, it is those who choose to dwell upon the secondary analogate (in this case, the material codex, the human author, or worldly authority), rather than attempting to see beyond it, who are found to be the principal offenders. Among them

⁵ For an overview of medieval conceptions of textual authority (and an analysis of the connections between this and the related problems of textuality and authorship), see Jacqueline T. Miller, *Poetic License: Authority and Authorship in Medieval and Renaissance Contexts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), Introduction and Ch. 1. Scholastic theories of authorship are analysed in A.J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages*. 2nd ed. (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1986).

Wyclif would certainly have included Kenningham, and there is a strong likelihood that his remarks on authority in particular were being made with Kenningham's objections in mind. The *textual* implications of a neglect of the principles of analogy are far reaching, as Wyclif's analyses of the three related concepts illustrate. Like the materialistic scholars described in the *Summa de Ente*, those who confine their attention to the physical text and the intention of the human author – who would have included, in Wyclif's mind, any nominalist or anti-realist – can have knowledge only of the world of existence (the lowest form of being).⁶ In textual terms, this renders them incapable both of apprehending authoritative truths, and of making any proper claim to authority in their own discourses. Most importantly, as Wyclif reveals, it blinds them to the true nature of the book (*liber*) of Scripture itself, the authoritative text par excellence.

1.1 Liber and Codex

The question of the definition of the book (*liber*), and hence of the nature of a particular form of textuality, is introduced in the sixth chapter of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, in which Wyclif considers an objection to his central thesis that Scripture is true in all of its parts. The objection is typical of the many which are cited in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, and betrays a fundamental misunderstanding of precisely those principles which enabled the mind to see beyond the secondary analogate (here, the *codices scriptorum*):

...it is argued that it is not inconsistent [to say that] Scripture is false, since Scripture is nothing but the books of writers [*codices scriptorum*], and it is no wonder, when [these writers] are themselves more false than usual, if the works of their craft [*ars*] are more than usually falsified.⁷

This point, which has clearly been carefully chosen, invites the predictable response that neither material books (*codices*) nor sensible signs (*signa sensibilia*) are holy Scripture, which is rather a 'signified' truth (*veritas signata*), existing beyond books or signs. This

⁶ See Ch. 2 (section 2), above.

⁷ '...arguitur, quod non est inconveniens scripturam sacram esse falsam, cum non sit scriptura nisi codices scriptorum, qui, cum sint plus falsi quam solebant, non est mirum, si opera artis sue sint plus solito falsificata.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, ed. in three volumes by Rudolf Buddensieg (London: Trübner, 1905), vol. i, p. 107.

idea very clearly recalls Wyclif's desire, expressed in the *Summa de Ente*, to see beyond, and ultimately to dispense with, the *liber materialis*.⁸ There are, he suggests, if the material book is itself included, five different forms of Scripture, ranging from the most to the least perfect. The hierarchical scheme which he presents follows the familiar Dionysian metaphysical pattern of the *Summa de Ente*, and bears a very obvious similarity to the five-part classification of universals presented in *De Universalibus*⁹:

I have been accustomed to assuming five levels of holy Scripture: Firstly it is the Book of Life, of which we are told in Apocalypse 20 and 21; secondly, it is the truths inscribed in the Book of Life according to their intelligible being. And both kinds of Scripture are absolutely necessary, differing not according to their essential natures, but by reason, as it is explained in *De Ydeis*. In the third sense, Scripture is taken to be the truths which are to be believed according to their kind, which either according to their existence or effect are written in the Book of Life. Fourthly, it is truth to be believed as it is written in the book of natural man, as the soul. Some say that this kind of Scripture is the totality of acts and truths listed under the third heading; some say that it is an intellectual habit; and some say that it is an intention or an idea. But in the fifth sense, holy Scripture is the books, words and other artefacts, which are the signs by which prior truths are recollected.¹⁰

The Book of Life and the truths inscribed within it, like divine ideas and the divine essence (as we learn from the *Summa de Ente* and from Wyclif's disputations with Kenningham), are only notionally distinct. There are, therefore, strictly speaking, only four levels of Scripture, the highest of which, in its two different forms, is kept wholly separate from the

⁸ See Ch. 3, above.

⁹ The correspondence between these two schemes has been observed by a number of commentators. See Jesse Gellrich, *Discourse and Dominion in the Fourteenth Century: Oral Contexts of Writing in Philosophy, Politics and Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 91; Kantik Ghosh, 'Authority' and Interpretation in Wycliffite, Anti-Wycliffite and Related Texts: c. 1375 - c. 1430 (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1995), p. 46 n. 75. On the classification of universals in *De Universalibus*, see Ch. 3, above.

¹⁰ '...solebam ponere quinque gradus scripture sacre: primus est liber vite, de quo Apoc. vicesimo et vicesimo uno, secundus est veritates libro vite inscripte secundum esse earum intelligibile, et utraque istarum scripturarum est absolute necessaria, non differens essencialiter, sed secundum rationem, ut dictum est in materia De Ydeis. tercio sumitur scriptura pro veritatibus credendis in genere, que secundum existenciam vel effectum inscribuntur libro vite. quarto sumitur scriptura pro veritate credenda, ut inscribitur libro hominis naturalis ut anima, quam scripturam quidam vocant agregatum ex actibus et veritatibus tercio modo dictis, quidam, quod est habitus intellectivus, et quidam, quod est intencio vel species. sed quinto modo sumitur scriptura sacra pro codicibus, vocibus aut aliis artificialibus, que sunt signa memorandi veritatem priorem...' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, pp. 108-9.

other three. The lowest, Wyclif suggests, can be understood in two different ways (according to a basic scholastic distinction). Either it is to be taken *personally* and *concretely*, in which case it is simply the material signs of the books themselves, regardless of what they signify, or *simply*, as signs signifying the intention of God.¹¹ It is in the latter sense, he tells us, that he himself understands the ‘sensible’ form of holy Scripture (*scriptura sacra sensibilis*).¹² To understand it in the first of the two senses would be to think as a terminist or ‘doctor of signs’ (*doctor signorum*), a member of the broad group of thinkers regularly castigated in the *Summa de Ente* and *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*. Both terminists and nominalists were clearly perceived by Wyclif as belonging to a single group of scholars, united not necessarily by a common set of philosophical concerns, but by a more general concern with knowledge of the lowest kind (the *notitia confusa*, or sense-knowledge which appears at the bottom of Wyclif’s hierarchy of perception in the *Summa de Ente*¹³). Whilst nominalists *rejected* analogy on ontological grounds, terminists, for whom signs were themselves the primary objects of knowledge, would have had no real need to draw upon such apparently extraneous principles.

Here, as in the works of the *Summa de Ente*, Wyclif is clearly anxious to separate the sign (in this case, a sequence of words on a page), from its prior cause and *signatum*. Christ, he suggests, understands Scripture in terms of the first of the five definitions, as we learn from John 10, where we are told, ‘the scripture cannot be broken’.¹⁴ By the term *liber*, therefore, we should understand ‘book’ as an intelligible entity, rather than as the books (*codices*) of men. The analogical relationship between the Book of Life and the books of men is emphasized by the parallelism between the five different forms of Scripture and the hierarchy of universals from the *Summa de Ente*. The principles of

¹¹ This distinction is usually applied to modes of *supposition*. Personal supposition occurs when a term supposits for an individual in the world (in this case, the verbal signs written in codices). Simple supposition, as we suggested in Ch. 3 (section 1), occurs when a term stands for a general significate. Since Wyclif regarded this as a universal nature, it had to be ‘signs signifying the intention of God’ (considered in their universal aspect) in this case.

¹² ‘sed hoc potest multipliciter intelligi, vel personaliter et concretive pro illis signis quomodocunque signaverint, vel simpliciter pro illis, ut signant sensum dei; et sic intelligo ego scripturam sacram sensibilem.’ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 109.

¹³ See Ch. 2 (section 5), above.

¹⁴ John 10:35.

analogy are evoked more explicitly when Wyclif tells us that the Scripture which we find in sensible words and books is only holy Scripture in an equivocal sense. It is referred to as Scripture, he suggests, on account of *similitude* merely, just as a painting of a man is called a man. This latter comparison, familiar from Wyclif's classification of the different kinds of analogy in *De Logica*, suggests that the relationship between scriptural codices and the Book of Life is to be understood in terms of analogy of attribution, the weakest form of analogy.¹⁵ As a divine idea, Scripture is at once most proper and most holy. It is most proper because 'it is written in the form of the highest wisdom', and its writing is 'so proper to God that it cannot be communicated by another nature.' It is most holy because of the sacredness of its subject, the strength of its meaning, and the utility of its purpose. Like Christ himself, we are told, it was sent to the world for the good of mankind.

The advantages of interpreting Scripture in analogical terms becomes clear when Wyclif enumerates the logical consequences of the mistaken view that it is simply one material text among many:

[If this were the case], all holy Scripture could be spoiled by a cobbler, could take its authority from a mere scribe; indeed, it would be capable of being destroyed by a dog and, as a thing which can be blemished, could be corrected by a clown. And all Scripture would be translatable to heresy by any man as he pleased, would be damnable and capable of being opposed, with neither virtue, direction, nor honour - and consequently without authority.¹⁶

The written form of Scripture, as a secondary analogate, can properly have no significance except in respect of the primary analogate (the Book of Life) which it signifies. Crucially, as Wyclif is to explain in detail later in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, this also means that in itself, it has no authority.¹⁷ From the perspective of the human reader, however, this secondary analogate provides the only means by which any conception of Scripture in its highest form can be arrived at. Wyclif is clearly not seeking to deny this, but rather to

¹⁵ See Ch. 2 (section 1), above.

¹⁶ '...sic esset omnis scriptura viciabilis a sutore, autorizabilis a scriba, ymmo a cane solubilis et corrigibilis a scurra sicut maculabilis, et omnis scriptura foret a quolibet hominibus hereticabilis, dampnabilis et adversabilis, nullius virtutis directive vel honoris et per consequens nullius autoritatis.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 111.

¹⁷ See section 1.2 of the present chapter.

ensure that the written signs of the scriptural codices do not also become *signata* in their own right (as they had apparently become for the materialistic nominalists and terminists of the Oxford Arts faculty). In the ninth chapter of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, he is willing to concede that the material codex has a very significant part to play in our apprehension of the higher forms of Scripture. Holy Scripture, we are told here, is ‘an aggregate of the codex and the holy meaning which the catholic takes from that material, as a sign’.¹⁸ The diversity of human understanding, however, means that there are as many forms of material Scripture, understood in terms of the fifth and final category listed in Chapter 6 of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, as there are catholic readers of the codices.¹⁹ Nevertheless, Wyclif suggests, the act of understanding is more truly holy Scripture than are lines on a page, which are only holy insofar as they approximate to that act. Likewise, the Scripture of the mind (*scriptura mentis*) is itself only holy by virtue of the objective scripture (*scriptura obiectiva*) which it apprehends.²⁰

Wyclif’s analogical conception of the scriptural text, whilst open to philosophical criticism from logicians who rejected the notion of intelligible being, was not in itself controversial. The issues of textual authority which such a hierarchical conception of the book brought with it, however, must have provoked angry responses both from within and outside the academy. Kenningham, as we have seen, had been highly critical of Wyclif’s pronouncements on the nature of authority and authorship. The effects of this criticism are clearly evident in the more detailed analysis of these concepts presented in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*. Kenningham would have been regarded by Wyclif as one among the many who were squandering their intellectual resources on the problems and processes of human authorship and authority. His rejection of Wyclif’s conception of authority, however, would also have placed him on a level with those who would confuse the authority of Scripture and the Decretals. Nominalists and papalists, it would seem, were

¹⁸ ‘nam sacra scriptura est aggregatum ex codice et sensu vel sententia sacra, quam catholicus habet de illa materiali ut signo.’ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 189.

¹⁹ ‘...ex quo patet quod, quotquot sunt catholice intelligentes codices scripture sacre, et idem materiale in numero, to sunt scripture sacre quinto modo dicte propter diversitatem actus intelligendi.’ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 189.

²⁰ ‘illa enim mentalis intelleccio est verius scriptura quam lineacio membrane, que non est scriptura sacra, nisi per habitudinem ad illam, nec scriptura mentis est sacra, nisi per scripturam obiectivam, quam concepit.’ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 189.

not systematically distinguished in Wyclif's mind (not, that is, as far as potential hermeneutic error was concerned). His theories of authorship and authority will be examined in detail in the following section, and will be related explicitly, where appropriate, to Kenningham's critique.

1.2 Auctoritas and the Auctor

The realist conception of divine and human authority brought with it a group of very distinctive problems. Wyclif's understanding of the complementary concepts of authorship and authority, moreover, highlight some of the most significant connections between the philosophy of the *Summa de Ente* and the exegetical theory of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*. Many of the issues Wyclif attempts to address in his treatment of authorship relate directly to the problems inherent in the conception of truth, intention and speech he presents in the *Summa de Ente*.²¹ These, as we have shown, had already attracted the attention of Kenningham, whose question on the nature of scriptural truth is left without an entirely satisfactory answer.²² In the fifteenth chapter of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, though not mentioning Kenningham by name, Wyclif provides what perhaps comes closest to a response to this earlier question. The problem under discussion is the familiar one of truth to divine intention. Since all truths are produced in accordance with the intention of God, as Wyclif has argued in the *Summa de Ente*, then all must be of equal authority:

It seems firstly that every truth is of equal authority with every other. For every truth, insofar as it is such, is the word of the Lord. Every word of the Lord is of equal authority with every other, first because it is essentially the highest authority, and then because it proceeds from the same author. Therefore every truth is of equal truth with any other.²³

²¹ See Ch. 3 (section 1), above.

²² See Ch. 4 (section 2.2), above.

²³ 'et videtur primo, quod omnis veritas sit paris autoritatis cum qualibet. Nam omnis veritas in quantum huiusmodi est verbum domini, omne verbum domini est paris autoritatis cum quolibet, tum quia est essentialiter summa autoritas, tum etiam quia ab equali autore procedit, igitur omnis veritas est equalis veritatis cum qualibet.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 390.

Wyclif's claim is met with the predictable objection that if every truth is equal, then so would be the authority of any proclaimer or recorder of that truth. As we soon discover, however, this objection rests on the mistaken assumption that the authority of truth can be gauged by the authority of the human author (the *auctor immediatus*). If this were so, Wyclif argues, then three unacceptable conclusions about the nature of authority and authorship in Scripture would follow. First, we would have to assume that the word of Christ is infinitely more authoritative than the word of any other author of Scripture. The words of all authors of Scripture, however, as Wyclif is at pains to point out elsewhere, are equal expressions of the intention of God, and should therefore be equally true. Similarly, we would have to assume that the authors of the New Testament – Peter, John, James, Matthew, Judas, Mark and Luke – wrote with different degrees of authority, since in life they differed both in terms of sanctity and authority. This, Wyclif suggests, is apparently inconsistent, since we learn in Acts 3 that they spoke *with one voice*. Lastly, we would have to concede either that the Decretals are of the same authority as the writings of Saint Peter, and hence more authoritative than the writings of any other saint (including Saint Paul), or, by attending to the sanctity of the author's life, or to the truth of his message (*sentencia*), that the writings of the four fathers of the Church (Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, Gregory) hold greater authority than the Decretals of Popes or Cardinals.²⁴

Underlying these three unacceptable conclusions, Wyclif believes, are the familiar problems associated with an ignorance of the principles of analogy. He responds with exposition on the nature of authorship and authority, drawing conspicuously on the

²⁴ 'item si veritas caperet gradum autoritatis ab immediato autore, tunc videntur sequi tria falsa. primum, quod omne verbum Cristi sit infinitum maioris autoritatis quam verbum alterius autoris scripture; videtur secundo, quod illi septem autores novi testamenti, scilicet Petrus, Johannes, Jacobus, Mattheus, Judas, Marcus et Lucas scripserunt scripturas disparis autoritatis, sicut et ipsi erant disparis autoritatis et sanctitatis, quod non videtur conveniens, cum uno ore locuti sunt, ut dicitur Act. tertio. item videtur iuxta illud, quod epistole decretales vel sint paris autoritatis cum epistola beati Petri et per consequens excedentes decreta et epistolas Pauli ac aliorum sanctorum, vel, si sanctitas vite aut veritas sentencie attendatur, tunc a probabili sancti quatuor doctores cum aliis sanctis postillantibus scripturas forent in scriptis suis maioris autoritatis quam aliqui pape vel cardinales in scribendo epistolas decretales.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 390.

Thomistic concept of participation introduced in the *Summa de Ente*. Wyclif begins characteristically by explaining the meanings of the terms 'authority' and 'author' themselves:

Here it is to be supposed firstly that authority is that by which somebody is formally an author. Secondly, we should distinguish how someone is an author of himself and in himself, as God is alone, and how someone [is an author] derivatively and by participation, as men are, to whom God imparts His power for the use of the Church. And those authorities are infinitely removed, and are fully equivocally so-called, for which reason the professor of Scripture could call the secondary power not 'authority', but a proxy office for the precognition of the meaning of the Lord. Thirdly we should note that, since authority of the first kind is said to be the same as the author, authority of the second kind is said to be an accident in respect of the first, by which, and finally, on account of which, it appears that just as truth can be understood in two ways, so the authority of truth can also be understood in two ways. For truth can be understood as an entity in respect of its primary being, and thus all truth is God, just as every being is God; or in respect of its secondary being, which is existence in general. And thus there are many kinds of truth.²⁵

The three points listed here follow the familiar pattern of Wyclif's analogical arguments in the *Summa de Ente*. God, whose essence is uniquely identical with the analogon itself – in this case, *authority* – is the only being who can properly be called an author. Human authors, as he goes on to explain, are authors only by participation (*participative*), possessing authority accidentally (as all creatures possess different qualities in different ways), rather than essentially (as all qualities inhere perfectly in God, being identical with him). Wyclif is clearly anxious to distance human authority from the authority of the divine as far as possible. Human authority, as a mere accident, is placed in the lowest category of being (and hence, truth).²⁶ Its relation to divine authority, moreover, is described in terms

²⁵ 'hic oportet primo supponere, quod autoritas sit illud, quo quis est formaliter autor. secundo oportet distingwere, quomodo aliquis est autor de se et in se, ut solus deus, et aliquis participative et derivative ut homines, quibus deus participat potestatem suam ad utilitatem ecclesie. et iste autoritates infinitum distant et sunt satis equivoce, racione cuius professor scripture catholice posset vocare secundam potestatem non autoritatem, sed vicarium officium ad praecognizandum sensum domini. tercio oportet notare, cum autoritas primo modo dicta sit idem cum autore, autoritas autem secundo modo dicta sit accidens respiciens principium, a quo, et finem, gracia cuius, patet, quod, sicut dupliciter potest intelligi veritas, sic dupliciter potest intelligi veritatis autoritas. potest enim intelligi veritas sicut entitas quoad esse suum primum, et sic omnis veritas est deus, sicut omne ens est deus, vel quoad esse secundum, quod est existencia in genere. et sic sunt multa genera veritatum.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 391.

²⁶ Cf. the four-place hierarchy of created being in *De Universalibus*, according to which, as here, accident and essence are represented as opposite metaphysical extremes. See the discussion in Ch. 2 (section 1), above.

of *equivocation*, rather than analogy. There can, within this framework at least, be no place for a theory of authorship which measures truth according to the authority of the human author, nor which measures human authority by the divine truth which is conveyed.

The consequences of this conclusion for Wyclif's theory of scriptural authorship are elaborated in the four separate points which follow it. Firstly, we are told, every truth spoken by God, who is the speaker of all truths, is equal with any other. Wyclif turns here to the definition of truth given in the *Summa de Ente*, namely that truth is *adequacy of a thing to the divine intellect*. In terms of truths intended by God, such adequacy is no different from identity, which, as Wyclif explains, is not subject to different degrees of completeness. Scripture, as the word – and as such, the intention – of God, is thus of equal authority in each of its parts. Human authors, on the other hand, are described as 'nothing but scribes or heralds of God, whose purpose is to record his law'.

Wyclif clarifies the basic division between human and divine authorship in his second point, by explaining how different kinds of truth (and hence, of authority) can exist only in the temporal world. This is a key point in his argument, since it confronts directly the problem of reconciling the absolute truth of all things which are intended by God, and which have been created by him, with the variety of truths and falsehoods which are known to exist in the created world:

Although every caused truth is of equal authority with any other, ...nevertheless formally distinct and subjective truths are of proportionally different authority, as they are more necessary or prior. The first part appears from this: that every truth, like every entity, according to the first idea of truth, is God himself, just as Augustine says in his *On Truth*, and as it is shown in the material of *On Ideas*, how every creature, according to its intelligible being, is God himself, according to the principle in John 1: 'What was made, in him was life'. And the second part appears from this: because accidental authority and authority in respect of a thing is received [in proportion to its] goodness or priority.²⁷

²⁷ 'licet omnis veritas causata sit paris autoritatis cum qualibet quoad duplicem rationem, tamen veritates distincte formaliter et subiective sunt autoritatis disparis proporcionaliter, ut sunt magis necessarie vel priores. prima pars patet ex hoc, quod omnis veritas sicut omnis entitas secundum primam rationem veritatis est ipse deus, sicut dicit Augustinus in libro suo De Veritate et patet in materia De Ydeis, quomodo omnis creatura secundum esse intelligibile est deus ipse iuxta illud Joh. primo: quod factum est, in ipso vita erat. et secunda pars patet ex hoc, quod accidentalitudo et respectiva rei capitur penes eius bonitatem vel prioritatem.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 392-393. (I have here, as before, departed from the Douay-Rheims translation of John 1:3-4 in order to retain the sense of the Latin passage as cited by Wyclif).

Absolute truth, as Wyclif suggests here, is something which exists only in respect of the intelligible natures of things. Unlike the 'subjective truths' of the world, which are 'formally distinct', such a truth is unitary, being identical, we are reminded, with God himself. No subjective truth is absolutely authoritative in this sense, but nor is it necessarily of equal authority with any other truth of its kind. This latter point, implicit in the closing section of the passage, is clearly a significant one for Wyclif, both in the immediate context of scriptural authorship, and in relation to the broader questions of social and political theory.

In the text which follows this exposition, Wyclif makes the relationship between the different forms of 'accidental' authority more explicit. Goodness (*bonitas*) and priority (*prioritas*), we have been told, are the basic indices of this form of authority. Wyclif gives the example of an abbot and his vicar, and of a father and his son, the former, in each case, having greater authority than the latter. The principle, he suggests, can be extended to the priesthood, whose most authoritative members are called 'presbyters', or seniors. These priests are priests by the law of grace, and it is through this divine gift alone that they receive their dignity. Priests of this kind, Wyclif reasons, are more worthy of honour than priests of the law of nature (*sacerdotes legis naturae*) or priests of diaconal law (*sacerdotes legis leviticae*). The presbyter of Christ, honoured by sacerdotal grace, is thus to be honoured by his inferiors. In accepting the office of priest, he receives his greatest honour by making known, through Scripture, the law of Christ. This concluding observation leads Wyclif to his third point, which relates to the authority of the text of Scripture, and to the idea of Christ as author:

The whole of holy Scripture, insofar as it is the authority of the head of the Church, is of infinitely greater authority than any other writing in respect of its proper and individual author. It appears from this that Christ, by virtue of [his] vision, infinitely surpasses any of his brothers. As author to author, so authority to authority; therefore, the conclusion.²⁸

²⁸ 'tota scriptura sacra quoad auctoritatem capitis ecclesie est infinitum maioris auctoritatis quam aliqua scriptura aliena quoad autenticacionem sui proprii et privati auctoris, patet ex hoc, quod Cristus ex gracia visionis infinitum excellit quemlibet alium fratrem suum. sed ut autor ad autorem, sic auctoritas ad auctoritatem, igitur conclusio.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 394.

The supreme authority of Christ, as the proper *auctor* of Scripture, becomes the guiding principle in Wyclif's theory of authorship. Human authority, as we learn from the preceding point, inheres most properly in the priests of Christ, the humble proclaimers of, and adherents to, his law. It is on his account, therefore, and not their own, that they have any right to be identified as authors. Wyclif turns to a passage from Psalm 141 for support:

Their judges falling upon the rock have been swallowed up.²⁹

The rock, Wyclif explains, following Augustine's commentary on the Psalms, is Christ, beside whose authority the judges of this world, powerful and learned, are thrown down. Plato, Aristotle, and Pythagoras are all compared with the rock, by whose side they are similarly cast down.³⁰ All such authors, Augustine tells us, so long as they are seen to say anything, are compared to the rock. Wyclif passes over these observations without adding further comments, until he reaches Augustine's suggestion that anyone who uses the words of Christ is to be thanked, but not personally to be followed.³¹ The truth which is thus spoken, Wyclif suggests, is itself a prior truth. His exact meaning is possibly related to the remainder of Augustine's text (which is not, nevertheless, cited), in which the truths spoken by Christ, and the Christian truths which may have been found earlier in Aristotle, are explained in terms of absolute, rather than temporal, priority.³² The basic sense, however, directs us again to the notion that speakers of Christian truths are themselves nothing more than vessels, whose truth and authority is never properly their own. Towards the end of the passage he states explicitly that Christ is the first principle of truth, from whom every statement of a human author which is worthy to be valued takes its origin.³³

²⁹ Psalms 141.6. Buddensieg notes (n. 11) that Wyclif substitutes 'iuxta petram' for the 'iuncti petrae' of the Vulgate: '*absorpti sunt iuxta petram iudices eorum*' (*De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 394).

³⁰ "petra," inquit, "erat Cristus, iuxta quem comparati ipsi iudices, magni, potentes et docti absorpti sunt. dixit de moribus vel quamcunque sententiam Aristotelis. adiunge illum petre, et absorptus est. quis est Aristoteles? audiat, Christus dixit et apud inferos contremescit. dicit hoc Pythagoras, dixit hoc Plato. adiunge illos petre. compara auctoritatem eorum auctoritati ewangelice, compara inflatos Cristo crucifixo" et absorpti sunt.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 394.

³¹ "propterea si inventus fuerit aliquis hoc dixisse, quod dixit et Cristus, gratulamur illi, non illum sequimur". Nam si qua vera loquitur, prior est ipsa veritas.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 394.

³² *Enarratio in Psalmum CXLI*, 8 (*PL*, 37, 1838).

³³ 'videre potuit, quod fuit quantumlibet maioris auctoritatis quam aliqua alia creatura et nullum dictum suum valere, nisi de quanto traxerit a Cristo originem, cum sit veritatis primum principium.' *De Veritate Sacrae*

It is according to this last principle that, in the last of his four points, Wyclif justifies his prioritization of Scriptural texts above all human forms of writing. Here, the focus is upon the authority of the Decretals (*epistolae decretales*), from which, we are told, the authority of Scripture is infinitely far removed. This observation, Wyclif explains, relates specifically to the nature of the *auctor* (or *conditor/scriba*) *proximus* of the text, a term which remains undefined at this stage, but which is later identified with the human author of Scripture. The Decretals, we are told, are the products of the Pope and his subjects, whereas Scripture is authorized directly (*immediate*) by God. The notion of directness is of central importance here. Anything communicated directly by God, or apprehended directly from him, draws its authority and meaning from him alone, *without the intervention of the human intellect*.³⁴ As Wyclif goes on to explain, ‘the word of God conceives of all of its knowledge and delivers it directly to its scribes, who add nothing of their own invention’.³⁵

This view, he tells us, is affirmed by Scripture itself, by the Church in its practices, and by all other faiths. It is not the scribes themselves, however, who choose to make this Scripture, because if it were, then Scripture would receive its authority from its *auctores proximi*, rather than from God:

It would indeed be unreasonable, when Christ had to give the law of his Scripture to the Church, for him to have done other than dictate it into the hearts of the humble scribes, encouraging them in the form of writing and showing which he had chosen. But we should not believe this of other apostles or vicars of Peter, because, if they had assembled a sense of Scripture before the one laid down, which was equal to the authority of the holy Scripture of God, ...it could not nevertheless be that it is made equal in its authority by its *conditor proximus*.³⁶

Scripturae, vol. i, p. 395.

³⁴ Wyclif invokes the concept of directness in a similar way in the context of scriptural literalism. See section 5.2, below.

³⁵ ‘verbum dei adinvenit omnem eius scienciam et inmediate tradidit scribis suis, qui nichil addiderunt de adinvencionibus propriis.’ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 395.

³⁶ ‘irrationabile quidem fuisset, cum Cristus debuit dare legem scripture sue ecclesie, nisi ipsemet dictasset eam in cordibus scribarum humilium, excitans eos ad formam scribendi et ostendendi, quam ipse elegerat. hoc autem non oportet sic credere de aliis apostolis vel Petri vicariis, quod, si congregarunt unam sentenciam scripture prius absconditam, que sit paris autoritatis cum scriptura sacra quoad deum, ...non tamen esse potest, quod parificetur in autoritate quoad proximum eius conditorem.’ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 396.

If the *auctor* (or *conditor*) *proximus* became thus the cause of truth in any scriptural text, Wyclif suggests, then he himself would be Christ. By the same token, as he points out later in the chapter, if papal bulls – or, presumably, the Decretals – were authoritative on account of their *auctor proximus*, then the Pope would be Christ.³⁷ If any author ‘is moved by God to promulgate in such a way’, on the other hand, then the text ‘is itself most authentic according to God.’³⁸ Wyclif proposes that, through this distinction, all laws which appear to make the decretals of equal authority with the Gospel can be abolished. Any decretal which affirms scriptural ideas may indeed be of equal authority with the Scriptures, but the basis of this authority, once again, is the word of God, and not the intention of the Christian *auctor proximus*. The directness of Christ’s authorship of Scripture, Wyclif suggests, is made explicit in the words of the apostle in Galatians 1.8:

I make known to you, brothers, the Gospel, which is preached by me, because it is not according to man, nor from a man have I taken or learned it, but through the revelation of Jesus Christ.³⁹

Wyclif would argue that no claim to *personal* authority is being made in this passage. From the perspective of the faithful human author (the *auctor proximus*), the composition of Scripture is therefore regarded as an essentially passive process in terms of the operations of the mind itself. Wyclif is clearly anxious, at every stage, not merely to marginalise, but to exclude from consideration, the processes of human discursive reasoning. What we are left with appears to rest on the operations of what Grosseteste, following Aristotle, had called the *intellectus passivus*.⁴⁰ Though Wyclif nowhere uses of the term himself, he would certainly have been aware of it, having already made use, as we have seen, of the complementary notion of the *intellectus agens* in his discussion of universals.⁴¹ There is, then, a direct communication of divine intention from God, the *auctor immediatus*, to the

³⁷ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 408.

³⁸ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 396.

³⁹ ‘notum vobis facio, fratres, ewangelium, quod ewangelizatum est a me, quia non est secundum hominem, neque enim ab homine accepi illud neque didici, sed per revelationem Jesu Cristi.’ The Latin text is cited in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, pp. 397-8.

⁴⁰ See the discussion in James McEvoy, *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp. 346-351.

⁴¹ *De Universalibus*, 3. 35-40. See Ch. 3, above.

soul of the *auctor proximus*, who records it. The *auctor proximus*, however, is also, in another sense, an *auctor immediatus*, as Wyclif goes on to explain:

...Scripture has a threefold author, namely God, the humanity of Christ, and their *scriba proximus*. God, moreover, is the *auctor immediatus* insofar as he is first in the *ordo ascendendi*, but the vicar of Christ is the *auctor immediatus* insofar as he is the authentic instrument in the *ordo descendendi*. The writer (*scriba*), however, to whom no revelation is made, or the stationer, or another possessor or editor of signs, is not an author.⁴²

The use here of the term *ordo* recalls the hierarchical conception of knowledge and being which we find in the *Summa de Ente*, and points very clearly, once again, to the influence of Grosseteste and Pseudo-Dionysius. The two senses of the term *immediatus*, as applied to opposite extremes of the hierarchy, are clearly very different, and it would seem that Wyclif makes use of the common term primarily as a means of separating the human authors of Scripture from those scribes 'to whom no revelation is made.' Unlike the human scriptural authors (the *auctores proximi* or *scribae proximi* of Scripture⁴³) who convey truths *instrumentally* (as *instrumenta autentica*), these latter writers, as we learn here, are not properly authors at all.⁴⁴ As such, they have an entirely passive rôle in the communication of scriptural truths, and cannot be related to the divine author in analogical terms.

In contrast to many of the most influential commentators of the preceding century, as we suggested in the Introduction, Wyclif has no interest in the respective 'literary' rôles of the scribe, the compiler or the editor.⁴⁵ All are effectively the same, as the broad

⁴² '...habet scriptura autorem triplicem, scilicet deum, Christi humanitatem et eorum scribam proximum. deus autem est autor immediatus quoad prius requisitum in ordine ascendendi, sed Christi vicarius est autor immediatus quoad instrumentum autenticum requisitum in ordine descendendi. Scriba enim, cui non fit revelatio, vel stationarius aut alius signorum possessor vel conditor non est autor.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 398.

⁴³ In Wyclif the term *scriba* ('scribe', 'writer'), when modified by *proximus*, is synonymous with *auctor* or *conditor*. When unmodified, it is generally used of the writer 'to whom no revelation is made' (see discussion above). There are, however, exceptions, as when Peter (the *auctor proximus* par excellence) is described as a 'scribe of Christ' (*scriba Christi*). See n. 50, below.

⁴⁴ On the Aristotelian concept of instrumentality as applied to the theory of authorship in the Middle Ages, see Minnis, ' "Authorial Intention" and "Literal Sense" '. See also the discussion of the human author as instrumental *causa efficiens* in Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, p. 83.

⁴⁵ On the growth of interest in the 'literary activity' of the human author in the thirteenth century, see Minnis,

reference to 'possessors of signs' would suggest. This markedly conservative evaluation of the significance of the human author is rooted very firmly in Wyclif's analogical interpretation of the hermeneutic process. It marks a significant departure from the Aristotelian interpretative paradigm which, as Alastair Minnis has argued, had led theorists of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to devote greater attention to the *interdependency* of divine and human authors.⁴⁶ The concepts of instrumentality and causality, each of which played a significant part in this process, are still clearly visible in Wyclif's writings. The mention here of the 'authentic instrument' and the 'threefold author' of Scripture, however, which have obvious parallels in the Aristotelian instrumental efficient cause and twofold efficient cause (*duplex causa efficiens*), does little to offset Wyclif's negative assessment of the function of the human author.⁴⁷

1.3 Human Authors and Scriptural Tradition

Though the basic terms of Wyclif's three-part schema (God-Christ-*scriba proximus*) serve to resolve the main problems of relative and absolute authority with which he began his discussion of authorship, there remains the question of the relative authority of the scriptural authors themselves. Insofar as all of the authors of Scripture communicated their message in accordance with divine intention, their words, as we have seen, would have been deemed to have equal authority. This simple principle, however, does not always apply straightforwardly. Wyclif considers an example from Galatians 2:11-14, in which St Peter (Cephas) and St Paul apparently make competing claims to truth. Peter, we are told, had eaten with the Gentiles before the arrival of the Jews, but had later (in the company of the Jews) distanced himself from them. It is in response to these actions that Paul questions him:

Medieval Theory of Authorship, pp. 94-103.

⁴⁶ *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, p. 81.

⁴⁷ We must assume that by 'authentic instrument' (*instrumentum autenticum*), Wyclif means simply 'the instrument of the divine author'. It seems unlikely, judging by what is said on the relationship between the authority of the human author and that of the (divine) truth he conveys, that this label identifies the human author with any form of authority.

¹¹ But when Cephas was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. ¹² For before that some came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them who were of the circumcision. ¹³ And to his dissimulation the rest of the Jews consented, so that Barnabas also was led by them into that dissimulation. ¹⁴ But when I saw that they walked not uprightly unto the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all: If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as the Jews do, how dost thou compel the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

If, Wyclif suggests, St Paul and St Peter were to be treated as equal authorities, then both would have to be believed. He rejects, however, the argument (attributed here to St Jerome) that Peter did not sin, but was censured by Paul *lest he should sin*. A true account, he suggests, would hold Peter to blame for his hypocrisy. He cites Augustine's epistle to Jerome, in which Peter is said to have sinned and to have been reprehended by Paul on account of his sins. If Augustine's account were mistaken, he argues, then Scripture itself would be false, which is impossible. God, according to Augustine, permitted Peter to sin, but did not, in so doing, *approve* of Peter's actions. This, Wyclif suggests, is the interpretation favoured by the Church, according to which God ordained this sequence of events for the good of Peter. He concludes that the faith implicit in the writings of the scribes of the law of Christ is to be valued above their actions, except insofar as these are consistent with the law of God.

Closely related to the problem of the relative authority of Peter and Paul is that of the relative authority of their successors within the Christian tradition. Wyclif addresses this in the section immediately following his discussion of the passage from Galatians 2, in which he draws on his earlier suggestion that Christian authority increases in proportion to the goodness or priority of the subject. Here it is argued that those who follow Peter may indeed have been equal to him in respect of rank and jurisdiction (*potestas ordinis et iurisdictionis*), but that Peter had many other graces which his successors did not share (the power to work miracles, of understanding obscure passages from Scripture, and of interpreting idiomatic expressions are listed as examples). The faith of any apostle of Scripture, he suggests, is to be followed in preference to that of any successor to the apostles, even when the word of the latter is identical with that of the former.⁴⁸ This

⁴⁸ '...est maior fides adhibenda scripture cuiuscunque apostoli quam illius eorum vicarii, eciam quoad dictum, quod uterque dixerit tanquam suum.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 400.

conclusion has its basis, we are told, in four observations (all of which relate more or less explicitly to the notions of temporal priority or greater goodness). According to the first of these, the earlier fathers (*priores patres*) were more holy, and adhered more closely to Scripture in their words and writings than their successors in the later Middle Ages. Likewise, secondly, their message (*sententia*) was ‘more spiritual’, and was ‘made suspect less by avarice’, than the decretals.⁴⁹ Wyclif is careful to point out here that *propinquitatis* is being used in a very specific sense, and refers to the closeness of particular natures or habits to the ‘root of truth’. To this extent, he tells us, the word of Peter is to be believed to an infinitely greater degree on account of his being a *scriba* of Christ (and hence, like the *auctor*, *conditor* or *scriba proximus*, a channel for divine intention), than on account of his being a successor (*vicarius*) of Christ.⁵⁰

The laws of priority which govern Wyclif’s conception of authorship would appear to leave little room for writers outside the Christian tradition, and less still for those whose work lies outside the disciplines of philosophy and theology. The theory of analogy itself, as we have seen from the *Summa de Ente*, implicitly marginalises the language of poets and storytellers, for whom metaphor is not underpinned by the metaphysics of analogy.⁵¹

The authority of non-Christian poets and philosophers, as Wyclif has argued in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, is never to be placed above that of Christian writers, even when, as in the case of the ancient Greeks, they precede them in time. We have already seen, however, that Christ must be regarded as the author of any truth conveyed by Aristotle which is consistent with scriptural teachings. Such a view is by no means exceptional. Surprisingly, nevertheless, it did not attract any comment from Kenningham in his lengthy critique of Wyclif’s conception of authority in the second *Determinatio*.⁵² The problem of pre-Christian authorship is discussed in detail by Wyclif in the eleventh chapter of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, in which he considers the relationship between the authorities of the Old and the New Testaments. It is often assumed, we are told here, that there are

⁴⁹ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 400.

⁵⁰ ‘...loquor de propinquitatis morum, verumptamen,...infinite plus creditur dicto Petri in quantum scribae Christi, quam in quantum Christi vicarius.’ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 400.

⁵¹ See Ch. 2, above.

⁵² See Ch. 4 (section 4), above.

many truths of holy Scripture contained within the writings of poets. Homer, Vergil and Ovid are given as examples, the first two of whom, Wyclif reminds us, are mentioned by St Jerome in the sixth chapter of his prologue to the Bible.⁵³ He goes on to consider the way in which the New Testament is used to establish the authenticity of writings of the Old, and asks why poets whose words are accepted by an author of the New Testament should not themselves be regarded as authentic scriptural writers. His own answer to this question is prefaced by a list of basic observations relating to the nature of truth, textuality and authorship:

There are three things to be noted. First, that every faithful person should believe every truth in its universal aspect, and that truths should be believed in their particular aspect by a child, who is disposed [to believe them] in this way.

Secondly it is to be noted that no individual books [*singulares codices*], as far as the substance of the faith itself is concerned, are rather the sense or the truths which they signify, than animal hides. If they were, then the faith would die if they were burned or destroyed.

Thirdly it is to be noted that more attention is to be paid to the way in which authors or witnesses are mentioned, as well as the mode of speaking or of declaring.⁵⁴

The first two points rely heavily on the realist conception of truth used throughout *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* and the *Summa de Ente*. It is according to the first, Wyclif suggests, that we are able to deduce that poets can indeed assert the truths of faith (*veritates fidei*), even if they are themselves pagans. He cites a passage from 1 Timothy 3, in which we are told that, 'he must have a good testimony of them who are without'.⁵⁵ As in the case of the truths of the authors of Scripture themselves, whose own invention, as we have been told, adds nothing to the truth conveyed, the truths of poets and pagans are not truths

⁵³ 'assumitur enim comuniter, quod in scriptis poetarum sunt multe veritates scripture sacre, ut patet de Homero et Vergilio Marone, sicut recitat Ieronymus in epistola posita in Prologo Biblie, sexto cap. et idem patet in Ovidio de vetula, in sibilla et quotlibet aliis dicentibus veritates ewangelicas.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 237.

⁵⁴ 'pro isto sunt tria notanda, primo quod omnem veritatem oportet omnem fidelem credere in universali et aliquas veritates oportet adultum ad hoc dispositum credere in particulari, de qua materia est grandis sermo. // secundo notandum, quod nulli singulares codices sunt pocius quam bestie de substantia fidei pro se ipsis, sed sensus vel veritas, quam signant, quia tunc illis combustis vel aliter pereuntibus perit fides. // tercio notandum, quod modus allegandi autorem vel testem sicut et modus dicendi vel asserendi est plurimum attendendus.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, pp. 237-38.

⁵⁵ 1 Timothy 3:7. (*De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 238)

of faith because they were spoken by these people, but because they were said by God.⁵⁶

Wyclif is careful to point out that the existence of such truths in pagan writings does not make *all* of the writings or statements of the author in question authentic scriptural writings. Such a conclusion would clearly be absurd, though in the absence of supporting theological arguments, Wyclif's metaphysical system would offer only a relatively weak defence against it. He turns to Augustine for support, and to the seventh book of the *Confessions*. Here, Wyclif reminds us, Augustine found ten conclusions of John the Evangelist. It is not difficult to see why Augustine's argument would have been attractive to Wyclif, emphasizing as it does the sense of the conclusions (the meaning which, for Wyclif, was the intention of God), rather than the particulars of their actual form:

[In the books of the Platonists] I read, *not of course in these words, but with entirely the same sense* and supported by numerous and varied reasons, 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him nothing was made. What was made is life in him; and the life was the light of men. And the light shone in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.' Moreover, the soul of man, although it bears witness of the light, is 'not that light', but God the Word is himself 'the true light which illuminates every man coming into the world'. Further, 'he was in this world, and the world was made by him, and the world did not know him'. But that 'he came to his own and his own did not receive him; but as many as received him, to them he gave power to become sons of God by believing his name', that I did not read there (John 1: 1-12).⁵⁷

A number of the biblical passages cited here are used by Wyclif elsewhere in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* and the *Summa de Ente*, as we have seen. When, like Augustine, we draw parallels between these and passages in Plato or another author, Wyclif suggests, we do not refer to the latter as authors who give proof on the basis of faith (*per locum a fide*),

⁵⁶ 'nec sunt veritates tales ideo fides, quia ab eis dicte, sed quia a deo dicte.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 238.

⁵⁷ 'et ibi legi non quidem his uerbis, sed hoc idem omnino multis et multiplicibus suaderi rationibus, quod in principio erat uerbum et uerbum erat apud deum et deus erat uerbum: hoc erat in principio apud deum; omnia per ipsum facta sunt, et sine ipso factum est nihil, quod factum est, in eo uita est, et uita erat lux hominum; et lux in tenebris lucet, tenebrae eam non comprehenderunt; et quia hominis anima, quamuis testimonium perhibeat de lumine, non est tamen ipsa lumen, sed uerbum deus est lumen uerum, quod inluminat omnem hominem uenientem in hunc mundum; et quia in hoc mundo erat, et mundus per eum factus est, et mundus eum non cognouit. quia uero in sua propria uenit et sui eum non receperunt, quotquot autem receperunt eum, dedit eis potestatem filios dei fieri credentibus in nomine eius, non ibi legi.' *Confessiones*, vii. 9 (CCSL, 27; trans. Henry Chadwick as *Confessions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 121).

but rather as authors who give proof by human testimony (*per locum topicum a testimonio humano*).⁵⁸ The latter, unlike the inspired authors of Scripture, could not presumably be identified as ‘instrumental’ authors, even though they necessarily act in accordance with divine intention. Their authority, correspondingly, is limited. They may be used, nevertheless, Wyclif suggests, to support the argument of one who regards their messages as ‘authentic’, just as we may wish to argue against infidels by mentioning their own authors to them.⁵⁹ Wyclif here emphasizes once again the necessity of regarding all scriptural meanings conveyed by human authors (those meanings, that is, to which they ‘add nothing of their own invention’) as the word of God. Drawing on a taxonomic scheme developed in *De Logica*, he explains that any declarative mode of speaking (*modus dicendi assertive*) may function either to express an opinion, to give a proof from reason, or to give precognition of a meaning intended by God. This final mode, he suggests, is proper to the authors or prophets of Scripture, who live as Christ and make known his meaning. No prophet who lives otherwise, we are told, can be regarded as a true prophet.⁶⁰

What emerges most clearly from the analysis of these three fundamental textual concepts (the book, the author and authority) is that analogy, though not consistently employed in the self-conscious, programmatic manner of the *Summa de Ente*, nevertheless plays a definitive role in the textual theory of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*. A number of the objections which are considered by Wyclif (especially those relating to truth, authority and antiquity), as we have seen, bear a close resemblance to those raised by Kenningham in his *determinationes*.⁶¹ His extended treatment of the relationship between human and divine authority, moreover, is a good indication of his sensitivity to the points which Kenningham was making. The close interdependency between the three textual concepts and the metaphysical principles of the *Summa de Ente* (truth, intention, universalism) provides a strong suggestion that, whilst nominalists and other anti-realists

⁵⁸ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 238.

⁵⁹ ‘...tale testimonium valet arguendo ad hominem, allegando sibi testem, quem ipse acceptat tanquam autenticum, ut arguendo contra fideles allegamus eis proprios autores.’ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 238.

⁶⁰ ‘modus... dicendi hominis dividitur in hec tria. aliqua enim dicit assertive, alia recitative vel interrogative et aliqua yronice. assertive tripliciter: vel opinando vel racione probando, vel ut sentenciam dei precognizando. et hoc est proprium autoribus scripture sacre...’ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 239.

⁶¹ See Ch. 4 (sections 2 and 4), above.

were not the sole targets of Wyclif's frequent philosophical complaints in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, they were clearly perceived to be more than a trivial threat. His analogical definitions of textuality and authority, as Kenningham clearly realised, were a convenient means of denying them access to a particular form of textuality, and hence to the broader discursive domain of authoritative exegesis.⁶² Two related areas in which analogy and textuality interact closely are those of intention and language. Both, as we have seen, had attracted attention from Kenningham, and both were areas which divided nominalists from realists. They will be considered in turn below.

2. FROM SCRIPT TO SENSE: INTENTION, LANGUAGE AND SCRIPTURAL LOGIC

Any theory of authorship would be meaningless without some corresponding conception of intention. Throughout his expositions on authorship and authority in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, as we have seen, Wyclif invokes the notions of intention and truth to intention to support his claims about the meaning and metaphysical status of the different kinds of Scripture. On a more practical level, these same ideas are drawn upon as a means of resolving apparent verbal ambiguities or inconsistencies in scriptural writings. By the rules of analogy, *intentio*, as a human phenomenon, is always secondary to the intention of God. The intention of the human writer, nevertheless, is still to be given priority over bare words on a page. In the third chapter of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, Wyclif cites Pseudo-Dionysius, who in his treatise *On Divine Names*, labels 'unreasonable' and 'stupid' any reader who privileges linguistic expressions (*dictiones*) above the force of intention (*virtus intentionis*).⁶³ The consequences of attending too closely to such expressions are illustrated from a passage taken from Grosseteste,⁶⁴ in which he discusses

⁶² See Kenningham's remark about throwing stones against the Pleiades, discussed in Ch. 4 (section 5), above.

⁶³ ' "est," inquit [Dionysius], "irrationabile, ut estimo, et stultum, non virtuti intencionis attendere, sed dictionibus, et hoc non est divina intelligere volencium proprium, sed sonos nudos suscipiencium." ' *De Veritate Sacre Scripture*, vol. i, p. 43. Cf. *De Divinis Nominibus*, 708C: ' Ἔστι μὲν γὰρ ἄλογον, ὡς οἶμαι, καὶ σκαιὸν τὸ μὴ τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ σκοποῦ προσέχειν ἄλλα ταῖς λέξεσιν.' (*Corpus Dionysiacum*, i. 156).

⁶⁴ The reference here is obscure. Buddensieg remarks in his edition that 'verba ipsa Rob. Grosseteste in Epistolis nusquam inveni' (vol. i, p. 43, n. 5).

the interpretation of the Greek words *ereos* ('love') and *ereo* ('I love'):

'In eloquent language,' says [Lincolniensis], 'are found the noun *ereos* and the verb *ereo*, used to designate divine and chaste love; either of them is used properly [*decenter*] in the case of divine and chaste love, and improperly [*indecenter*] in the case of unclean love. Thus, those hearing the noun *ereos* used in divine eloquence, and understanding by the word itself the frequency of dishonourable love, as often happens to the force of verbal intention in common speech, do not attend to what is actually used in the holy Scriptures, but to the word as it is commonly accepted, which is stupid and unreasonable.'⁶⁵

The opposition between 'the word as it is commonly accepted' (*vox communiter sumpta*) and 'the force of verbal intention' (*virtus intentionis verbi*) is clearly founded on the more fundamental Augustinian distinction between *vox*, the word in its material form, and *verbum*, its basic meaning.⁶⁶ For Wyclif and Grosseteste alike, this simple distinction, which Augustine inherited from the classical tradition (and which was subjected to Christian metaphysical interpretations throughout the Middle Ages), was among the most important for the serious exegete. It served at once to objectify verbal and propositional meaning, and to marginalise the rôle of the human linguistic community in its determination.

This latter function of Grosseteste's distinction is one which Wyclif is careful to emphasise. Dionysius himself, as we have been told, urged us to attend to the verbal intention, and hence to the intention of the author, as a means of resisting interpretations arising out of popular usage of language.⁶⁷ Such interpretations, we learn in the *Divine Names*, are not consistent with the will to understand divine things. They consist merely in the apprehension of bare sounds (*soni nudi*), which are sufficient, according to Dionysius, only for those whose intellects are not receptive to their full meanings. Ancient

⁶⁵ ' "in eloquiis," inquit [Lincolniensis], "inveniuntur hoc nomine ereos et hoc verbum ereo posita in designacione divini et casti amoris, quod decenter est in hoc amore, sicut in turpi amore indecenter. unde audientes nomen ereos in eloquiis divinis positum et comprehendentes per ipsum vehemenciam amoris inhonesti, ut consuetum est fieri in sermone vlgari virtuti intencionis verbi, secundum quod in eloquiis sacris ponitur, non attendunt, sed voci communiter sumpte, quod est stultum et irrationabile." ' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 43.

⁶⁶ On the significance of *verbum* in Augustinian philosophy and theology, see D.W. Johnson, 'Verbum in the Early Augustine (386-397)', *Recherches Augustiniennes*, 8 (1972), 25-53.

⁶⁷ See Wyclif's reference to *De Divinis Nominibus*, 708C (cited above).

theologians, Wyclif suggests, laboured for this reason to cast aside the senses of infidels and children, and to attend to the meaning of the single, true author (God). He turns here to the heuristic schema of the *Summa de Ente*, highlighting once again the analogy between learning to read (which involves a progression from alphabetic analysis to ‘syllabication’, reading and understanding) and learning to read the Book of Life (in which the reader progresses from grammar to scriptural grammar, authorial intention, and finally to the sense of the Book of Life itself):⁶⁸

Just as a child who learns first the alphabet, secondly to split words into syllables, thirdly to read, and fourthly to understand, has at each of those stages a distinct sense of that which he learned at first, and later, on account of confusion, cast aside, so the theologian, after the doctrine of grammar, learns secondly the grammar of Scripture, adapted to its sense (the first [grammar] having been put aside), [and] attends thirdly to the sense of the author, having turned away from sensible signs, until fourthly he has seen, without covering, the Book of Life.⁶⁹

The process of learning Wyclif describes here, with its emphasis on denial and re-assessment, is conspicuously Dionysian. Progress would be hindered if it were not possible, at each stage, to dispense with the less perfect – and potentially confusing – modes of understanding.⁷⁰ The sense of Scripture, imparted by the holy Spirit, is here likened to its fruit, which is to be taken first by the faithful reader. The leaves and rind of the words are always to be taken after the fruit itself, except insofar as they are disposed towards the sense. Words which lead us away from the sense, we are told, are as a poison, and are to be treated accordingly. The dangers of attending too closely to language, at the expense of the prior sense it is intended to communicate, were evident to Christ and many of the saints. It was for this reason, Wyclif argues, that they chose not to write, except as a sense on the tablets of the heart (*tabulae cordis*). The opposition between body and soul,

⁶⁸ As described in *De Ente Primo in Communi*, p. 109. See the discussion of this passage in Ch. 2 (section 5), above.

⁶⁹ ‘sicut puer primo discens alphabetum, secundo sillabicare, tercio legere, et quarto intellegere, habet in quolibet istorum graduum sensum suum distincte intentum circa illud, quod primo discit, et posterius propter confusionem excutit primum sensum, sic theologus post doctrinam grammaticae discit secundo grammaticam scripture, aptatam ad sensum relictam priori, tercio relictis signis sensibilibus attendit ad sensum autoris, quousque quarto viderit sine velamine librum vite.’ *De Veritate Sacre Scripture*, vol. i, p. 44.

⁷⁰ Compare the discussions of the six kinds of knowledge in *De Ente Primo in Communi* and *De Ydeis*, which are analysed in Ch. 2 (section 5), above.

or heart, running through this exposition, and the contempt for words (*voces*), the bodily aspects of language, again reveals Wyclif's indebtedness to the Augustinian tradition.

Wyclif's belief in the centrality of *intentio* and its metonyms (*mens, anima, cor*, etc.), which have occupied a conspicuous place in the passages analysed above, is reflected in the system of logic presented in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*. Logic was the second of the three verbal arts which, with grammar, supplied the basic metalanguage of medieval scriptural exegesis.⁷¹ In the third chapter of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, in the section immediately preceding his discussion of the nature of intention, we are exhorted in our interpretation and exposition of holy Scripture to learn a 'new grammar' and a 'new logic', of a kind which is not found in standard pedagogic treatises.⁷² Here, once again, we are being encouraged to think in analogical terms. Human logic should be judged against the highest logic, which is the divine logic of Scripture itself. In evaluating human systems of logic, Wyclif suggests, we should follow the advice of Augustine in *De Doctrina Christiana*, where we are told that all harmful things are condemned in Scripture, but that all useful things are found there. The logic of Aristotle, by this simple standard, can be defended, but only where it is found to be consistent with the most perfect logic of Scripture itself. It is not, therefore, on account of the authority of Aristotle that we should uphold Aristotelian logic, but rather by the supreme authority of Scripture.⁷³ This, we are told, is the same as God himself, who is the *auctor immediatus* of any correct sense which is found in our books. Wyclif argues from this point that holy Scripture includes within itself every kind of logic (insofar, presumably, as such logic is consistent with divine logic), and should therefore be observed by every kind of man in his own speech.⁷⁴

⁷¹ See the essays by Jeffrey F. Huntsman and Eleanore Stump in D.L. Wagner, ed., *The Seven Liberal Arts in the Middle Ages* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), pp. 58-95; 125-146.

⁷² '...oportet in scripturam sacram exponendo vel intelligendo adiscere novam grammaticam ac novam logicam, sicut patet per beatum Gregorium et alios sanctos, qui exponunt autoritate scripture novos sensus terminorum scripture, qui nusquam originantur ex libris grammaticae.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 42.

⁷³ '...logica Aristotelis, que ut plurimum est recta, sit logica scripture, dicente Augustino epist. tertia Ad Volusianum, quod ibi est logica, quoniam veritas lumenque anime rationalis non nisi deus est, iuncto illo tercio De Doctr. Christiana quadragesimo uno, "si aliquid noxium est, ibi dampnatur, si utile est, ibi invenitur". ideo logica Aristotelis non est sustinenda ut Aristotelis, sed ut scripture sacre, cum ipsa sit autor summus et prima regula...' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, pp. 47-48.

⁷⁴ The issue of the relationship between human and scriptural language/logic is broached by Wyclif in the first chapter of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, in which it is concluded (by following Augustine) that such systems

Like other analogates, divine logic represents the principle of unity and harmony which should serve to regulate the diverse and chaotic logical systems of the world of existence.

The relationship between the two is summarised in familiar Aristotelian terms, according to which the diverse species in any genus are unified by a single, universal principle. In the case of logic, we are told, holy Scripture itself – or the system of logic inscribed within it – acts as the unifying principle:

...since there is one originary principle in every genus, which is the metre and measure of all the others, it appears that in the genus of logic, either holy Scripture should be the rule of other logics, or the contrary. Since no other logic regulates [Scriptural] logic by the principle that, ‘if there is anything harmful there, it is condemned, and if useful, it is approved’, it follows that that logic is the rule of all others. And since the derivative of that principle is more correct the closer it is to that principle, it is clear that our own logics are more subtle according as they are more similar to it.⁷⁵

The fundamental law of the logic of Scripture, as we learn in the *Summa de Ente*, is conformity with, or truth to, intention (in its different forms).⁷⁶ The multiplicity of different forms of logic in late scholasticism, like the variety inherent in language itself, represented for Wyclif an inevitable departure from such conformity. Just as the confusion of tongues (Genesis 11: 1-9) had resulted from the sin of pride, so, he suggests, the decline of logic, which scholasticism was seen to have brought with it, bore the traces of sin in its divisions and disputations. Exactly which aspects of late-medieval logic he has in mind here is unclear, though the assault would appear to be a general one, rather than one directed at a specific group of thinkers. Later in the same chapter, Wyclif speaks of logical systems in Oxford lasting barely longer than twenty years, and typically undergoing frequent modifications. There are, he suggests there, as many varieties of human logic as there are

should be used *imitatively*, but never *authoritatively*: ‘secunda conclusio Augustini De Planis Locucionibus Auctorum Scripture est ista: “licet de literis auctorum scripture, que sine difficultate intelliguntur, sumamus exempla rethorice vel logice loquendo conformiter, tum in hoc debemus imitari eos tamquam humiles eorum discipuli, non tamquam in autoritate eis parificati.” ’ (vol. i, p. 4.)

⁷⁵ ‘...cum in omne genere sit unum principium, quod est metrum et mensura omnium aliorum, patet, quod in genere logice oportet, vel logicam scripture esse regulam aliis logicis vel e contra. et cum aliena logica non regulat illam eo, quod, “si quid noxium ibi est, dampnatur, et si utile, approbatur,” sequitur, quod ista logica sit regula omnium aliarum. et cum principiatum sit reccius ut principio suo propinquius, patet, quod logice nostre sunt eo subtiliores, quo sunt sibi similiores.’ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 48-49.

⁷⁶ See Ch. 3, above.

logicians guided by the proud affectation of propriety.⁷⁷ Throughout the chapter, we are exhorted to resist the temptation to retreat into diversity, and instead to speak together, without contradiction. This is the advice, Wyclif reminds us, of Peter and Paul in Acts 15, who urge us to speak the words of God *with one voice*.⁷⁸ He is careful to point out, however, that such conformity consists simply in the *observation* of the logic of Scripture whilst now one particular kind of logic is employed, and now another. The choice of which kind of logic is to be used, we are told, is to be determined by the spirit of counsel and the rules of charity (*ex spiritu consilii et regulis caritatis*). Hence, in the *exposition* of the mysteries of the Scriptures, we should use the plain logic of Scripture (namely, that which applies to non-metaphorical language), but in our own use of those terms by which the mysteries of faith are concealed, we should use the mystical logic of Scripture (that which applies to figurative, ‘mystical’ language).

All of these precepts, of course, presuppose that the basic principles of logic are to be found within the pages of Scripture itself. In the *Summa de Ente*, as we have seen, Wyclif had identified a passage from St Matthew’s Gospel as embodying the essential philosophy of scriptural logic: ‘Let your speech be yea, yea: no, no’ (5:37). This simple precept of Christ is rehearsed once again in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, in which it is identified by Wyclif as being the necessary logic of the *viator*, and sufficient for all communication. Any individual who could follow it without fail, we are told, would thereby be perfect, and would commit no sin in language. The appropriateness of such a principle to the realist conception of intention and truth outlined earlier in the same chapter is not difficult to understand, and had been made very explicit, as we have seen, in the *Summa de Ente*. The principle itself, Wyclif argues, teaches us to extricate the poison of any ‘superfluous’ and ‘harmful’ logical method, which would have included, presumably, any of the contemporary terminist approaches to language. All such approaches, we learn, are excesses; to follow such dialectical methods is an act of curiosity, which was not indulged by the *antiqui sancti*. The words of Christ in Matthew’s Gospel are cited again

⁷⁷ ‘ut patet in Oxonia, vix durat una aliena logica per viginti annos, sed sepiissime variantur, quia, quot sunt capita logicorum, tot ex affectione proprietatis superbe sunt logice variate.’ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 54.

⁷⁸ ‘Petrus et Paulus precipiunt omnes uno ore loqui sermones dei; patet ergo quod expediret sine repugnantia communicare concorditer.’ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 50 (Acts 15:25, 27).

by Wyclif later in the same chapter, as proof that the principles of logic can be found in Scripture itself. Here, the close interdependency of logic, language and truth-to-intention is very clearly highlighted:

If it were asked whereabouts holy Scripture teaches logic, I reply... that it is in the precept of Christ: 'Let your communication be yes-yes, no-no.' For Christ, the best master, did not convey this principle of logic with a meagre meaning, since it informs the Church fully, both in manners and in the logic of verbal communication. To this extent it should be learned, because in serving this maxim the preacher would also be following the truth, within and without, in affirmation and negation, and would be excluding false duplicity if agreement of mental and verbal intention were everywhere observed.⁷⁹

Here, Wyclif makes explicit the distinction between mental intention (*intentio mentis*) and verbal intention (*intentio verbi*) which informs the other parts of his argument. Significantly, the distinction was not highlighted in his earlier references to the intention of the divine author, which, as we have seen, was simply identified with the *intentio verbi*. Wyclif concludes his discussion with a final exhortation to his readers to embrace the principles of scriptural logic, and to leave behind the other logical systems which, 'on account of their imperfections and their remoteness from their final end, it was not pertinent for holy Scripture to discuss.'⁸⁰ The emphasis on *correspondence* in the passage from Matthew's Gospel, as we suggested in Chapter 3, served to affirm for Wyclif his own fundamental belief that Scripture represented truth to divine intention. It also implicitly affirmed the analogical principles underlying his own Dionysian conception of the exegetical process. These will be the subject of the section following.

⁷⁹ 'et si queretur, ubi scriptura sacra docet logicam, dico... quod in illo precepto Cristi sit sermo vester est, non non. Cristus... magister optimus dedit hoc principium logice non parce sentencie, cum simul informat ecclesiam plene tam in moribus quam logica comunicacionis verbalis, quantum oportet adiscere, quia servando hanc maximam servaret sermonizans veritatem intus et extra in affirmacione et negacione, et excluderet falsam duplicitatem, si concordancia intencionis mentis et vocis foret ubilibet observata.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 53.

⁸⁰ 'cum ergo hoc, quod continet omnia, scienciam habet vocis, secundum quam scienciam docuit hanc logicam, quis fidelis imponeret sibi defectum sive calumpniam! alias autem privatas logicas propter earum imperfecciones et remociones a fine ultimo non pertinuit scripture sacre in particulari discutere.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 54.

3. EXEGESIS AND REALISM IN *DE VERITATE SACRAE SCRIPTURAE*

The exegetical procedures of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, unlike the hermeneutic concepts introduced in the preceding sections (*auctor, liber, intentio*), do not represent significant advances in Wyclif's textual philosophy. Though he is often less explicit about the philosophical ideas he is invoking, most derive directly from the system developed in the *Summa de Ente*. The familiar problems of analogical interpretation, to take the most significant example, occupy Wyclif throughout the text. Most conspicuous among these is the question of the relationship between literalism and metaphoricity, which he seeks, as in the *Summa de Ente* and the *determinationes* against Kenningham, to confine to the secondary, *derivative* discourse of the human language sciences (grammar, logic, rhetoric). What is most revealing about this sustained attempt to marginalise language, as before, is not the resistance of the linguistic sciences to any such categorisation, but the difficulty of excluding definitively their 'non-linguistic' counterparts (crucially, the theory of analogy itself) from the same marginal domain.⁸¹ The same problem surrounds the related concept of literalism (as Kenningham's remarks in his second determination would suggest),⁸² which also features prominently in discussions of exegetical theory throughout *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*.

3.1 *Properties of Figurae and Figurata: The Realist's Distinction between Analogy and Metaphor*

The principle of analogy is introduced as an exegetical tool in the first chapter of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*. Having rejected the proposition, presented at the beginning of the chapter, that the language of Scripture – whether plain or obscure – is not to be imitated,

⁸¹ The problem which confronts Wyclif may be understood in terms of the opposition between metaphysics and rhetoric (the latter, like the linguistic sciences in Wyclif, acting as 'supplement' to the former) on which medieval logocentric discourses depended. See the discussion in Ralph Flores, *The Rhetoric of Doubtful Authority: Deconstructive Readings of Self-Questioning Narratives: St Augustine to Faulkner* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), pp. 19-43. Flores identifies Augustine as a 'self-questioning' author, whose works consistently challenge (if only implicitly) the logocentric premises of Western metaphysics (pp. 44-66). Significantly, Wyclif reads Augustine in terms which attempt to affirm, rather than to deny or question, these premises. (See the discussion of *ampliatio temporis* in Ch. 3 (section 4), above.)

⁸² See Ch. 4 (section 2.3), above.

Wyclif moves on to consider the interpretative problems surrounding figurative passages. Here, he turns to a text from Augustine's commentary on the Homilies of St John, in which he explains how different things, 'by resemblance and other means', are called 'Christ':

[Augustine] says that "many things by resemblance and other means, which it would be lengthy to recollect, are called 'Christ'. Now, if you were to break up the properties of the things which you have been used to seeing, it is clear that he is not a rock, which is hard, nor is he without feeling; nor is he a door, because a craftsman did not make him; nor is he an angular stone, because he was not fashioned by a sculptor; nor is he a shepherd, because he is not the protector of four-legged sheep; nor is he a lion, because he is not wild, nor a lamb, because he is not a beast. He is therefore said to be all of those things by similitude."⁸³

Those who argue from this passage, Wyclif suggests, too often accept it 'without respecting the differences on either side of the argument.' It is perfectly possible, for example, for holders of contradictory opinions to support their arguments from Augustine's statement (*dictum*). Earlier in the same passage, Wyclif reminds us, Augustine was willing to concede that Christ could be both a door and a shepherd. Peter, Paul and the other apostles, we are told, can also be called shepherds, as can any good bishop. Only Christ, however, can be called a door, having taken this name for himself *personaliter*. By following Augustine, the careful doctor is able to concede that Christ is, and is not a door, without fear of contradiction. Augustine's logic, Wyclif insists, is founded on the principle (rehearsed ceaselessly in the *Summa de Ente* and the *Logicae Continuatio*⁸⁴) that *in equivocation there is no contradiction*. Equivocation, we are told, is not simply equivocation of a name, but of a thing and a name.⁸⁵ Contradiction would presumably be seen to arise only in cases in which the name, or linguistic sign, was being privileged above the things signified by that name. The distinction between equivocation and analogy was

⁸³ '[Augustinus] dicit, quod "multa per similitudines et alia, que commemorare longum est, dicuntur Cristus. Si autem proprietates discucias rerum, quas videre consuisti, nec petra est, quia durus, et sine sensu non est, nec ostium est, quia non eum faber fecit, nec lapis angularis est, quia non est a sculptore compositus, nec pastor est, quia custos ovium quadrupedum non est, nec leo est, quia fera non est, nec agnus est, quia pecus non est. Omnia igitur ista propter similitudinem.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 7.

⁸⁴ See Ch. 3 (section 1), above.

⁸⁵ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 9.

not an absolute one, though Wyclif generally treats the latter as a means of understanding the former. In addressing the problem of *how* figurative language is to be understood, he presents a detailed summary of the analogical method. As in the *Summa de Ente*, our attention is drawn to the fundamental distinction between properties of the *genus* of a creature, and the perfection of those properties in the analogon. It is on account of this distinction, we are told, that the name is used of God only equivocally:

It remains to consider in what sense figurative language in Scripture should be understood. Indeed, I have often said that it should be understood in the mystical sense, the spiritual sense, symbolic and analogical, as commentators on Scripture tell us, namely thus: the signs in a mystical theological proposition, in which at one extreme is the name of a creature, attributed nevertheless to God, should be observed as conditions of analogy which establish properties according to the *genus* of the creature from which the name is taken. And by attending to that which is of perfection in the analogon, but also to the properties of imperfection in the *genus*, the aforesaid [word] is attributed to God according to an equivocal sense.⁸⁶

To illustrate how this process of analogical comparison operates, Wyclif turns to one of the terms discussed most frequently in late-medieval exegetical theory, 'lion'. For unskilled grammarians (*nudes grammatici*), he suggests, the term signifies simply a four-legged roaring beast. Theologians, however, perceive that 'lion' can at one time signify Christ, and at another the devil. This is consistent, he reminds us, with the argument of Gregory in the *Morals*.⁸⁷ Wyclif turns to the book of Apocalypse, in which we are told that 'the lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.' (5:5) This example, in which the lion is clearly Christ, is compared with another from 1 Peter 5: 'your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour.' (v. 8) Drawing on a popular exegetical convention, Wyclif isolates natural dominion, strength, and life-giving force as the properties which must form the basis of the analogy with Christ. Just as the lion is the natural king of the beasts, so

⁸⁶ 'restat videre, ad quem sensum locuciones huiusmodi figurative scripture debent intelligi. et sepe dixi, quod debent intelligi ad sensum misticum, sensum spiritualement, simbolicum et proporcionalem, ut sancti postillantes scripturam loquuntur crebrius, sic videlicet, quod signata una proposicione mystice theologie, in qua alterum extremum est nomen creature et tamen attributum deo, notari debent condiciones analogice fundantes proprietates secundum genus in creaturis, cuius nomen accipitur. et colando illud, quod est perfeccionis in illo analogo, ac adiciendo proprietates imperfeccionis in genere, attribuendum est illud predicatum deo ad sensum equivocum.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, pp. 14-15.

⁸⁷ Wyclif refers to *Moralia in Iob*, 3, Chs. 4, 17 and 18.

Christ is described in Apocalypse 19 as having in his loins the writing 'king of kings and lord of lords'.⁸⁸ As the lion is the strongest of beasts in relation to its size, so Christ is the strongest in terms of spiritual powers. We learn from St Matthew's gospel, Wyclif points out, that every power in heaven and earth was given to him mortally. The lion rouses its cub from sleep to movement with its roar, just as Christ raised Lazarus from the tomb with his call.

The propriety or impropriety of the analogical term 'lion', as applied to Christ, is considered in the third chapter of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*. It has been argued, Wyclif suggests here, that Christ is properly a lion, since he is a lion in the mystical sense, which is uniquely consistent with itself. To the extent that Christ is properly the ruler of his kind, on this view, so he is properly a lion. For the *sancti doctores*, however, as Wyclif goes on to argue, Christ is improperly a lion, since he is figuratively so called, according to the principle of similitude (*similitudo*).⁸⁹ These two opposing perspectives are resolved by positing a twofold definition for *proprietas* and *improprietas*. Each term, Wyclif argues, can be applied according to the figure itself (the lion as a four-legged roaring beast), or according to the thing figured (Christ). In terms of the impropriety of the figure, Christ is not a lion, since he is not identical with the animal signified by the word 'lion'. Nevertheless, he is properly a lion if we speak of the analogical propriety of the thing signified (*loquendo de proprietate analogata figurati*), which encompasses, we are told, the properties listed in Apocalypse 5. This distinction is consistent with the Thomistic definitions of metaphor and analogy given in *De Trinitate*, and is supported, Wyclif argues, by the statements of Augustine, Grosseteste and Gregory.⁹⁰ Augustine, as we have seen, was willing to concede that Christ could properly be and not be a door, without any danger of contradiction. We learn from Grosseteste, likewise, that names can belong properly to both corporeal and spiritual things together, albeit not in an identical sense. Gregory, in the last place, argues that what cannot be predicated essentially of God, must be predicated figuratively, since God does not assume the nature of a beast as he does the essence of a

⁸⁸ Apocalypse 19.16.

⁸⁹ For examples of this patristic interpretation of *leo* in the early medieval exegetical tradition, see Gillian Evans, *The Language and Logic of the Bible: The Earlier Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 53-6.

⁹⁰ See Ch. 2 (section 2), above.

man.

The opposition between analogical and linguistic propriety in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* lends further support to the claim – introduced in Chapter 2 – that the Aristotelian division between poetic and speculative/theological discourses was reinforced by the medieval (predominantly Thomistic) understanding of *analogia entis*.⁹¹ The nature of this opposition, as Wyclif perceived it, is clarified in the fourth chapter of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, in which the properties of figurative and ‘fictive’ language are examined in detail. Here, Aristotle, Aquinas and Augustine are cited in support of the claim that scriptural fictions and parables are used to express truths, even though they have no historical basis. Figures used in Scripture, Wyclif argues, are either figures of syntax (*figurae constructionis*), such as *conceptio*, *synesis*, or *zeugma*, or figures of speech (*figurae locutionis*).⁹² The latter category is the most significant of the two within the context of metaphor and analogy, and encompasses allegorical, parabolic and fictional expressions (*locutiones allegorice, parabolice, et ficte*). No attempt is made to relate any of these figures explicitly to the concept of *analogia entis*, and it is clear from the definitions supplied by Wyclif that none of the three metaphorical modes strictly presupposes analogy. There is, rather, in each case, the *possibility* that the figurative expression may have an analogical referent.

Of the three different kinds of figure, Wyclif tells us, only allegory is based upon the historical sense of Scripture, though all are equally true in terms of the meanings which they communicate. Allegory, we are told, occurs ‘when through the history of Scripture, expressed literally, the future which is to be believed of the Church is signified.’ Wyclif gives the example of the slaughtered paschal lamb of the Old Testament, which signifies Christ. The slaughter and consumption of the lamb, he suggests, which are identified as true historical events by Augustine, may be understood in terms of the spiritual eating of which we learn in St John’s Gospel: ‘Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink

⁹¹ See Ch. 2 (section 3), above.

⁹² *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 65. This distinction is drawn from the grammatical tradition, in which there were traditionally two forms of figure, or *schema*: ‘Schemata lexeos sunt et dianoeas, id est figurae verborum et sensuum. sed schemata dianoeas ad oratores pertinent, ad grammaticos lexeos.’ Donatus, *Ars Maior*, iii. 4.5 (GL, 4, p. 397).

his blood, you shall not have life in you.’ (6:53).⁹³ The relationship between Christ and the lamb of Old Testament history can clearly be construed in analogical terms. The basic terms of the allegory, however, as the passage Wyclif cites from Augustine makes clear, are the two acts of consumption, the one literal and the other spiritual. To this extent, analogy is here functioning as a *condition* of a particular form of allegorical signification, but is not coterminous with it. The other two metaphorical modes are similarly only *potentially* linked with analogical meanings. The definitions and examples which Wyclif supplies only serve to highlight the lack of correspondence which is often to be found between the two systems. Parabolic locutions, for example, which are defined as fictional passages ‘narrated according to a certain similitude’, seldom have any need of analogy. As in the case of the parables of Christ (which Wyclif supplies as an example), they are used primarily in a moral, rather than a theological context, and do not function as analogical signs of the transcendent.⁹⁴

Wyclif’s systematic distinction between analogy and metaphor might easily be dismissed as a routine theological exercise. As we have seen, there was nothing fundamentally new about his arguments concerning *figurae* and *figurata*. To confuse or conflate the categories of analogy and metaphor, however, would be to threaten the very basis of Wyclif’s theory of textuality. The authority of the sacred text, after all, rested on its status as an intelligible entity, for which the material text acted simply as a sign. Here, as elsewhere, Wyclif was clearly anxious to separate linguistic categories and operations (the province of the poet or the grammarian) from entities and relationships in the real world (the unique products of divine intention). Kenningham’s determinations had revealed how easily ‘reality’ – as conceived by realist metaphysicians – could be reduced to a series of logical and linguistic principles. Analogy, from the perspective of the anti-realist logician, would have been anything but an exception to this rule. This was not the

⁹³ ‘unde Augustinus octavo Super Genes. Ad Literam sic scribit quarto cap.: “recte quippe appellatur, quod ad eum signandum precessit: ipse est ovis, que inmolatur in pascha, et illud non tantum dicendo figurabatur, sed etiam faciendo. numquit erat ovis? plane ovis erat et occidebatur et manducabatur”. intelligo de manducacione spirituali, de qua Joh. sexto: *nisi manducaveritis carnem filii hominis et biberitis eius sangwinem, non habetis vitam in vobis.*’ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 66.

⁹⁴ ‘secunda vero locucio parabolica est, quando narratur quevis sententia in scriptura secundum quandam similitudinem, licet res non sit historizata in scriptura sacra, ut patet in ewangelio de multis parabolis salvatoris. et de ista locucione facit Augustinus mencionem octavo Super Genes. Ad Literam sexto capitulo.’ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 66.

only principle, however, which was placed under threat by Kenningham's nominalistic emphasis on logical and linguistic categories. Wyclif's conception of divine intention – on which the theory of analogy ultimately rested – could also be undermined by anti-realist argumentation. This is significant, since the theory of intention lay behind the second of the two problematic concepts highlighted at the beginning of this section: literalism. We have already seen how Kenningham's *Determinatio de Esse Intelligibili Creaturae* threatened the metaphysical premises of Wyclif's theory of intention.⁹⁵ There can be little surprise, then, that divine intention played such a conspicuous rôle in his analysis of the scriptural senses in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, nor that he was so insistent on privileging authorial intention above meanings arrived at through the discourses of the interpretative community. Here, as in his expositions on analogical exegesis, however, the distinction between the real and the linguistic, the originary and the derivative, the divine and the human, was one which often became strained. Whether this is to be read as a direct result of Kenningham's critique or not, there can be no doubt – as it will be argued in the following section – that the determinations would have cast a dark shadow over his earlier arguments about literalism and intention.

3.2 *Literalism, Intentionalism and the Four Senses of Scripture*

Though *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, as we have argued, made few significant philosophical innovations on the level of exegetical praxis, it did bring the hermeneutic theory of the *Summa de Ente* more closely into contact with the paradigms of patristic and medieval biblical interpretation. It is only here that literalism, as an 'intentionalist' construct (as distinct from the literalism necessary for syllogistic argumentation, or for the formation of a 'univocal' concept of God in Ockhamism or Scotism⁹⁶), is applied to the Alexandrian four-fold categorization of the scriptural senses. In the fourth chapter, we learn that any of the three senses traditionally regarded as 'spiritual' (the allegorical, the tropological and the anagogic), may themselves be literal:

⁹⁵ See Ch. 4 (section 2.3), above.

⁹⁶ See Ch. 2 (section 4), above.

...Although any sense which the letter has may be called 'literal' *de virtute sermonis*, the holy doctors nevertheless all call the literal sense the sense of Scripture which the Holy Spirit first revealed so that the soul may ascend towards God. And [this sense] is now historical, as is evident from the deeds of Christ and from the deeds of the fathers in both testaments; now, however, it is moral or tropological, as we see from the section of Scripture concerning wisdom, such as the passage in Deuteronomy 6 and Matthew 22: *Love the Lord your God with your whole heart, etc.*; now it is allegorical, as is clear from the Apostle in 1 Corinthians 10: *All are baptised in Moses*; now, indeed, it is anagogical, as is clear from the statement of the saviour in Matthew 22 and Luke 20: *In heaven they do not marry, nor are they married, but are, as it were, angels of God.*⁹⁷

The association of the literal sense with the meaning intended by the divine author is not in itself either original or remarkable. Thomas Aquinas, whose numerous pronouncements on literalistic interpretation have attracted more attention than most, identified both authorial intention and historical meaning with the literal sense of Scripture.⁹⁸ He distinguished the literal from the spiritual senses by their modes of signification, the first signifying through words only (which may be used by human and divine authors alike), and the latter group through things (which, like terms in an analogical proposition, can be 'intended' only by the divine author).⁹⁹ Wyclif departs from the Thomistic model in his inclusion of the three 'spiritual' senses *within* the literal sense. He would not necessarily have rejected Aquinas's basic distinction, and is careful to emphasise that each of the four senses, despite being potentially literal, is still *generically* distinct from the others (since it has different subjective parts). As Wyclif is careful to explain, however, the senses are

⁹⁷ 'quamvis autem quilibet sensus, quem habet litera, possit de virtute sermonis dici congrue literalis, doctores tamen comunitur vocant sensum literalem scripture sensum, quem spiritus sanctus primo indidit, ut animus fidelis ascendat in deum. et est nunc historicus, ut patet de gestis Christi et de gestis patrum utriusque testamenti, nunc autem est moralis vel tropologicus, ut patet de parte sapienciali scripture, ut est illud Deut. sexto, et Matth. vicesimo secundo: *diliges dominum, deum tuum, ex toto corde* etc. nunc autem est allegoricus, ut patet per illud apostoli prima Cor. Decimo: *omnes in Moyse baptizati sunt*; nunc vero est anagogicus, ut patet per illud dictum salvatoris Matth. vicesimo altero et Luc. vicesimo: *in celis nec nubent nec nubentur, sed sunt sicut angeli dei.*' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, pp. 119-120.

⁹⁸ See, for example, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a.1, 10, in which we are told that 'Illa... significatio qua voces significat res pertinet ad primum sensum, qui est sensus historicus vel litteralis.' (p. 36) Later in the same passage, Aquinas suggests that 'sensus litteralis est quem auctor intendit, auctor autem sacrae Scripturae Deus est qui omnia simul suo intellectu comprehendit.' (p. 38) On the duality of the literal sense in Aquinas, see F. A. Blanche, 'Le Sens Littéral des Écritures d'après Saint Thomas d'Aquin: Contribution a l'histoire de l'Exégèse Catholique au Moyen Age', *Revue Thomiste*, 14 (1906), 192-212 (pp. 192-196).

⁹⁹ 'Dicendum quod auctor sacrae Scripturae est Deus, in cuius potestate est ut non solum voces ad significandum accommodet (quod etiam homo facere potest) sed etiam res ipsas.' *Summa Theologiae*, 1a. 1, 10 (p. 36).

not thereby distinct *ex opposito*, as a man and an ass are distinct,¹⁰⁰ but only *secundum rationem* (namely, according to a division imposed by the mind).

Wyclif defines the historical and the three 'spiritual' senses in turn, drawing on the traditional assumption – associated here with the *doctor subtilis*, Duns Scotus – that meanings expressed mystically in Scripture (through the *sensus secundus*) are elsewhere to be found in their literal form (the *sensus primus*).¹⁰¹ The literal, or historical, sense, he tells us, 'is that by which the letter first teaches the truth'. The allegorical sense, on the other hand, goes beyond historical signification, but is 'endorsed elsewhere by the letter.' To illustrate the relationship between history and allegory, Wyclif turns to Galatians 4, in which the allegorical significance of Abraham's two sons in the book of Genesis is considered:

²²*It is written, in Genesis 17, that since Abraham had two sons, ...²⁴these are the two testaments. Look: beyond the historical sense Abraham, who is taken to be the father of many races, signifies God the Father, and his two sons, with their circumstances, signify the two testaments, Ismael the old and Isaac the new...*¹⁰²

The text, Wyclif suggests, may be read according to either the historical or the allegorical sense, or in respect of both together. Here, once again, he is careful to emphasise that the possibility of following both senses at once, for which he finds confirmation in the writings of Rabanus Maurus, by no means denies the validity of distinctions drawn between them, just as the distinctions themselves 'do not deny their identity in many suppositions'. Wyclif goes on to explain how these conventional definitions of literalism and allegory relate to his more idiosyncratic understanding of the relationship between literalism and authorial

¹⁰⁰ '...quamvis isti quatuor sensus secundum sua genera distinguntur eo, quod genera non sunt ex equo idem, sed habent aliquas partes subiectivas nature disparis et utrobique disparem rationem, tamen non distinguntur ex opposito sicut homo et asinus...' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, pp. 120-21.

¹⁰¹ '...legens scripturam ad sensum primum sine sensu secundo habet solum sensum historicum, ille autem, qui superaddit sensum secundum, habet de eadem litera sensum allegoricum. et ista videtur michi sententia doctoris Subtilis super primo Sententiarum, conclusione tertia sic dicentis: "dico, quod, quicumque sensus in una parte scripture non est literalis, in alia parte est literalis, et ideo, licet aliqua pars scripture habeat diversos sensus, tamen tota scriptura omnes istos sensus habet pro sensu literali".' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, pp. 121-22.

¹⁰² 'scriptum est Genes. Septimo decimo, *quoniam Abraham duos filios habuit, hec enim sunt duo testamenta. ecce, preter sensum historicum Abraham, qui interpretatur pater multarum gentium, signat deum patrem, et duo filii eius cum suis circumstantiis signat duo testamenta, Ysmael vetus et Ysaac novum...*' *De Veritate*

intention. If any faithful reader were to understand the mystical sense of Genesis 17 'purely', he suggests, without at the same time disregarding its historical dimension, then the allegorical sense of the text would thus be 'literal' to that reader. To this extent, allegorical passages which lack an historical foundation – and hence which lack a literal sense as conventionally defined – may still be said to be identical with the literal sense. Such an identification, however, as Wyclif points out, is only tenable so long as the sense of the text is that which is first in the order of understanding (*sensus... primo in ordine ab homine conceptus de scriptura*).¹⁰³ By this definition of literalism, he suggests, we can see that Aquinas spoke truly when he claimed that the *sensus parabolicus* (which encompassed all meanings conveyed metaphorically through words) was part of the literal sense.¹⁰⁴ Similar rules apply to the other two spiritual senses. The moral or tropological sense, we are told, sometimes has an historical sense which is apprehended first, but might also be the literal sense elicited immediately (*immediate*) from Scripture. The anagogic sense likewise, insofar as it teaches immediately the truth which is to be expected in the triumphant church (*in ecclesia triumphante*), is literal.¹⁰⁵ Any of the senses, therefore, can be apprehended *mediate* or *immediate*, the allegorical teaching us what is to be believed, the moral what is to be done for the sake of merit, and the anagogic what is to be hoped for. These separate definitions, Wyclif argues, correspond respectively to the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity.¹⁰⁶ As is to be expected, none of the senses is strictly literal unless it is apprehended *immediate* ('directly'):

Sacrae Scripturae, vol. i, p. 121.

¹⁰³ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 122.

¹⁰⁴ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, pp. 122-23. Wyclif refers to the definition of *sensus parabolicus* given in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a. 1, 10: 'sensus parabolicus sub litterali continetur, name per voces significatur aliquid proprie et aliquid figurative' (p. 40) Aquinas's inclusion of the *sensus parabolicus* within the literal sense follows from his claim that 'sensus litteralis est quem auctor intendit' (1a. 1, 10 (p. 38)). The parallelism which Wyclif perceives between his own conception of literalism and that of Aquinas presumably rests on his awareness of this important claim.

¹⁰⁵ 'sensus autem moralis vel tropologicus quandoque habet sensum historicum prius inductivum, et quandoque est sensus literalis immediate elicited ex scriptura, cum quicumque sensus scripture sit moralis, in quantum immediate allicit ad virtutes, est eciam anagogicus, in quantum docet veritatem expectandam in ecclesia triumphante...' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 123.

¹⁰⁶ '...istorum trium sensuum misticorum sensus allegoricus docet mediate vel immediate credenda, sensus anagogicus docet mediate vel immediate speranda, sed sensus tropologicus docet mediate vel immediate meritorie agenda. et sic correspondent per ordinem fidei, spei et caritati.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 123.

Those for whom it is pleasing to distinguish the literal sense according to a definition, or to its subjective parts, from the others, should say that by definition the literal sense is that which is the catholic sense elicited immediately from Scripture, and that the other three senses, if they have been elicited from Scripture immediately, are then literal. But if they are elicited mediately, then they are either the allegorical, the tropological or the anagogical sense, but not the literal.¹⁰⁷

Wyclif contrasts this simple definition with the ‘useless divisions’ (*rangae inutiles*) he was previously accustomed to drawing in connection with the scriptural senses.¹⁰⁸ As in the case of the many similar claims made elsewhere, we are given no firm indication of either the time or the context of these earlier practices. There can be little doubt, however, that he would have consigned them mentally to the same vague period of youthful impetuosity and extravagance with which he associated his misguided devotion to nominalist and terminist methodologies. His former way of speaking in regard to the senses of Scripture, he declares here, has now been recognised as ‘lacking foundation’ (*infundabilis*) and ‘unnecessarily burdensome’ (*superflue onerosum*).¹⁰⁹ It is sufficient, he suggests, drawing very conspicuously on the analogical theory of knowledge and perception developed in the *Summa de Ente*, to understand the word *sensus* itself in terms of four interrelated definitions. Three of these relate to the powers of the mind and the intellect (created or uncreated), and hence – in textual terms – to the process of reception. The fourth – and for Wyclif, the most significant – describes either these same powers (of the created mind), or their object (*obiectum*), which is the Book of Life itself:

...‘Sense’ at one time means the corporeal power of the mind, since there are five exterior and five interior senses; and indeed, it sometimes means either the created or uncreated intellective power, as in Romans 11: *Who hath known the mind of the Lord?* And thirdly, it designates the act of such a power. Fourthly, however, it signifies the object which such a power perceives as the truth, and which the orthodox Christian understands from Scripture. This is called the sense of Scripture, as Christ says in Luke 24:

¹⁰⁷ ‘illi autem, quibus placet distingwere sensum literalem secundum rationem vel partes subiectivas ab aliis, debent dicere, quod de ratione sensus literalis est, quod sit sensus catholicus inmediate elicitus ex scriptura, et alii tres sensus, si inmediate eliciuntur ex scriptura, tunc sunt literales. si autem mediate, tunc sunt sensus allegoricus, tropologicus vel anagogicus, non literalis.’ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, pp. 123-124.

¹⁰⁸ ‘quandoque autem contendebam distingwendo hos quatuor sensus ex opposito per rangas inutiles...’ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 124.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

Then he opened their understanding [‘sensum’], that they might understand the Scriptures. But although ‘sense’ can there be understood as the cognitive power of the disciples, which was previously veiled, nevertheless it is clear that it would be consistent if it were taken to be the meaning written in the law of Moses, in the prophets and in the Psalms of Christ... And that meaning is the Book of Life...¹¹⁰

Wyclif’s literalism, as we have seen, had attracted some hostile criticism from Kenningham during the course of his determinations in the early 1370s.¹¹¹ If Wyclif’s own comments are to be believed, he would have received nothing better from the majority of his contemporaries in Oxford. The reasons for this are unlikely to have been purely philosophical, but it is nevertheless true that the principles of his literalism ran contrary to the most fundamental precepts of nominalist logic and metaphysics. Ockham’s theory of univocal predication, as we have suggested, allowed no room for metaphorical language, and it would have been meaningless to suggest that any figurative statement was literally (*literaliter* or *de virtute sermonis*) true. Theological propositions had to be translated into their literal equivalents before any understanding of the divine could be arrived at, however imperfect. An almost identical principle, as we have seen, lay at the heart of Thomistic literalism (‘from the literal sense alone can an argument be drawn’), though its primary justification there was logical rather than metaphysical.¹¹² Though the Thomistic principle is likely to have had an effect on Ockham’s exegetical method, it is of comparatively little significance within the context of nominalist hermeneutics. For Wyclif, clearly, it would have been Ockhamism, and not Thomism, that posed the most significant threat to his own analogist-intentionalist system of interpretation.

The application of the principles of analogy to the problems of metaphoricity and literalism in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, despite being for the most part unexceptional,

¹¹⁰ ‘...sensus quandoque dicat virtutem anime corporalem, ut sunt quinque sensus exteriores et quinque sensus interiores. quandoque vero dicit vim intellectivam creatam vel increatam, ut Rom. undecimo: *quis cognoverit sensum domini*, et tercio signat actum talis virtutis, sed quarto signat obiectum, quod virtus talis sentit, ut veritas, quam catholicus sentit de scriptura, vocatur sensus scripture, quomodo loquitur Cristus Luc. vicesimo quarto: *tunc aperuit eis sensum, ut intellegent scripturas*. quamvis autem ibi sensus possit intelligi vis cognitiva discipulorum prius velata, tamen pertinencius videtur sumi pro sententia scripta in lege Moysi, prophetis et psalmis de Cristo... et ista sententia est liber vite...’ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, pp. 124-5.

¹¹¹ See Ch. 4 (section 2.3), above.

¹¹² See Ch. 4 (second paragraph), above.

is among the clearest illustrations of the strength of Wyclif's commitment to a realist metaphysic. As such, however, as we have seen, it also serves to highlight the inherent weaknesses of a system which seeks to marginalise, as far as possible, linguistic and discursive processes. Kenningham's critique of the concepts of real predication, intelligible ideas and (implicitly) the intelligible book clearly left Wyclif with few options but to insist more strenuously on the necessity of analogy and its metaphysical premises. Kenningham's suggestion that Wyclif himself, despite his many claims to the contrary, depended as heavily on material signs and physical texts as any of the sign-doctors he was opposing, made the rigid opposition between (real) analogism and (linguistic) metaphoricity more difficult to sustain.

4. WYCLIF'S SCRIPTURAL DEFENCES: A RESPONSE TO KENNINGHAM?

In the eighth and ninth chapters of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, Wyclif presents a series of philosophical defences against those who seek to deny the truth of holy Scripture. As elsewhere in the tractate, he remains vague about the identity of his opponents, but there is a strong likelihood – given the thematic structure of the defences – that Kenningham was intended as the principal target. The key metaphysical concepts which Wyclif discusses are identical with those which Kenningham attacked so relentlessly in the determinations. Together with Wyclif's own determinations against Kenningham, the two groups of weapons provide the clearest indication of the magnitude of the threat which Kenningham's arguments were perceived to have posed. They are also a good indication that the arguments themselves – and possibly also the anti-realism which underlay them – were exerting an influence in the contemporary academic community of Oxford.

There are two groups of weapons or armatures (*armaturae*), the first of which, we are told, is to be used against the *callidae sophistae* who seek to discover falsehoods in Scripture.¹¹³ The second is the medium through which we are to achieve knowledge of scriptural truth.¹¹⁴ The first armature is principally *metaphysical* in nature, and relates to

¹¹³ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 167.

¹¹⁴ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 194.

the philosophical bases of the five-fold definition of Scripture presented in the sixth chapter. Its five parts have been carefully chosen, and seem likely to have been intended as correctives to the interpretation of philosophical realism presented by Kenningham in his determinations. The first part of the armature is the doctrine of ideas, a cornerstone of Wyclif's philosophical realism which was criticised in the final determination (*De Esse Intelligibili Creaturae*). The related principle of real universals (*universalia ex parte rei*), the first of the three 'nests' presented in Wyclif's determination against Kenningham, forms the second part of the armature. The third part, according to which there is unity in diverse *genera* and *species*, is effectively presupposed by the first two. The fourth, the metaphysical principle according to which all past and future instants are present to God, recalls the concept of temporal extension which Kenningham criticised in his second determination (*De Ampliatio Temporis*). The final part concerns the relationship between logic and reality, and is presented in the form of the logical maxim introduced in the *Summa de Ente*: 'non est contradictio in signis equivocis'.¹¹⁵

The second armature is *hermeneutic*. Its primary function is not, unlike that of the first, to reinforce the realist definition of Scripture itself, but to resolve some of the problems surrounding its human reception.¹¹⁶ There is a strong likelihood that Wyclif's remarks here, as in the case of his discussion of the first armature, reflect anxieties awakened by Kenningham's comments in the determinations. Considered as responses to these comments, however, they are less satisfactory. Wyclif makes no explicit concessions to Kenningham, though the the armature as a whole serves as a tacit acknowledgement of the difficulties inherent in a rigid anti-materialist hermeneutic.

¹¹⁵ See section 3.1, above.

¹¹⁶ I use the term 'hermeneutic' in broadly the same sense as it is given in Chapter 1. Here, however, it also serves to distinguish textual concerns (the processes of editing, reading and interpretation) from the more metaphysical aspects of Wyclif's exegetical theory. The labels 'hermeneutic' and 'metaphysical' are not applied to the armatures by Wyclif himself.

4.1 *Freeing the Sword of the Spirit: The Metaphysical Armature*

The first of the two armatures is presented after a brief excursus on the propriety of God's law and the nature of heresy in the eighth chapter, and occupies the remainder of the text.¹¹⁷ Its quintuplex structure is compared with the five-fold categorization of Scripture presented in Chapter 6 of the same work, and with the spiritual defences listed by Augustine in his book to the Holy Spirit, namely the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the breast-plate of justice, the ointment of the gospel of peace and the girdle of truth.¹¹⁸ These parallelisms, like the numerous others which are highlighted in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, direct us once again to the fundamentally analogical nature of Wyclif's thought. More crucially, the description of the five points illustrates the significant hermeneutic connections between the diverse philosophical concepts examined by Kenningham in the *determinationes*. Wyclif begins his exposition with the theory of divine ideas or intelligible natures, the first principle of his metaphysical teaching. As we have seen, this acted as the foundation for the three basic elements in Wyclif's hermeneutic theory: *analogia entis*, 'real' truth and *ampliatio temporis*.¹¹⁹ It also provided the philosophical basis for his theory of real universals and equivocation, which acted respectively as the second and the fifth principles in the metaphysical armature. As in the *De Universalibus*, in which divine ideas are presented as the highest form of being the archetypes of the created world, Wyclif cites the passage from St John's Gospel (1:3-4) to support his arguments about their nature and reality:¹²⁰

There are ideas coeternal with God, which are in him as principles or exemplars, according to which the universe was created, as in that passage in John 1: 'What was made, in him was life.' Through this it is possible to understand how in that passage in Genesis 1, God said, 'Let there be light', and there was light. And this is a pregnant sentence, so that firstly 'to say' is the word of God; secondly, 'Let there be' is the principle of the exemplar; and thirdly, 'there was' describes the making of the thing and the existence of the creature. Through this, moreover, it is possible to understand in

¹¹⁷ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, pp. 167-182.

¹¹⁸ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 168.

¹¹⁹ See Chs. 2 (*analogia entis*) and 3 (truth and time), above.

¹²⁰ Cf. *De Universalibus*, Ch. 7, ll. 35-38 (also: Ch. 15, ll. 306-10). See the discussion of this passage in Ch. 2 (section 1), above.

many places the fecundity, profundity, and sublimity of Scripture, as Augustine has often mentioned.¹²¹

Here, the metaphysical system of the *Summa de Ente* is very clearly visible, beginning with divine intention, proceeding through the ideal exemplar, and concluding with the existence of the creature itself. An understanding of this system is presented by Wyclif as a necessity, rather than as a useful accessory. He cites Augustine's remark from his forty-sixth question in support of his argument: 'without any conception of ideas, nobody is either wise or blessed.'¹²² Kenningham's critique of Wyclif's argument about the essential identity of the divine essence and intelligible being is not mentioned, though the presentation of the armature is itself an indication that it had remained in his mind. Wyclif nowhere attempts a rational justification of this argument in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, though the principle of essential identity is explicitly invoked in his discussion of the relationship between the two highest forms of Scripture in the sixth chapter.¹²³

The second of the five weapons – the doctrine of real universals – follows naturally from the first, drawing heavily upon the metaphysical system of the *Summa de Ente*. Like the first, it very explicitly marginalises any logician who fails either to accept or to understand the basic precepts of philosophical realism. There can be no doubt, in this

¹²¹ '...est dare ydeas deo coeternas, que sunt in eo rationes vel exemplaria, iuxta que universitas est creata, iuxta illud Joh. primo: quod factum est, in ipso vita erat. per hoc enim potest intelligi, quomodo ista scriptura Gen. primo dixit deus: ffiat lux et facta est lux, sit onusta sententia, ita quod primum 'dicere' sit verbum dei, secundum 'ffiat' sit ratio exemplaris, et tercium 'facta est' dicat faccionem rei et existenciam creature. per hoc eciam potest intelligi in multis locis scripture fecunditas, profunditas atque sublimitas, ut sepe meminit Augustinus.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 168. (Here, as above, I have departed from the Douay-Rheims translation of John 1:3-4.)

¹²² *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 168. Buddensieg observes that Wyclif does not reproduce Augustine's exact words here (n. 21).

¹²³ See section 1.1, above.

particular case, that Wyclif has nominalists of past and present generations in mind. The reference to signs in the opening sentence is possibly an oblique response to Kenningham's remarks on the doctors of signs – and to his provocative claim that Wyclif himself should be counted among them – in his second determination:

The second weapon is that there are universals *ex parte rei*, beyond signs, as in the passage from Genesis 1: 'God created every living and moving creature which the seas brought forth in their kind, and every flying thing according to its kind.' And a knowledge of these creatures is a common medium for understanding the uncreated Trinity, as Augustine teaches in his *Dialogue to Felicianus*. And here Anselm says, in the second chapter of *On the Incarnation*, that those denying such universals are 'heretics of logic'.¹²⁴

Here, as in *De Trinitate*, we are reminded of the analogical relationship between the nature of universals and the nature of the Trinity. Wyclif once again draws attention to the significance of this analogy for a proper understanding of the nature of the Trinity. There is not, he suggests, any fallacy concerning the Trinity which does not have an analogue in relation to the nature of universals. By implication, any philosopher who seeks to dispense with the notion of real universals – as would any nominalist or anti-realist – is also guilty, or potentially guilty, of trinitarian heresy. Kenningham makes no reference to Wyclif's pronouncements on the relationship between realism and orthodox trinitarianism in his surviving determinations, though there can be little doubt that he would have been sensitive to their implications for his own metaphysical teaching. The armature itself, we are told, is like the Augustinian breastplate, 'according to which *genera* and *species*, through differences in their suppositis, are connected (*contexta*)'.¹²⁵ Its prominent position among the five weapons – recalling its situation among the three metaphysical 'nests' mentioned by Wyclif in the ongoing academic debate with Kenningham – reflect its perceived centrality as a hermeneutic tool.

¹²⁴ 'secunda armatura est, quod ex parte rei est dare universalia preter signa, iuxta illud Gen. primo: *creavit deus omnem animam viventem atque motabilem, quam produxerant aque in species suas et omne volatile secundum genus suum.* et noticia istarum creaturarum comunium est medium ad intelligendum trinitatem increatam, ut docet Augustinus in Dialogo Ad Felicianum. et hinc dicit Anselmus in De Incarnacione secundo cap., quod negantes talia universalia sunt "dialectice heretici."' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 169.

¹²⁵ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 169.

Wyclif's arguments about universals and the Trinity lead him very logically into a consideration of the third of the five weapons, according to which all things of one *species* or another, despite being distinct in terms of time or place, in reality form a single whole. This principle of unity in diversity, as we have seen, lies at the heart of the epistemological system of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*. The processes of analogical reasoning themselves rest fundamentally on a progressive return to unity, without which true knowledge cannot be achieved. Wyclif's contempt for the diversity which he finds in contemporary logic, and for the nominalist preoccupation with knowledge of the singular, are both important consequences of his own determined application of this third weapon.¹²⁶ He describes it here as a 'staff to the soul' (*incitatorium pedum anime*), which is used to maintain evangelical unity and to defend the truth of Scripture *de virtute sermonis*.¹²⁷

The fourth armature is a product of the extended notion of time developed in the *Summa de Ente* and the *Logicae Continuatio*. Once again, *ampliatio temporis* is linked inextricably with the theory of intelligible being, the subject of the preceding three points:

The fourth armature is as the strongest shield of the highest metaphysic, which says that all things that were or will be *are* to God, not only according to their intelligible being, but according to their real being in their present time, as in the passage from Ecclesiastes 3: *All things have their season, and in their times all things pass under heaven.* (v.1) And thus the Scriptures can be saved, doctors can be in agreement, and the insoluble difficulties of others, who imprison [i.e. restrict] the present tense, can be done away with.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ See section 2 of the present chapter.

¹²⁷ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 169-70.

¹²⁸ 'Quarta armatura quasi scutum tutissimum est illa alta metaphisica, que dicit, quod omnia, que fuerunt vel erunt, sunt apud deum nedum secundum suum esse intelligibile, sed secundum esse reale, pro tempore suo presencia, iuxta Ecclesiastes tercio: *omnia tempus habent et suis spaciis transeunt universa sub sole.* et sic possunt salvari scripture, concordari doctores et tolli faciliter insolubiles difficultates aliis, qui incarcerant presens tempus.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 171. The text of the vulgate has 'sub caelo' for Wyclif's 'sub sole'. I have used the Duoay-Rheims translation (which follows the former) here.

The 'real' being of past and future moments 'in their present time', though Wyclif nowhere attempts to explain these expressions, must presumably be equivalent to their mode of existence prior and subsequent to their becoming past and future times, respectively. The present time, thus understood, is fundamentally different in kind from the past and the future, being the only time which is both intelligible and existential at once. Wyclif's description of those who 'restrict' (literally, 'imprison') the present tense by failing to apply the principles of *ampliatio*, though it is far from explicit, might easily have been intended as a veiled criticism of nominalist methods. Kenningham would presumably have been numbered among those who restrict the present, having argued, as we have seen, that 'Scripture *extends the signification of terms* to connote past and future times' (my italics).¹²⁹ The expectation that the theory of amplification will bring contemporary doctors into agreement, however, is an indication that the target may have been devotees of terminist methodologies more generally, whose interpretations of time and tense, being oriented towards the proposition rather than a group of 'real' categories, were far from uniform. The scriptural passages which are cited here, though they are not glossed individually, suggest that the theory of *ampliatio* is being applied in essentially the same way as in the *Summa de Ente*:

Before Abraham was made, I am (John 8:58)

Go and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I am consummated. (Luke 13:32)

I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. (Exodus 3:6)¹³⁰

All three passages must be accepted as expressions of truths, or, as Wyclif remarks in respect of the first two, as propositions in which 'the truth speaks pertinently and truthfully'. There are, nevertheless, apparent temporal anomalies in the first two cases, and the words of the last, as we are told, were spoken 'long after' the saints in question had died. In what is an apparent attempt to justify these inconsistencies, Wyclif explains that

¹²⁹ *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, p. 27. See the discussion of this passage in Ch. 4 (section 3), above.

¹³⁰ All three examples are cited together by Wyclif. See *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 171.

it is necessary that all things in the created world happen *in their own time*. Drawing on a range of scriptural passages containing the expression *in tempore suo* (or something very similar), he argues that the confusion would be too great if God allowed the whole of the created universe to come into being at the same instant. This, we are told, is the reason why the prophets speak ‘so variously’ (*tam varie*) and ‘with different tenses’ (*cum differentiis temporum*). He turns here to Augustine, in whose commentary on the Psalms we learn that ‘it often happens that a prophet, speaking of the past, declares the future’. Wyclif cites a passage from Psalm 22 as an example: ‘They have dug my hands and my feet’ (v. 17).¹³¹ As in the *Summa de Ente* and the *Logicae Continuatio*, the true exegete is expected to understand that such passages, far from representing figurative locutions or verbal anomalies, are entirely consistent with the realities of time and eternity. This is because ‘all future events’, from the perspective of the divine, ‘have already happened’.¹³²

Besides resolving the apparent verbal anomalies frequently encountered within the pages of Scripture, Wyclif’s theory of extended or ‘amplified’ time is also applied in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* to the problem of future contingents. This was among the issues over which nominalists and realists were most conspicuously divided in the latter half of the Middle Ages, and it is quite possible that Wyclif has contemporary nominalists in mind at this point in the treatise:

Through this armature... the matter of predestination is known, and the necessity of future and contingent events in their respective contexts. The solution of the following argument [is also known]: *Christ [our] God asserted this, therefore it will happen*. For the future is as necessary as the past, since it happens in either case that nothing was. Hence, without the shield of faith, by which we know that creatures mutably succeed [each other in time], and that the immutable God, by reason of eternity, stands in every past and future [instant], I do not see how metaphysical writings relating to the intuitive knowledge of God, or the philosophy of successives as it is taught, could be upheld.¹³³

¹³¹ ‘...hec ratio, quare prophete loquuntur tam varie cum differentiis temporum, ut notat Augustinus Super Psal. centesimo vicesimo quinto: “solet,” inquit, “fieri, ut propheta de preterito loquens futura pronunciet,” ut in psalmo vicesimo secundo: *ffoderunt manus meas et pedes meos, futura erant et quasi facta cantabantur.*’ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 172.

¹³² ‘omnia enim, que futura sunt, deo iam facta sunt...’ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, pp. 172-3.

¹³³ ‘per hanc itaque armaturam cognoscitur materia de predestinacione, de necessitate futurorum cum contingencia ad utrumlibet et solucio illius argumenti: Christus deus hoc asseruit, ergo eveniet. nam tam necessarium est futurum sicut preteritum, cum contingit ad utrumlibet, quod nichil fuit. unde sine isto scuto

The passage reproduces, in a summary form, the arguments about future contingents and predestination presented in *De Logica* and the *Summa de Ente*.¹³⁴ Here, as in the two earlier texts, the significant point for Wyclif is clearly not that contingent events are in some sense necessary (a view which was widely held¹³⁵), but that temporal amplification is the means by which such contingent necessities are to be understood. It was the metaphysical system underlying the principle of amplification, after all, which divided Wyclif from anti-realists like Ockham, Aureol and Kenningham, and not the issue of contingency and necessity itself. In respect of the latter, his opponents seem more often to have been fellow realists than nominalists.¹³⁶

Wyclif's fifth and final weapon draws on the theories of equivocation and real predication developed in the *Summa de Ente*. As in the earlier text, these are held to have been misunderstood by contemporary philosophers – almost certainly terminists, and possibly also nominalists – because of a mistaken identification of truth and falsehood with linguistic signs. Academic interest in equivocation and (apparent) contradiction had grown with the development of *insolubilia*-literature in the later Middle Ages, and Wyclif had himself contributed a short treatise on the subject early in his career (c. 1365).¹³⁷ This would certainly have made him aware of the principal approaches to the problem of ambiguity (both of nominalist and realist scholars), and cannot have improved the assessment of contemporary logical scholarship which he gives – many years later – in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*. Here, as elsewhere, he appeals to the logic of Scripture itself (another primary analogate), as his guide. The theologian, we are told here, looks beyond

fidei, quo credimus creaturas mutabiliter succedere et deum inmutabilem ratione eternitatis omni preterito vel futuro assistere, non video, quomodo salvaretur scriptura methaphysica de dei noticia intuitiva vel philosophia de succesiva edocta.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, pp. 173-74.

¹³⁴ See Ch. 3, above.

¹³⁵ For a concise survey of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century interpretations of the concept of future contingency, see Calvin Normore, 'Future Contingents' in Kretzmann et al., *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, pp. 358-382.

¹³⁶ According to Robson, Wyclif was especially critical of the views of Fitzralph and Bradwardine. He acknowledges, nevertheless, that the Ockhamist conception of grace 'as a simple relation between God and creatures' was also implicitly rejected. See *Wyclif and the Oxford Schools*, pp. 207-214.

¹³⁷ The treatise has recently been edited by Paul Vincent Spade and Gordon Anthony Wilson, *Johannis Wyclif summa insolubiliium* (New York: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1986). See also Thomson, *Latin Writings*, pp. 11-12.

verbal signs, in which he seeks to find neither truth, falsehood nor contradiction. By following Christ, he learns to use logic as it is found in Scripture, avoiding the inevitable difficulties which human – or, at the very least, anti-realist – logical systems were giving rise to:

The fifth armature [is] as a belt embracing [the body]. Herein lies all of the knowledge of the equivocation of terms in Scripture, by which it is known that there is no contradiction in equivocal signs, as is illustrated in the first chapter from Scripture and from the testimony of Augustine. For philosophical equivocations, lying hidden, are expressed in our books. When the theologian has recognised them, he can understand the truth, which does not lie in the outer garment of the words, just as falsity or contradiction does not lie there. He who with pure love seeks the lord Jesus Christ, rather than vain sophisticated glory, uses logic in the likeness of Scripture, as is explained in the third chapter [of the present work].¹³⁸

To illustrate how equivocation should be understood, Wyclif presents separate examples from ethics, natural science and logic.¹³⁹ The first, he suggests, serves to make consistent two passages from the New Testament:

Be without offence to the Jews, and to the Gentiles, and to the church of God: As I also in all things please all men. (1 Corinthians 10:32-33)

If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. (Galatians 1:10)

According to Augustine, we are told, the proposition *et ego placeo et ego non placeo* ('I please and I do not please') may be true without representing a contradiction. Each part of the proposition, Augustine argues, is evident to the good and pious interpreter, who finds no contradiction between them to obstruct him. From this Wyclif draws three conclusions about the hermeneutic philosophy of Augustine and the saints (*sancti*), each of which powerfully reinforces the metaphysical arguments of the *Summa de Ente*. The first – and

¹³⁸ 'quinta armatura quasi cingulum latum amplectens hec omnia est noticia equivocacionis terminorum scripture, qua cognoscitur non esse contradiccionem in signis equivocis, ut exemplatum est primo capitulo tam ex scriptura quam ex testimonio Augustini. equivocaciones enim subtilissime latentes philosophos in nostris codicibus exprimentur, quas, dum theologus cognoverit, potest intelligere veritatem, que non iacet per se in verborum velamine, sicut nec falsitas vel repugnancia et ille, qui casto amore diligit dominum Jesum Cristum, non gloriam vanam sophisticam, utitur hac logica instar scripture, ut dictum est tercio capitulo.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 174

¹³⁹ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 174-182.

least remarkable – is that the saints strove to exclude falsity and contradiction from Scripture.¹⁴⁰ The second relates to the interpretation of the ambiguous term *placeo* itself. Here we are told that to please a creature for its own sake (*placere... creature finaliter propter se*) is the same as pleasing a man simply (*placere homini simpliciter*). To please men with a view to pleasing God, on the other hand, is to please *secundum quid*, without any ‘equivocal contradiction’ between the two kinds of pleasing.¹⁴¹ As in the case of the relationship between God and his symbols in the theology of the *Summa de Ente*, the avoidance of contradiction is only perceived to be possible so long as there exists some kind of metaphysical continuity between created and uncreated being. For nominalist thinkers, and for critics of Wyclif’s metaphysical system like Kenningham, no such continuity would have been apparent. Wyclif’s third conclusion concerns the term *homines* (‘men’). By ‘all men’, we are told, the saints understand ‘all kinds of men’, both within and outside the Church. When the apostle says, ‘If I pleased men, I would not be a servant of Christ’, he speaks of men as bodily creatures (*carnales*). Augustine, in *De Verbis Domini*, we are told, draws the distinction between one who lives *secundum hominem*, and one who lives *secundum Deum*. Wyclif uses as an example the apostle’s way of speaking in 1 Corinthians 1:26-29. The term is also applied to those who live *secundum deum*, such as those who are described in Psalm 81:6: ‘You are Gods and all of you the sons of the most high’.

Wyclif’s second example (from natural science) concerns the signification of names of material substances. These, he suggests, signify either material essences – which have an accidental substantial form – or the union of these essences with a material form. An example of the first mode of signifying is found by Wyclif in St John’s gospel, in which we learn that water is made into wine.¹⁴² In this case, he explains, the same material essence is at different times both water and wine, the latter being produced ‘by various processes of mixture’. A second example is taken from the first two lines of Genesis, in which a single material essence (the *prima materia*) is called earth, water and an abyss. This same

¹⁴⁰ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 175.

¹⁴¹ ‘ecce secundo, quod placere sic creature finaliter propter se, est placere homini simpliciter et placere hominibus sub ratione placendi deo finaliter, quod est placere secundum quid, est placere equivocum contradiccionem excludens.’ Ibid.

¹⁴² John 2:9.

mode of signifying, Wyclif suggests, can be used to explain how priests are said to have been partially in the loins of Abraham in Genesis 3 and Hebrews 7, and how all material substances are said to have been created at once in Ecclesiasticus 18.¹⁴³ He turns to St Anselm for support, citing a passage from his treatise *De Conceptu Virginali*:

It is certainly not possible to deny that Adam's children were within him when he sinned, but they were within him causally or materially, just as if they were in a seed; in themselves personally they are, because in him they were the seed itself.¹⁴⁴

Wyclif finds in Anselm not only a precedent for his own metaphysical arguments about scriptural meaning, but a comparable contempt for logicians and philosophers who seek to deny the truth of the Bible. Anselm had argued later in *De Conceptu Virginali* that anyone who rejected his claim that 'in the singular itself there are different persons', would also have to deny that Christ was in Abraham, in David, and in the other fathers. Though the argument is presented purely in the form of a hypothesis, there is a strong suggestion that Anselm had a specific group of exegetes and philosophers in mind. Wyclif is in no doubt whatsoever, declaring that 'in the time of that saint there were heretical dialecticians who denied holy Scripture, and who dismissed its logic as vain.'¹⁴⁵

The third and final example relates to common terms, and to the problem which arises when such terms are 'restricted' to singular referents. Because the term 'Christ' is common to both the humanity and the divinity of Christ, Wyclif argues, he is said on different occasions to be both created (*factus*) and uncreated (*non factus*). In each case, the term would presumably be seen to have been 'restricted' in a different way. The principles

¹⁴³ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 177. The references are to Genesis 3:15 ('I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.'), and to Hebrews 7:10 ('For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedech met him.'). The reference to Ecclesiasticus is from 18:1 ('He that liveth for ever created all things together. God only shall be justified, and he remaineth an invincible king forever.').

¹⁴⁴ "equidem negari nequit, infantes Adam fuisse, cum peccavit, sed in illo causaliter seu materialiter velut in semine fuerunt et in se ipsis personaliter sunt, quia in ipso fuerunt ipsum semen." ' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 177. Cf. the text of *De Conceptu Virginali* in *PL*, 158, col. 431-466 (this passage: col. 454).

¹⁴⁵ 'ecce, quod tempore huius sancti fuerunt dialectice heretici negantes scripturam sacram et abicientes eius logicam tamquam vanam.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 178.

of restriction also apply to temporal terms such as *esse*, *fuisse* and *fore*, which Wyclif describes as being common respectively to present, past, and future times. The terms, in this case, are restricted, or 'limited', to particular times in the present, past, or future. Scripture, Wyclif suggests, often restricts temporal terms to particular times, as in the case of Genesis 2.20: 'For Adam there was not found a helper similar to himself'. Here, he explains, we must supply the phrase, 'not before Eve was created.' Likewise, when we read in Jeremiah 31 that 'Rachel, weeping for her children, refused to be consoled, because they are not', we must supply, 'the children of predestination, as the children of Leah, martyred for Christ.' By Rachel, Wyclif suggests, the saints understand the contemplative church (*ecclesia contemplativa*). Since wickedness of the flesh (*lubricitas carnis*) is completely contrary to contemplation, any sinner who indulges in such wickedness *is not*, according to the *modus loquendi* of Scripture.¹⁴⁶

The theory of equivocation, like the principle of *ampliatio temporis* which precedes it in the list, is clearly perceived to have a special place among the hermeneutic weapons. It is analysed at greater length than any of the others, and is held to be adequate to resolve all of the recognised *fallaciae* of scholastic logic. Both amplification and equivocation, as we have seen from Wyclif's disputations with Kenningham, were vulnerable to criticism on logical grounds, and both could very easily be understood purely (or principally) as linguistic or logical phenomena.¹⁴⁷ The division between linguistic and real categories could easily be blurred, and Wyclif would have found it difficult to deny that linguistic operations played as significant a role in the theories of equivocation and amplification as the putative realities underlying them. That these two mainstays of realist textual theory should be so carefully and exhaustively defended in a treatise on hermeneutics should not, then, be any cause for surprise. All five weapons, like the meta-hermeneutic concepts used throughout *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, are said to have their bases within the text of

¹⁴⁶ 'non sunt filii partis contemplative ecclesie, quam sancti intelligunt per Rachelem, cum lubricitas carnis sit maxime contemplacioni contraria, et esse sic peccatorem est quoddam non esse iuxta modum loquendi scripture.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 179.

¹⁴⁷ See Ch. 4, above.

Scripture itself (though no specific parts are mentioned at this point in the treatise). We should not, Wyclif argues, accept any principle of knowledge which does not have such a basis:

I do not see that we should admit [any] science or conclusion which does not find testimony from Scripture. Thus, from that passage in Genesis 1: 'Let us make man to our image and likeness' (v.26), it seems to me that five notable truths are taught. First, that God the creator is the Trinity, since otherwise he would not speak pertinently [in saying] 'let *us* make'. Second, that the whole personality of a man is stored in the soul, since it is said, 'let us make man'. Third, that the soul is triune, since it is the image of God himself. Fourth, that man was created in grace, since he was made in the likeness of God; and fifth, that the whole Trinity is one simple essence, since it is said singularly, 'in our image and likeness'. And this is so in other parts of Scripture, if ignorance of it does not obstruct us.¹⁴⁸

All of these theological ideas are familiar from the discussion of the soul-Trinity analogue in *De Trinitate*.¹⁴⁹ Wyclif's gloss on the Genesis passage is far from controversial, though it seems unlikely that the five weapons would have been so readily accepted by his contemporaries as these basic principles of Trinitarian theology. Both, nevertheless, were held to be founded upon explicit scriptural teaching. Like all other biblical *signata*, the five weapons were – in Wyclif's eyes – products of divine, rather than of human intention. At the end of the eighth chapter, the weapons are identified explicitly as ideas in the mind of the *auctor immediatus* of Scripture:

I urge catholics that they do not learn or defend any one of the five weapons as though it were mine, but rather as something given and revealed to the faithful through the saints by the author of the first [kind of] Scripture, so that the sixth invasive weapon, namely the sword of the spirit, which is the word of Scripture, is not tied up, but can in its form have a free course. For then Scripture would be in authority, reverence and even efficacy as it formerly was.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ 'nec video, quod oportet admittere scienciam vel conclusionem, que non habet testimoniam ex scriptura. unde ex illo Gen. primo: *faciamus hominem ad ymaginem et similitudinem nostram*, videntur michi doceri quinque notabiles veritates. primo, quod deus creator est trinitas, cum aliter pertinenter non diceret: 'faciamus'; secundo, quod tota personlitas hominis servatur in anima, cum dicitur 'faciamus hominem'; tertio, quod anima sit trina, cum sit ymaginem dei sui; quarto, quod homo fuit creatus in gracia, cum factus est ad similitudinem dei sui; et quinto, quod tota trinitas est una simplex essencia, cum dicitur singulariter 'ad ymaginem et similitudinem nostram'. et sic de aliis partibus scripture, si non obest eius ignorancia.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 180-181.

¹⁴⁹ See Ch. 2 (section 2), above.

¹⁵⁰ 'adiuro autem catholicos, quod non discant vel defendant aliquam illius armature quintuplicis tamquam meam, sed tamquam autoris prime scripture per sanctos suos detectam et datam fidelibus ad finem, quod sexta

The lost age of perfection to which Wyclif refers in this passage is the same, undoubtedly, as that which was held to have existed before the decline of logic (and the rise of Aristotelianism, nominalism and terminism) in the Oxford schools. The freeing of the sword of the spirit is suggestive of a liberation from the materialistic concerns of the schools and the contemporary church, and of a restoration to the meaning of God, the true author. The problems which surrounded the production and interpretation of the *physical* text nevertheless remained an obstacle even for the committed realist. Wyclif goes some way towards confronting these problems in his discussion of the second armature.

4.2 The Hermeneutic Armature and Knowledge of Scriptural Truth

The second armature is introduced in the ninth chapter, which is devoted to questions of interpretation and scriptural authority. After an extended exposition on the dangers of attending too closely to human intention and the material forms of Scripture, Wyclif presents the five components of the armature in turn:

armatura invasiva, scilicet gladium spiritus, quod est verbum scripture, non sit ligatum, sed possit in forma, qua hactenus, habere liberum cursum suum. tunc enim foret scriptura in autoritate, reverencia ac enim efficacia sicut olim.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 182.

It is to be noted that, just as Scripture itself, in the sixth chapter [of the present work], is five-fold, and the armour for its defence in the eighth chapter is five-fold, so the medium leading to knowledge of its truth is five-fold, namely the correction of the books of Scripture, instruction in the logic of Scripture, consideration of the parts of Scripture together, the virtuous disposition of its devoted students, and the internal instruction of the first master.¹⁵¹

Though Wyclif remains committed to the idea that knowledge of the *liber materialis* should not be an end in itself, his paradoxical dependence upon the written form of the text, as we suggested earlier, only becomes clearer as his argument progresses. It is made the more conspicuous by the influence of Robert Grosseteste, a philosopher whose Aristotelianism left his own views on the transcendent similarly compromised.¹⁵² Wyclif's first weapon, for example, takes the form of the adequately corrected text. Such a text, he suggests, though the product of human scribes, copyists and editors, should not be guided by the principles of human knowledge, but should be corrected according to the reader's conception of the author's meaning (*ut lector concipiat sententiam auctoris*).¹⁵³ Such a conception, of course, as Wyclif would certainly have conceded, was always bound to be imperfect. By directing his attention towards divine authorship and the highest form of Scripture, however, the reader could hope to minimise these imperfections as far as possible.

The second defence Wyclif offers against the falsification or distortion of scriptural meaning is a knowledge of the logic of Scripture. Such knowledge, he suggests, following the argument developed in the third chapter of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, prevents the theologian from becoming imprisoned by words. Here, once again, he turns to Augustine, endorsing the claim – made in *De Doctrina Christiana* – that the scriptural *modus loquendi* is learned through the habit of reading and listening.

¹⁵¹ ‘...notandum quod, sicut quintuplex est scriptura ex sexto capitulo et quintuplex armatura pro eius defensione ex octavo capitulo, sic quintuplex est medium disponens ad sue veritatis notitiam, scilicet codicum scripture correccio, logice scripture instructio, parcium scripture magis collacio, sui devoti studentis virtuosa dispositio et primi magistri interna instructio.’ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 194.

¹⁵² On the effects of Aristotelianism on Grosseteste's epistemology, see McEvoy, *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste*, p. 20; pp. 326-345.

¹⁵³ ‘...correccio codicum non ffit secundum ornacionem sumptuosam nec secundum rectificationem factam iuxta humanam scientiam, sed proporcionaliter, ut lector concipiat auctoris sententiam.’ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 195.

Wyclif's third defence, which states that scriptural interpretation should proceed according to the fullest reading of its parts (*crebra leccio partium*), recalls the debate with Kenningham over the status of literal truth.¹⁵⁴ It is often necessarily the case, he acknowledges here, that one part of Scripture explains another. In such cases, any attempt to interpret the text *de vi vocis*, according to the truth of isolated words, would presumably fail. Likewise, just as we must allow for a 'safe variety' in interpretation, which is always explained by 'reciprocal truth', so we must allow for variation between the Gospels, as between other texts. Though these may add or introduce changes to material which appears elsewhere, the same meaning nevertheless remains (*vel addunt vel variant stante eadem sententia*). It was according to these principles that Augustine, in his *De Concensu Evangelistarum*, was able to resolve the apparent contradictions which he found among the evangelists. The example is given of his treatment of the following passage from St Matthew's Gospel, which, Wyclif suggests, is preserved from falsehood:

Then was fulfilled that which was said by the prophet Jeremiah, who said:
'and they took thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was prized, who
was prized of the children of Israel.'¹⁵⁵

The difficulty with this passage, we are told, is that the statement attributed to Jeremiah is not actually found in Jeremiah at all. Wyclif presents Augustine's solution in terms of three interrelated responses. The first concerns the text itself, whose corrected codices, it is suggested, use the term *propheta*, rather than *Jeremias*. The passages which do use *Jeremias* are therefore not holy Scripture, but erroneous texts which should be cast aside. Augustine, we are told, finally rejects this solution, since the majority of corrected texts, even those which rely on Greek exemplars, retain the problematic term. The second response is directed towards the problem of the authorship of the passage. Jeremiah, Augustine suggests, wrote and said many things with one voice, by the authority of divine inspiration. These things, however, were not translated into human writing by him, but left to another prophet to be so translated. Jerome, Wyclif suggests, claimed to have found the said passage in a Hebrew book bearing the title of Jeremiah, though the book itself is

¹⁵⁴ See Ch. 4 (section 2.3), above.

¹⁵⁵ Matthew 27:9. Cited in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 196.

among those prophetic writings which are unavailable to us.¹⁵⁶ The third response is the only one, we discover, which Augustine found fully satisfactory. Its significance for Wyclif is clear from the terms in which it is glossed:

[T]he third response... consists in the following: that the holy Spirit ordained that Matthew write the name Jeremiah to indicate that all holy prophets had communicated in language with a single spirit, so that whatever the holy Spirit said through them, he also said singulars to be of all things, and all things to be of singulars. And thus the holy Spirit moved the mind of Matthew to write in this way, so that he would teach the church among the saints to be as the power of communion, so that every saying of Zachariah would agree most congruently with Jeremiah.¹⁵⁷

The focus here is much broader than in Wyclif's earlier discussion of the distinction between the force of the word (*vis vocis*) and the force of discourse (*virtus sermonis*). The resultant shift in emphasis away from human language and towards a single underlying spirit, from singulars in themselves to a recognition of the interdependence of singulars and universals, and from the multiple voices of the prophets (God's instrumental authors), to the unifying force of divine intention, is nevertheless fundamentally the same. The process of reading, Wyclif suggests in his concluding section, should proceed according to an understanding of its harmonious elements, and through a rejection of any appearance of contradiction.¹⁵⁸

The fourth defence relates to the disposition of the *discipulus scripture*, the reader of the sacred text. Such a figure, we are told, should be of a virtuous disposition, lest his or her spirit should be injurious to the process of reading itself. God reveals and conceals his book, so that anyone who is a friend to this master (namely, to God himself), takes the fruit

¹⁵⁶ The reference to St Jerome here is obscure. Buddensieg admits to having been unsuccessful in his attempts to locate the passage. See *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 197, n. 12.

¹⁵⁷ 'tercia responsio... stat in isto, quod spiritus sanctus ordinavit Mattheum inserere nomen Jeremie ad denotandum, quod omnes sancti prophete uno spiritu... comunicaverant in loquela, sic quod quecunque per eos spiritus sanctus dixerit, et singula esse omnium et omnia singulorum; et sic spiritus sanctus movebat mentem Matthei sic scribere, ut discat ecclesia inter sanctos esse tantam concordiam, ut omne dictum Zacharie congruentissime competeret Jeremie.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 197.

¹⁵⁸ 'prodest crebro legere partes scripture pro habendo conceptu sue concordancie et excludenda apparentia sue repugnantie.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 197-98.

of learning away from the arrogant or the proud student.¹⁵⁹ This is known to us, Wyclif suggests, from the testimony of Scripture itself, as from that of the *sancti doctores*. He directs us here to Jesus' words (spoken to God) in Matthew 11:25:

thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to the little ones.¹⁶⁰

The nature of the 'virtuous disposition' can be explained, Wyclif suggests, in terms of three principal qualities or gestures. These are a humble acknowledgement of Scriptural authority, conformity with the laws of Scripture and of reason, and acceptance of the testimony of the fathers. All of these points, as we have seen, had been a source of disagreement between Wyclif and Kenningham.¹⁶¹

The metaphysical and epistemological systems of the *Summa de Ente* are most conspicuous in Wyclif's description of his fifth and final hermeneutic weapon, divine instruction. This, we are told, is most necessary, since it is impossible to learn anything without the teaching of the *prima sapientia* ('first wisdom'). We learn this, Wyclif suggests, from Augustine's *De Magistro*, and from a passage in St John's Gospel: 'All things were made by him: and without him was made nothing that was made.' (1:3).¹⁶² The principle is also central to the theory of truth expounded by Grosseteste in his *De Veritate*, a work which had certainly been used by Wyclif in the earlier part of his philosophical career.¹⁶³ It is summarized here in terms of the theory of knowledge and being which is found in the *Summa de Ente*. Just as all beings have being through God, we are told, so every truth is true through God, who is the first truth and the first known. Wyclif relates this pattern to the theory of participation, illustrating how all aspects of

¹⁵⁹ 'cum oportet deum aperire et claudere illum librum, patet, quod, quicumque fuerit amicus huius magistri, habet fructum discipline superbis absconditum.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 198.

¹⁶⁰ 'sic enim dicit Christus Matth. undecimo, quod pater abscondidit misteria scripture a sapientibus et revelavit ea parvulis' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 198. (Wyclif here provides a third-person paraphrase of the passage translated above.)

¹⁶¹ See Ch. 4 (esp. section 4), above.

¹⁶² *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 201.

¹⁶³ On the argument of *De Veritate*, see McEvoy, *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste*, pp. 321-326. Citations of *De Veritate* in the edited works of Wyclif are listed in S.H. Thomson, *The Writings of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, 1235-1253* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), p. 119.

creation – individuals, species and genera – have being and truth through participation in their superiors, and ultimately through participation in the highest being. The first being and the first truth, we learn, are the primary cause of all forms of created knowledge, just as the light of Christ illuminates every man, or as the sun illuminates celestial or earthly lights:

Everything, just as it has to be, has to be known, but nothing can be true except through the first truth, or through participation in it; therefore it cannot be known, either. For this reason philosophers say that [the first truth] is the first known. For no individual in general can be a being or be true, except through participation in its species, nor a species except through participation in its genus, nor a genus except through participation in the first and most general being, to which it is assigned in entity and truth, and consequently in causality of knowledge. For the first truth itself is the first cause of any created knowledge whatsoever... For since Christ is the true light, which illuminates every man, it is clear that it is absolutely impossible for the sense of a man to be illuminated so that he knows anything, except as it shines first through him, just as it is impossible, *ex suppositione*, for the light of a star or of a torch to show anything except by virtue of material sun showing this first, as it is agreed by many philosophers.¹⁶⁴

The shift from participation to illumination in the second half of this passage betrays the influence, once again, of Augustine. Wyclif directs us to the seventh book of the *Confessions*, in which, we are told, Augustine traces his ideas on illumination to the books of Plato.¹⁶⁵ Wyclif's own theory of illumination almost certainly owes as much to Grosseteste's interpretation of the Augustinian doctrine as it does to Augustine directly, and he was clearly anxious to emphasise the complementarity of their respective systems of thought.¹⁶⁶ The significance of Grosseteste's contribution becomes clear when Wyclif

¹⁶⁴ 'unumquodque sicut se habet ad esse, sic ad cognosci, sed nichil potest esse verum nisi veritas prima vel eius participacione, ergo nec cognosci. ideo dicunt philosophi, quod ipsa est primum cognitum. nullum enim individuum in genere potest esse ens vel verum nisi participacione sue speciei, nec species nisi participacione sui generis, nec genus nisi participacione entis primi et comunissimi, ad quod est status in entitate et veritate et per consequens in causalitate noticie. ipsa enim prima veritas est prima causa cuiuscunque noticie create... cum... Cristus sit lux vera, que illuminat omnem hominem, patet, quod absolute impossibile est, sensum hominis illuminari, ut quidquam cognoscat, nisi per eum primo irradiantem, sicut est impossibile, ex suppositione lucem astri vel candeles quidquam ostendere nisi in virtute solis materialis hoc prius ostendentis, ut placet multis philosophis.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 201-02.

¹⁶⁵ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 202.

¹⁶⁶ On the Augustinian concept of illumination, and its relation to rational knowledge, see Robert E. Cushman, 'Faith and Reason', in Roy W. Battenhouse, ed., *A Companion to the Study of St Augustine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 287-314 (pp. 292-295).

makes the connection between an illuminatory theory of knowledge and the interpretation of Scripture more explicit. Our attention is drawn again to the five-fold classification of Scripture presented in the sixth chapter of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, and to the different epistemological processes associated with each level. The processes linked to the lower four levels, Wyclif suggests, are simply routes to the first and highest, as the Christian theory of illumination reveals. Here he turns to Grosseteste's commentary on the *Posterior Analytics*, in which the distinction is drawn – following Augustine – between the outward man and the true, 'inward' doctor (*interius verus doctor*).¹⁶⁷ The former, and the signs used by him, are nothing but instruments (*instrumenta*) moving accidentally, whereas the latter illuminates the mind and shows the truth. Thus, Wyclif suggests, Augustine speaks truly in the third book of *De Doctrina Christiana*, when he tells us that the most outstanding and most necessary thing to the disciples of Scripture is that they pray so that they understand.¹⁶⁸

Wyclif's references to illumination in his discussion of the last of the five hermeneutic weapons mark an emphatic return to the theory of truth and intention which we found in his exposition on the literal sense of Scripture. Once again, we are being encouraged to think in rigid analogical terms about the nature of the text. The secondary analogates whose rôle in the communicative process Kenningham had been keen to emphasise – the material text and human logical and linguistic systems – are here relegated to the status of mere instruments. Though they have a part to play in the hermeneutic process, they have no significance on their own account, as Wyclif's reference to 'accidental' movement suggests.

¹⁶⁷ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 202. On the notion of the *interior homo* ('inner' man), a central concept in Augustinian theology, see Grodin, *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics*, pp. 32-39.

¹⁶⁸ '...dicit Lincolniensis primo Posteriorum in prologomagister et signa eius non sunt nisi instrumenta quedam per accidens movencia, sed est interius verus d, quod octor, qui mentem illuminat et veritatem ostendit. et sic vere dicit Augustinus tercio De Doctrina Christiana, trecesimo septimo, quod precipuum et maxime necessarium est discipulis scripture scare, quod orent, ut intelligant.' *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 202.

The pervasive analogism of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, whilst it can leave us in little doubt as to the strength of Wyclif's mature philosophical convictions, betrays a clear anxiety about the logical and metaphysical claims which had been established in the *Summa de Ente*. Analogy provided an important buttress against the anti-realism of Kenningham and his followers, but was not sufficient to silence their objections. It did contribute very clearly, however, to some of Wyclif's most outstanding and original exegetical innovations. His theory of the text, which systematically opposed the authority of human writers and material texts to that of God and the intelligible form of Scripture, was one which, like the philosophical nests described by Kenningham, effectively excluded certain forms of discourse (in this case, both Aristotelian and nominalist exegetical treatises and commentaries) from the realms of serious academic consideration altogether. His defence of the intelligible text, he claimed, was itself rooted in Scripture, which meant effectively that neither could be contradicted (since Scripture, in its ultimate form, was not the same as the material texts on which his opponents based their arguments). His conception of metaphor and literalism was perhaps his most controversial innovation, which cannot have been formulated without some awareness of the difficulties it was likely to give rise to. The detailed presentation of the metaphysical and hermeneutic weapons in the eighth and ninth chapters of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* marks Wyclif's clearest recognition of his vulnerability -- here and elsewhere -- to philosophical assault. Kenningham posed the greatest threat, both to the philosophical and the exegetical aspects of Wyclif's thinking, and there can be little doubt, as we have suggested, that the ten weapons were formulated with his very carefully argued objections in mind.

Despite the high degree of consistency in Wyclif's hermeneutic arguments, and in his defence of scriptural truth, it cannot be said that Kenningham and the philosophical nominalists (narrowly defined by their rejection of 'real' ideas, universals and propositions) were being singled out in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* as the *sole* cause of exegetical corruption. As we have suggested, the 'modern doctors' and 'doctors of signs' of Oxford may have included nominalists among their number, but the labels are often applied in very general terms in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, and are likely to have identified a broad group of Aristotelian and post-Aristotelian (terminist) logicians. References to William of Ockham, whose philosophical claims were explicitly attacked in the *Summa de Ente*, occur

only four times throughout the whole of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* (a much longer treatise than any tract of the *Summa de Ente*). In this later work, moreover, Wyclif is as anxious to distance himself from Ockham's views on Franciscan spirituality – with which, we are told, 'a certain doctor' had attempted to associate him¹⁶⁹ – as to oppose him explicitly on metaphysical issues. Ockham is not presented as the perpetrator of heresies relating to either universals or ideas, despite the incriminations which had been made in this connection in *De Universalibus*. This is surprising, given the space which Wyclif devotes to these fundamental hermeneutic concepts in *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*.

Academic opponents of Wyclif's exegetical theory, and of his literalism in particular, were not, of course, solely philosophers. Though Kenningham's objections posed an immediate and obvious threat to Wyclif's conception of scriptural meaning, they were no worse than the less narrowly philosophical arguments of his other famous opponent, the Franciscan William Woodford. We should therefore be cautious about seeking philosophical influence where none can be expected. It is for this reason that the *Summa de Ente* has played such a significant part in our analysis of the hermeneutic system of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*. Wyclif's philosophy has the virtue of being highly consistent, and it is not difficult, as we have seen, to trace key hermeneutic principles (analogy, *ampliatio temporis*, real predication, intelligible being) back to their philosophical origins in the *Summa de Ente*. Kenningham himself rejected Wyclif's ideas on philosophical grounds, as the titles of his determinations confirm, but he was clearly an exceptional figure. We cannot risk assuming that he had a wide philosophical following in Oxford, especially if Courtenay's remarks about nominalist influence in England are true.¹⁷⁰ Equally, however, we can be in little doubt that Wyclif the Bible scholar perceived anti-realism – in Kenningham's determinations and elsewhere – as a significant hermeneutic obstacle. His arguments about the nature of authorship, intention, and authority, in particular, make this abundantly clear. If we are to do these arguments justice, it would seem, we must accept Wyclif's responses to medieval nominalism without assuming that they served as ends in themselves. As the debates with Kenningham have revealed, nominalism and realism merely supplied the framework within which conflicting

¹⁶⁹ *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. i, p. 345-46.

¹⁷⁰ See the discussion in Chapter 1 (section 2.2), above.

conceptions of textuality (and the theories of truth and time on which they largely depended) could be debated; they had become, by the time of the composition of *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, the means to a textual end.

CONCLUSION

Among the few things that can be said with any certainty of the relationship between Wyclif and those who have been described, rightly or wrongly, as ‘nominalists’, is that it was not an easy one. The central objective of the present study has been to determine how far this unease was properly the result of philosophical nominalism (as defined in Chapter 1), and in what ways it could have influenced the development of Wyclif’s hermeneutic thought. The assumption has been made, throughout, that such a problem can properly be approached only from within the context of Wyclif’s relatively neglected philosophical writings (the logical works and the *Summa de Ente*). These, as we have seen, shed some important light on the possible responses to medieval nominalism which we find in the *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, as well as highlighting some of the main inadequacies of the term ‘nominalism’ itself. They also illustrate the fundamental relationship between philosophical theory and textual authority, whose significance in Wyclif’s scriptural writings can hardly be exaggerated.

Each of the three general hermeneutic concepts highlighted in the title of the present study – truth, time and textuality – is defined in Wyclif’s writings by the metaphysical rules first laid out in the *Summa de Ente* and the two tractates on logic. In the second chapter, we illustrated how the realist principle of *analogia entis* supplies the foundation for Wyclif’s interpretation of scriptural signs, and how it informs the broader metaphysical ideas in his philosophy. The relationship between analogy and univocity was considered, and we illustrated ways in which a commitment to the latter – which played a central rôle in nominalist logic – might lead to some of the hermeneutic errors highlighted by Wyclif in the *Summa de Ente* and *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*. A link was posited, tentatively, between univocity and the literalism which has been seen to characterise ‘nominalist’ exegetical methods. We concluded with the observation that Wyclif’s theory of analogy attracted relatively little explicit opposition from within the university. Indirect opposition, nevertheless, can be found in Kenningham’s powerful critique of the concept of intelligible natures (which we analysed in Chapter 4). It was suggested in Chapter 5, moreover, that three textual concepts informed by analogical reasoning (the book, the author, and authority) were also challenged by Kenningham’s anti-realism. In the third

chapter, we presented two of the most controversial aspects of Wyclif's hermeneutic realism, his theory of 'real' propositions (*propositiones in re*) and temporal amplification (*ampliatio temporis*). Neglect of these theories, which were both fundamentally incompatible with the assumptions of nominalist metaphysics, lay for Wyclif at the very heart of contemporary confusion over the nature of scriptural truth. As we have suggested, opposition to the principles of *analogia entis* or to either of the theories presented in Chapter 3 did not necessarily entail a commitment to philosophical nominalism. There is, nevertheless, a strong likelihood that the opposition to these views which Wyclif encountered, whether voiced in academic debates in the Arts faculty or recorded in philosophical treatises or *summae*, would have been influenced principally by nominalist logic and metaphysics. Within the *Summa de Ente*, as we have seen, Wyclif makes explicit reference to Ockham's erroneous pronouncements on the nature of universals, and it is not insignificant that the *De Universalibus* is among the longest tracts of the *Summa de Ente*.

The relationship between the *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* and contemporary nominalist discourses is more obscure. In broad metaphysical terms it is a realist text, and there are close structural correspondences, as we have seen, between the ideas developed here and those presented in the *De Universalibus*. In the later tract, however, as Wyclif suggests, he was writing as a theologian, having left behind (with some relief) the tedious logical processes and analyses which were part of life in the Arts faculty. It is perhaps for this reason that he is more dismissive of the assumptions and methods of the logical and grammatical arts generally, than of nominalist logic and metaphysics in particular, in the *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*. As we have argued, there is no evidence within the text itself to connect the *doctores signorum* or the *moderni* exclusively with the assumptions of nominalist metaphysics, and Ockham himself is seldom explicitly associated with these terms.

The most significant links between the *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* and the philosophy of the *Summa de Ente*, beside the structural correspondences and the pervasiveness of analogy as an analytical and hermeneutic principle, are those which are highlighted by Wyclif's debate with Kenningham. Though Kenningham is mentioned nowhere by name in the *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, the correspondence between concepts explicitly challenged in the *determinationes* (those of divine ideas, universals, real

predication, temporal amplification and literalism) and those which collectively constituted Wyclif's five-fold metaphysical and hermeneutic *armaturae* is striking. All of these ideas (with the exception of literalism, which is not principally a metaphysical concept) had their origins in the *Summa de Ente* and the *Logicae Continuatio*.

Kenningham's own significance for Wyclif studies goes beyond his distinctive philosophical perspective on his contemporary's work. He contributed very decisively, as we suggested in Chapter 4, to the development of Wyclif's ideas on specific *hermeneutic* issues such as literalism and authority (neither of which would normally have been regarded as philosophical). Wyclif's extension of Thomistic intentionalism to the three 'spiritual' senses would have been controversial even beyond the realms of philosophical disputation, and Kenningham clearly found no difficulty in presenting logical arguments against it. Whether Kenningham's reliance on principles consistent with Ockhamist logic is reason to describe his views on literalism as 'nominalistic' is therefore, as elsewhere, a question of definition. There can be no doubt, nevertheless, that the principal threat to Wyclif's 'intentionalist' conception of the literal sense was a metaphysical one, nor that it had its origins in a form of anti-realism which had elements in common both with contemporary 'moderate' nominalism (as defined by Courtenay) and Scotism. There is a very clear progression from the responses to Kenningham presented by Wyclif in his own *determinatio* – which necessitated significant modifications to his earlier scriptural theory – to the hermeneutic concepts assembled in the *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*. Unlike William Woodford, Kenningham has attracted relatively little scholarly attention, despite having been recognised as one of the shrewdest of Wyclif's contemporary critics.¹ Wyclif's own literalism has not received the attention it deserves, and its philosophical significance has been largely overlooked. This problem would certainly be rectified if Kenningham's own very distinctive philosophical position, as well as his skills as a dialectician, were brought into the foreground.

¹ See for example Robson's discussion in *Wyclif and the Oxford Schools*, pp. 162-170. Catto remarks that 'Kenningham was clearly able to put up a vigorous case and perhaps had the better of the argument', 'Wyclif and Wycliffism', p. 195.

The uncertainty which surrounds many of the doctrines and ideas which *could* be characterised as ‘nominalist’ in Wyclif should not deter us from drawing conclusions about responses to nominalism in his writings. Part of the purpose of this study has been to highlight ways in which existing definitions of nominalism, as applied to the teaching of Wyclif’s opponents, has often been inadequate or misleading. Despite the significant revisions which have been made to the historical understanding of nominalism over the past three decades (by Courtenay and Oberman in particular), relatively little has changed in the academic assessment of Wyclif’s opponents. Opposition to Wyclif’s metaphysical views, as we have suggested, had a range of potential philosophical sources, not all of which would normally be characterised as ‘nominalist’. The views of Ockham and Scotus, for example, – especially in relation to the theory of predication – had much in common, though only the former is usually described as a nominalist. Followers of Scotus (Peter Aureol being the obvious example), no less than contemporary Ockhamists, would have found many of Wyclif’s metaphysical conclusions unacceptable. John Kenningham, whose arguments had a more tangible influence on the development of Wyclif’s later philosophical teaching than any other contemporary, does not adhere rigidly to the principles set down by Ockham or any other ‘nominalist’ thinker of the fourteenth century. Though he has not been described as a nominalist, his rejection of Wyclif’s teaching on ideas and universals would be good reason to identify him as such, if only in respect of his ontological convictions.

There is, then, a twofold problem with the term ‘nominalism’ and its existing definitions. Firstly, it is clearly too narrow a label to apply to Wyclif’s philosophical and logical opponents collectively. On a metaphysical level, as we have suggested, the broader term ‘anti-realist’ is more descriptive of their shared assumptions. This alternative label also implicitly separates those who were opposed to philosophical realism, and whose metaphysics Wyclif implicitly or explicitly rejected, from those whose logical methods he criticised on the grounds that they privileged the *signum* and its properties above the *signatum*. These, as we have argued, were strictly *termininists*, but need not necessarily have been metaphysical anti-realists. None of these alternative labels and definitions renders the term ‘nominalism’ or ‘nominalist’ redundant, of course. It is often appropriate, in the analysis of Wyclif’s anti-realism, to isolate principles peculiar to, or characteristic of, fourteenth-century nominalism. The more general term, however, gives proper recognition

to the principles of anti-realism which were found in writers from outside the nominalist tradition (as defined by recent 'revisionist' histories of fourteenth-century thought), but which were nevertheless potentially significant influences on Wyclif's ideas and their reception.

The second difficulty with 'nominalism' is that it has tended to marginalise figures who, like John Kenningham, have not been associated with any specific medieval 'school' or group. In Kenningham's case, the result has been a lack of recognition of the significance of one individual's position within the broader dialogue between Wyclif and anti-realist thinkers. The identification of Kenningham's ideas with a form of anti-realism provides a possible solution to this problem, whilst doing nothing to obscure the important continuities which exist between his own philosophy and that of the fourteenth-century nominalists.

Changes in terminology and definition should not be regarded as an end in themselves, and we must ask what hermeneutic insights are to be gained from the study of anti-realism and its representations in the writings of John Wyclif. As we have seen, constructions of truth, time and textuality in anti-realist discourses posed a threat to Wyclif's hermeneutic theory precisely because they exposed the subjective, dialogic nature of meaning production and reception. Kenningham's systematic assault on Wyclif's conception of intelligible being, divine knowledge, and real propositions left little room for a hermeneutic theory in which the sense of the biblical text could be apprehended *immediate* from its divine author. The text as Wyclif understood it, and from which his hermeneutic arguments drew their authority, became little more than a fiction at the hands of so determined an opponent of realism as Kenningham. Wyclif's responses to Kenningham, as we have seen, reveal a very acute sensitivity to the dangers posed by his opponent's nominalistic philosophical rigour.

The competing claims to authority which were made by Wyclif and his philosophical adversaries, though they would have little meaning in the absence of an established tradition of theoretical reflection on biblical interpretation, had important consequences beyond the realm of scriptural hermeneutics. In the *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* alone, they entered into broader debates relating to the nature of heretical, sinful or untruthful

discourse.² In each of these areas, Wyclif's thinking was very clearly informed by the principles of being and truth which had served to define his hermeneutic system. The textual and philosophical principles which underly his conception of authority (as described in Chapter 5)³ served to define his understanding of the nature of heretical texts and practices. Nominalism itself, on both hermeneutic and philosophical grounds, would presumably have represented an obvious source of heretical doctrine. Issues of the perceived relationship between heresy and nominalism, however, or of the meaning of realist and nominalist ethics, must be reserved a future chapter in the history of late scholasticism.

² See *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, vol. ii, pp. 1-99 (on the nature of lying); vol. i, pp. 159-167; 331-374; vol. 3, pp. 274-310 (on heresy).

³ See Ch. 5 (section 1).

APPENDIX: GLOSSARY OF LATIN TERMS¹

The references supplied in braces under each entry are to chapters, with section numbers in parentheses. No reference is given for terms in general use throughout the thesis.

accidens: accident. Anything which exists in a subject (as a property or attribute), but not independently of it. One of the nine Aristotelian accidental predicates (quantity, quality, relation, place, time, position, state, action, affection). See also *substantia*, *subiectum*. [Ch. 2 (1 and 3)]

aeternitas: eternity. The term usually applies to the extra-temporal, rather than to an infinite succession of temporal instants. [Ch. 3 (2.3)]

ampliatio (-*verbi*, -*dictionis*, -*termini*): extension (of a word, statement, term). In post-Aristotelian logic, the expansion of the supposition of a term beyond its conventional limits (as when a verb in the present tense is used to signify a future time). Broadly equivalent to Augustine's concept of *distentio animae* (q.v.). In Wyclif, *ampliatio* is used principally of time itself (hence, *ampliatio temporis*), which in its extended metaphysical sense is visible to God in its entirety (past, present and future). See also *restrictio*. Cf. *distentio animae*, below. [Ch. 1 (3); Ch. 3 (2.4)]

analogatum: analogate. One of the two entities sharing in different degrees the quality of the analogon. See *analogum*, below. [Ch. 2 (1)]

analogia verbi: analogy of the word ('verbal' analogy).

analogia entis: analogy of being. This form of analogy, which obtains between different entities (*entes*), was divided by Thomistic scholars into three fundamental types: 1. Analogy of proper proportionality (as between the divine essence and accidental properties ('goodness', 'mercy', 'kindness') in man). 2. Analogy of attribution (as between entities whose relations to the *analogum* (q.v.) are of different kinds ('healthy man', 'healthy urine')). 3. Analogy of inequality (as between entities which share a name but are not proportionally related (e.g. celestial and worldly bodies)). Wyclif regarded this as a form of *equivocatio* (q.v.). [Introduction; Ch. 2; Ch. 5 (1)]

analogum: analogon. The entity or quality to which analogates are compared (e.g. 'goodness', 'love', 'authority', 'author'). [Ch. 2 (1); Ch. 5 (3.1)]

autor: author.

- *inmediatus*: 'immediate' or direct author. This term applies primarily to God, the 'immediate' author in the *ordo ascendendi*, but can be applied to the inspired human author, the immediate author in the *ordo descendendi* (see entries under these terms, below). [Ch. 5 (1.2)]

¹The orthography in this section has been standardised, and will differ from that used in some of the editions cited in the text. Hence, *e* > *ae* (*aeternitas*); *cc* > *ct* (*distinctio*); *y* > *i* (*idea*).

- *proximus* (also: *conditor proximus*; *scriba proximus*): ‘proximate’ author/composer. This term is applied exclusively to the (inspired) human author. [Ch. 5 (1.2)]

categorematum: a ‘categorematic’ term in a proposition. Categorematic terms signify properties and things in the world. See *syncategorematum*. [3 (2.1)]

causa: cause. In Aristotelian philosophy, one of the four causes (Gk. αἰτίαι). These causes were described as *efficient*, *formal*, *material* and *final*.

- *efficiens*: efficient (or ‘motive’) cause. The cause of change (or lack of change) in a condition or state of being. [Ch. 3 (1)] In the Aristotelian commentary tradition, this was the author of the text (whether divine or human). The concept of the *duplex/triplex causa efficiens*, used to describe the respective rôles of human and divine authors, supplies an important analogy to Wyclif’s theory of the threefold authorship of Scripture. [Ch. 5 (1.2)]

- *formalis*: formal cause. In Aristotle, the form or structure of an entity. In the commentary tradition, this was the structure imposed on a literary composition by its author.

- *materialis*: material cause. In Aristotle, the substance from which something is composed (e.g. wood, in the case of a wooden table). In textual theory, the physical book (Wyclif’s *liber materialis* or *codex* (qq.v.)). See also *materia*, below. [Ch. 5 (1.1)]

- *finalis*: final cause. The end to which something happens or is brought about. The purpose or intended effect of a textual composition. [Ch. 3 (1)]

causatum: ‘thing caused’; effect. Wyclif frequently applies this term to the effect of an efficient cause (*causa efficiens*), though it is also found in other contexts.

codex: book (considered as a material entity). See *causa materialis*, above. [Ch. 5 (1.1)]

cognitio: cognition.

- *intuitiva*: ‘intuitive’ cognition. See *notitia intuitiva*, below. [Ch. 1 (2.2); Ch. 4(3)]

- *abstractiva*: ‘abstractive’ cognition. See *notitia abstractiva*, below. [Ch. 1 (2.2); Ch. 4(3)]

complexum: a complex expression. Any logical expression which comprises more than a single categorematic element.

conclusio: the conclusion of a syllogistic argument (See under *minor* and *maior*, below).

conditor: composer. See under *autor*, above. [Ch. 5 (1.2)]

contemplatio (adj. *contemplativus, a*): contemplation (contemplative).

contradictio (also: *repugnantium*): contradiction. The process by which the truth of one term (or proposition) entails the logical negation of the other in a proposition (e.g. 'a man is a dog'). [Ch. 3 (1); Ch. 5 (4.2)]

decenter: 'properly'. This term is found only in passages cited from Grosseteste. The sense is similar to that of *proprie* (q.v.).

determinatio: determination. An academic debate, usually held between a master and his student before an audience of scholars. [Ch. 4, *passim*]

distentio animae: the extension of time in the soul. Augustine uses the concept of extension to explain the individual's experience of the passage of time. Though time itself consists in singular, indivisible instants (which are not extensible), it is experienced *as though* it were extended. The root of this experience, for Augustine, is psychological, resting on anticipation and recollection. Cf. *ampliatio*, above. [Ch. 3 (2.2)]

distinctio: distinction.

- *formalis*: 'formal' distinction. A real distinction existing within a single entity. Ockham dismissed such distinctions as mental constructs. [Ch. 1 (2.2)]

- *essentialis*: 'essential' distinction. The distinction which is drawn between two different entities (by virtue of their being different essences). [Ch. 1 (2.2)]

duratio: duration. Non-successive, 'eternal' time. The term is also applied to the duration of the world in finite time. See *tempus* (2), below. [Ch. 3 (2.3)]

equivocatio (-*nominis*, -*entis*): equivocation (of a name or a being). An equivocal name is applied to entities which are not related in proportional terms. Equivocal being represents an impossibility. [Ch. 3 (1); Ch. 5 (4.2)]

ens: 1. a being; 2. essence (when opposed to *esse*).

- *primum*: 'first' being (God). See *esse commune*, below.

- *secundum se*: The being which an essence has by virtue of being itself; essential (as opposed to accidental) being. Cf. *ens secundum accidens*, below.

- *secundum accidens*: 'accidental' being. The being which something has by virtue of being an accidental property.

esse: 1. being in general; 2. existential, as opposed to essential being (*ens*).

esse commune (also: *ens commune*, *ens primum*): lit. 'common' being. The being in which creatures participate. [Ch. 2 (1)]

esse intelligibile (also: *ens intelligibile*): being as apprehended by the intellect, rather than through the senses. All existential beings have intelligible counterparts, though it is possible for intelligible beings to have no existential form.

[Ch. 2 (1 and 3); Ch. 4 (2.1)]

esse reale: 'real' being. This term, which occurs very rarely, is used of existential being. See *existentia*, below.

existentia: existence (sometimes used interchangeably with *ens*). The lowest form of being in Wyclif's metaphysical hierarchy. Being as experienced in the temporal world. [Ch. 2 (1)]

fictum (also: *figmentum*): in Ockham's philosophy, a natural (non-arbitrary) concept in the mind. For Ockham, universals were principally *ficta*. [Ch. 1 (2.2)]

figura: a figure. 1. A linguistic figure. When unqualified, the term usually refers to a figure of speech (*figura locutionis*). 2. A category. Synonymous in this sense with *predicamentum* (q.v.).

- *constructionis*: figure of syntax. Any one of a number of forms resulting from a syntactic substitution or translation. E.g. when the gender of an adjective agrees with the natural gender of the thing signified by a noun, but not with the grammatical gender of that noun (a form of *synesis*). [Ch. 5 (3.2)]

- *locutionis*: figure of speech. In Wyclif, this is usually a metaphor. [Ch. 5 (3.2)]

figuratum: 'thing figured'. The thing signified by a figure of speech. [Ch. 5 (3.2)]

forma: form. The form of an existential being. See *materia*, below. Cf. *causa formalis*.

genus: genus. The class to which a group of species of a common kind belong. E.g. fruit is the genus to which the species apple, banana, plum and pear (among others) belong.

grammaticus: grammarian. This term is used disparagingly throughout Wyclif's writings, often as a label for contemporary terminists.

idea: an idea in the divine intellect (unlike *ratio*, this term is not applied to ideas in the human mind).

illuminatio: illumination. The process by which knowledge is conveyed by God *directly* to an individual. An Augustinian term. Cf. *notitia fidei*, below.

impositio: imposition. The process by which a name is assigned (arbitrarily) to an entity in the world.

incomplexum: an 'incomplex' expression (one consisting of a single lexical item). [Ch. 3 (2.1)]

indivisibilis: indivisible. Used of points in space and time (*instans indivisibile, punctum indivisibile*).

immediate: ‘immediately’, directly. Used of any sense apprehended from the divine author without the intervention of discursive reason. [Ch. 5 (3.2)]

insolubilium: an ‘insoluble’ proposition. A proposition to which a truth value cannot be assigned (usually because this would entail a contradiction); a self-contradictory proposition. E.g. ‘I am a liar’. [Ch. 3 (1); Ch. 5 (4.2)]

instans: instant. An indivisible point of time.

instrumentum: instrument. In Aristotelian and Thomistic philosophy, anything which is used by an agent.

- *autenticum*: ‘authentic’ instrument. Applied to the inspired human author, whose writings convey divine intention. Identical with the ‘instrumental’ *causa efficiens* (q.v.) of the Aristotelian commentary tradition. [Ch. 5 (1.2)]

intellectus: the intellect.

- *agens*: the ‘agent’ (or ‘active’) intellect. This refers to the abstractive power of the intellect, necessary to the apprehension of universal natures. [Ch. 2 (1)]
- *passivus*: the ‘passive’ intellect (not used by Wyclif, but found in the philosophy of Robert Grosseteste).

intelligibilis: intelligible. Perceptible to the intellect, rather than to the senses. (See *esse intelligibile*, above).

intentio: 1. intention; 2. (of a term or expression) sense or meaning.

- *authoris*: intention of the author (human or divine). [Ch. 5 (1.2)]
- *mentis*: intention of the mind (‘mental’ intention). [Ch. 5 (1.2)]
- *verbi*: intention of the word (‘verbal’ intention). This is the basic sense of a word or proposition, divorced from cultural associations. The intention of the divine author is identical with the verbal intention of his text. [Ch. 5 (1.2)]
- *prima*: first intention. Terms of first intention supposit for entities in the world. In the medieval commentary tradition, the expression *intentio prima* also identifies the intention of God, the first author.
- *secunda*: second intention. Terms of second intention supposit for other propositional terms. See under *suppositio*, below.

liber materialis: physical book. See also *codex* and *causa materialis*, above. [Ch. 5 (1.2)]

littera: letter. In the medieval grammatical tradition, the letter was the minimal unit of analysis. [Ch. 1 (5)]

locutio: utterance.

- *intrinsic* (also: *verbum intrinsicum*): ‘internal’ utterance/word. Anything which is spoken or understood inwardly, as a word or text in the mind (*mens*) or the heart (*cor*).

- *vocalis* (also: *verbum vocalis*, *dictio vocalis*): ‘vocal’ utterance/word/statement. Anything which is spoken physically, rather than inwardly.

maior: ‘major’. The major premise of a syllogistic argument (the italicised clause in the example below):

All people are human
I am a person
Therefore, I am human.

materia: matter. The material from which an existential being is composed. In Aristotelian philosophy, this is opposed to its *form* (*forma*). Wyclif observes this opposition throughout his writings. See also *causa materialis*, above.

minor: ‘minor’. The minor premise of a syllogistic argument (the italicised clause in the example below):

All people are human
I am a person
Therefore, I am human.

modus dicendi: way of speaking. The two principal ways of speaking (‘moods’) were declarative and interrogative.

mutabilis: ‘mutable’. Used of any entity which is subject to change.

nominalis: nominalist. This term, which is used nowhere by Wyclif himself, describes any logician who supposes universals to be (1) concepts (such as Ockham and the fourteenth-century Oxford nominalists) or (2) words (such as the *vocales* of the twelfth century). See also *vocalis*. [Ch. 1 (2-5) *et passim*]

notitia: knowledge or perception.

- *abstractiva*: ‘abstractive’ cognition. For Ockham, the process by which the mind arrives at universal concepts. This form of knowledge relied on successive acts of intuitive cognition. See *notitia intuitiva* (below).

- *confusa*: ‘confused’ knowledge. Knowledge arrived at through the senses. [Ch. 2 (5)]

- *distincta*: 'distinct' knowledge. Knowledge arrived at through the *intellectus agens* (q.v.). Universals may be known distinctly. Human knowledge of God is also a form of *notitia distincta*. [Ch. 2 (5)]
- *elicita*: 'elicited' knowledge. Knowledge of God which is 'elicited' by the blessed. This form of knowledge, we are told in the *De Ente Primo in Communi*, depends on an analogical (or hermeneutic) conception of the world. [Ch. 2 (5)]
- *fidei*: knowledge by faith. The knowledge an individual has by virtue of his or her faith. Such knowledge, through which the Book of Life itself is known, depends on a process of divine illumination. [Ch. 2 (5)]
- *intuitiva*: 'intuitive' knowledge/cognition. In Ockham's epistemology, knowledge of singulars arrived at through the senses. Analogous to Wyclif's *notitia confusa* (q.v.). [Ch. 1 (2.1)]

ex opposito: 'by opposition'. Two things are distinguished *ex opposito* if they are really distinct (rather than distinct *secundum rationem* (q.v.)). [Ch. 5 (3.2)]

ordo ascendendi, descendendi: order of ascending, descending. Analogous to the Dionysian concepts of return (by which man comes to know God through symbols) and procession (by which God is made known to man). [Ch. 5 (1.2)]

pars subiectiva: subjective part. This term is applied to inferior categories in a system of classification (united by a common superior term). 'Dog', 'cat', 'horse', etc. are subjective parts of the class 'animal'. Wyclif remarks that the four scriptural senses, being generically distinct, have different *partes subiective*. [Ch. 2 (2); Ch. 5 (4.2)]

ex parte rei: this phrase denotes a real, rather than a conceptual, mode of being. (For the realist, universals are held to exist *ex parte rei*.) See also *praedicatio ex parte rei*, below. [Ch. 5 (5.1)]

participatio: participation (adv. *participative*, 'by participation'). The process by which entities in the temporal world 'share in' a property or essence which is perfected in the divine nature. [Ch. 2 (1); Ch. 5 (1.2)]

personaliter (also: *concretive*): (of modes of supposition) 'personally', 'concretely'. A term supposits personally when it stands for an individual entity in the world. (e.g. in 'Peter is good', 'Peter' supposits for Peter the man). [Ch. 5 (1.1)]

ad placitum (*significatio*-): used of an arbitrary system of signification, such as that of human language. Such a system is said to signify *ad placitum*. [Ch. 2 (1)]

posse (also: *potentia, esse possibile*): possible being; potency. Any form of being which is potential, but not actual. For Wyclif, this form of being was as real as actual being, since it was ultimately an idea in the mind of God.

praedicamens (also: *categoria*): predicate. Any one of the ten Aristotelian predicates ('categories'). See under *accidens* and *substantia*.

praedicamentalis (*ens-*): used of beings which are subject to the ten Aristotelian predicates.

praedicatio: predication. The process by which one term in a logical (or 'real') proposition is 'said of' another (e.g. in the proposition 'Peter is good', goodness is predicated of Peter.) See *propositio*, below.

- *per se*: Something is said to be predicated *per se* of another thing when the reference is generic or specific (rather than accidental). (e.g. 'Peter is a man')

- *per accidens*: 'accidental' predication. Something is said to be predicated *per accidens* of a subject when it is an accidental property of that thing. (e.g. 'Peter is good.')

- *ex parte rei* (also: - *realis*): 'real' predication. Any form of predication which occurs in reality, rather than in a linguistic proposition. Wyclif divides real predication into three principal kinds: *praedicatio formalis*, *praedicatio secundum essentiam*, *praedicatio secundum habitudinem* (qq.v.). See *propositio realis*.

- *formalis*: 'formal' predication. One thing is predicated formally of another if the two are formally identical (as a particular and its genus or species). [Ch. 3 (1)]

- *secundum essentiam*: 'essential' predication. One thing is predicated essentially of another if the two are not formally identical, but are identical by virtue of some other principle of being. [Ch. 3 (1)]

- *secundum habitudinem*: 'habitudinal' predication. [Ch. 3 (1)]

propositio: proposition. When used by Wyclif, the reference is almost invariably to *propositiones reales/in re* (see below), rather than to linguistic propositions.

- *realis* (also: -*in re*): a 'real' proposition. A proposition which is true by virtue of the reality of the subject and predicate (e.g. Peter and his humanity constitute a true proposition in which the universal species 'human' is predicated of the singular subject, 'Peter'). [Ch. 3 (1); Ch. 4 (2.2)]

proprie: terms are said to be applied *proprie* ('properly') either when they are used literally (i.e. non-metaphorically), or when they are predicated of a perfect or intelligible form ('love' as predicated of God).

punctus: a point in time or space, usually, though not invariably, indivisible.

- quidditas*: quiddity ('thisness'). That which makes a thing what it is (in Wyclif, this is its generic or specific nature). [Ch. 3 (1)]
- ratio*: an idea conceived by the human or the divine intellect. [Ch. 2 (1)]
- *primaeva*: lit. 'primitive idea'. The ideal form of any being in the mind of God.
 - *vitalis*: lit. 'living idea'. An idea in the mind of God. [Ch. 2 (1)]
- secundum rationem*: lit. 'by reason'. Used of a distinction or category which is consciously imposed by the mind, rather than being real or natural. [Ch. 5 (3.2)]
- restrictio*: 'restriction'. Applied to the suppositional properties of a categorematic term (see *categorematicum*). A term which supposits for a given range of *supposita* is said to be 'restricted' to those *supposita*. A temporal term which refers only to the present time, for example, is thereby 'restricted' to the present. [Ch. 3 (1 and 2.1)]
- sapientia*: wisdom. This term is found principally in citations from Grosseteste.
- prima* -: 'first' wisdom (i.e. God).
- scientia*: knowledge.
- scriba*: writer, scribe. In Wyclif, this term can apply either to an inspired author of Scripture (*scriba proximus, scriba legis Christi, scriba Christi*), or to an uninspired writer who properly has no *auctoritas*. In the latter sense, it is synonymous with *scriptor* (q.v.). See also *auctor*, above. [Ch. 5 (1.2)]
- scriptor*: writer. This term is applied exclusively to the uninspired human writer, usually a scribe or a copyist.
- sententia*: lit. 'sentence' (translated throughout as 'message', 'meaning'). The meaning of an author, a text or a proposition. [Ch. 5 (3.2)]
- sensibilis* (e.g. *signum sensibile, ens sensibile*): sensible. Perceptible to the senses. In Wyclif and elsewhere, this term is typically opposed to *intelligibilis* (q.v.), which is used of entities perceptible to the intellect.
- sensus*: the meaning or sense of a text, passage, or proposition.
- *litteralis*: 'literal' sense. 1. (also: - *historicus*) the literal record of historical events in Scripture. 2. the sense intended by the divine author, and apprehended directly from him. In Wyclif, any of the three spiritual senses (see below) could thus be regarded as literal, as well as the historical sense itself. [Ch. 4 (2.3); Ch. 5 (3.2)]
 - *allegoricus*: 'allegorical' sense. According to the traditional mnemonic, the allegorical sense teaches 'what you should believe' ('quid credas allegoria [docet]'). Wyclif cites the example of Abraham's two sons, Ismael and Isaac,

who may be taken to signify allegorically the Old and the New Testaments, respectively. This is a fitting example, since allegory (according to Augustinian convention) provided the usual means of reconciling events recorded in the Old and the New Testaments (the former usually being regarded as allegorical prefigurations of the latter). [Ch. 5 (3.2)]

- *moralis* (also: - *tropologicus*): 'moral' or 'tropological' sense. The moral sense teaches 'what you should do' ('*moralis quid agas [docet]*'). According to Wyclif, it is the sense which gives us knowledge of meritorious acts. [Ch. 5 (3.2)]

- *anagogicus*: 'anagogical' sense. The anagogic, or eschatological sense, Wyclif suggests, signifies 'the truth which is to be expected in the triumphant Church'. It is the sense which looks to the future ('*quo tendas anaogia [docet]*'), and towards the kingdom of heaven. [Ch. 5 (3.2)]

- *parabolicus* (also: - *figuratus*): 'parabolic' sense. In Thomistic exegetical theory, any meaning which is conveyed *through words* metaphorically. Aquinas considered this to be part of the literal sense. [Ch. 4 (5); Ch. 5 (3.2)]

- *primus*: 'primary' sense. The historical sense of a scriptural passage. See *sensus litteralis* (1), above. [Ch. 5 (3.2)]

- *secundus*: 'second' sense. Any meaning conveyed through one of the three mystical senses (*sensus moralis, sensus anagogicus, sensus parabolicus* (qq.v.)). [Ch. 5 (3.2)]

signatum: lit. 'signified', 'significate'. Anything signified by a sign (*signum*). [Ch. 2 (1); Ch. 4 (2.2)]

significatio: signification. The process by which a sign (linguistic or real) refers to an entity in the world (or in a proposition). See *suppositio*, below.

signum: a sign. In Wyclif, the term applies primarily to linguistic signs (e.g. 'human'), sacramental symbols (e.g. the bread and the wine of the Eucharist), and natural signs in their various forms. [Ch. 1(5); Ch. 4 (2.2)]

simpliciter: (of modes of supposition) 'simply'. A term supposits *simply* when it stands for its general significate. For Wyclif (like Burley), this was a real universal nature; for Ockham, it was a universal concept. [Ch. 3 (1); Ch. 5 (1.1)]

singulare: singular. Any singular (existential) entity. See *existentia*, above.

species: species, kind. The class to which entities of a particular kind belong (e.g. 'apple', 'banana', 'plum', 'pear' are all species of fruit).

subiectum: subject. The term (or entity) of which something is predicated. (e.g. 'Peter' in 'Peter is a man' or 'Peter runs')

- *ad existentiam*: In Ockham's logic, a real ('existential') subject. [Ch. 3 (1)]

- *ad praedicationem*: A propositional subject, of which another term is predicated. [Ch. 3 (1)]

substantia: substance. What something is. Substance is the first of the ten Aristotelian predicates or categories. It is the only category which may act as the ultimate subject (see *subiectum*, above) of a proposition, and which is separable (i.e. which can exist independently of another subject). [Ch. 2 (1 and 3)]

suppositio: supposition. The process by which a term in a proposition 'stands for' another entity or term. See also *simpliciter*.

- *materialis* (also: - *personalis*, - *concreta*): material supposition. A term supposits *materially* when it stands for another term in a proposition. (E.g. in 'goodness is a term', *goodness* stands for the term 'goodness', rather than for the quality or essence to which the term refers.) [Ch. 3 (1)]

suppositum: supposit. The thing for which a term in a proposition suppoits (see *suppositio*, *restrictio*, above). [Ch. 3 (1)]

syllabicare: lit. 'to syllabicate'. Syllables were regarded by the *grammatici* (from Donatus onwards) as grammatical units. Letters (*littera*) were the minimal units, which in turn constituted syllables. In the process of reading, therefore, the student first learned the alphabet, and then how to split words into syllables. This latter process was described as 'syllabication'. See also *littera*. [Ch. 1 (5); Ch. 5 (2)]

syncategorematum: a 'syncategorematic' term in a proposition. These are non-referential terms in a proposition (i.e. terms which do not signify a substance or quality for which there is an Aristotelian category). They include conjunctions, prepositions, and determiners.

tempus: 1. time (in general) [Ch. 3 (2.1-2.4); Ch. 4 (3); Ch. 5 (4.1)]; 2. 'successive' time (as opposed to *duratio*) [Ch. 3 (2.3)]; 3. grammatical tense. [Ch. 5 (4.1)]

terminare: 'to terminate'. This verb is applied by Wyclif in the sense 'to provide an end for'. To terminate the act of perception or knowing is to supply it with a known. [Ch. 4 (2.1)]

terminus: in scholastic usage, a term in a proposition (rarely found in Wyclif).

universale (also: *universalium*): universal. 1. a universal nature; 2. a universal term or concept (i.e. one predicated of all particulars of a given kind).

- *causatione*: universal by causality. Any cause which is common to a number of effects (as *genera* and *species* are common to groups of created singulars). See *causa (finalis)*, above. [Ch. 3 (1)]

- *communicatione*: universal by community. The common nature shared by a group of supposita (*supposita*). [Ch. 3 (1)]

- *repraesentatione*: universal by representation. A conceptual or linguistic universal. For Wyclif, this was regarded merely as a sign of the first two kinds of universal, and was strictly only *equivocally* a universal. [Ch. 3 (1)]

univocus (*univociter*, etc.): 'univocal'. A term is predicated univocally if it applies to a single concept (which may be shared by different predicates), or a single thing. (E.g. the term 'human' as applied to human beings.) In Ockham's logic, terms such as 'good' may be predicated univocally of God and man. [Ch. 2 (1)]

verbum: 1. a word; 2. the meaning of a word (see under *vox*, below); 3. a verb.

- *substantivum*: 'substantive' word. A noun (or a verb used substantively, such as the infinitives *esse*, *fore*, and *fuisse*).

virtus sermonis (also: *vis sermonis*, *vis vocis*): lit. 'force of language' (-*vocis*: 'force of the word'). This expression has a long history, and is usually taken to refer to the *literal* meaning of a proposition. In Wyclif, it encompasses all meanings which are arrived at *immediate* (q.v.), without the aid of discursive reasoning. As such, within the context of scriptural interpretation, it is often applied to metaphorical, as well as to literal expressions. [Ch. 3 (1); Ch. 4 (2.3, 3); Ch. 5 (3.2)]

vocalis: 'vocalist'. The name applied to logicians of the twelfth century who regarded universal categories (genera and species) as words (*voces*). [Ch. 1 (3)]

vox: a word. Wyclif generally observes the ancient distinction between *vox* (a word in its phonic or graphic form) and *verbum* (the meaning of the *vox*).

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