

The Theory of Seminal Reasons in James of Viterbo*

Introduction

An examination of James of Viterbo's theory of seminal reasons would first indicate a review not only of the usual biographical data, but also of the intellectual climate of the time, one which would prompt such a thorough study of the theory of seminal reasons.

The early history of the Stoic doctrine of the *logoi spermatikoi* and its subsequent adaptation by Augustine for exegetical purposes is well known. The seminal reasons or *rationes seminales* of Augustine are possessed of both active and passive elements, and are receptacles of the divine power so that the primacy of divine causality may be preserved, among other things.

Although the Augustinian tradition remained dominant in western philosophy for almost a millenium, it is not unusual that interpretations of Augustine's theory in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries be voiced in Aristotelian terminology, as, for example, was the case in Bonaventure's interpretation of seminal reasons.

Some twenty-five years after Bonaventure's writing on seminal reasons¹), two events occurred which were to change the complexion of scholasticism. These, of course, were the condemnations of 1277 by Tempier and Kilwardby. Whatever may have been the ancillary and perhaps less laudable motives, the main thrust of the condemnations showed a fear of doctrinal error, which, the promoters of the condemnations felt, could well occur if one left the traditional paths of Augustinian orthodoxy in pursuit of the «new» Aristotelian thought, especially as interpreted by Averroes and/or the Averroists. However, the wide scope of the condemnations also served to cast the shadow of suspicion over a number innocent of heterodoxy and as a result,

* Previously published in *Darshana International* (India), January 1980.

¹) Bonaventure, *Commentaria in quatuor libros sententiarum magistri Petri Lombardi*, Tomus secundus: *In secundum librum sententiarum*, studio et cura PP. Collegii a S. Bonaventura (Florentia: Ad claras aquas [Quaracchi], ex typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1885), d. 7 and d. 18.

scholasticism from the time of the condemnations onwards, as Gilson remarks²), acted on the defensive.

However, as a by-product of the condemnations there seems to have been a resurgence of writing on traditional Augustinian themes, among them that of seminal reasons, and it is one of such writings, that of James of Viterbo, that we shall now examine.

James of Viterbo

Born at Viterbo around 1255³), James entered the Order of Hermits of St Augustine some fifteen years later. Having been sent to Paris for studies in 1275, he was one of the first disciples of Giles of Rome. He obtained the baccalaureate in theology in 1288, and became master of theology in 1293, succeeding Giles of Rome as *magister studiorum* that same year. He continued in this office until 1300, at which time he was appointed *lector principalis* at the *studium generale* of the order of Naples, where he remained until his death in 1308.

Not given to polemics, James taught within the Augustinian tradition. Among his writings, the better known are his *Quodlibeta*, the *Quaestiones de praedicamentis in divinis*, and the *De regimine christiano*.

James' doctrine of seminal reasons, best known for its novel and controversial nature, part of which springs from the coalescence of the Augustinian tradition with the writings of Aristotle, Averroes, and Simplicius is found in question five of his second quodlibet⁴), given at Paris in 1294. His theory purports to be the *via media* between the extremes of classical Anaxagorean position of *latitatio formarum* and the Avicennian position of creation of natural forms by the *dator formarum*.

²) Etienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, (New York: Random House, 1955), p. 408.

³) Biographical data on James of Viterbo may be found in Ypma's introduction to his edition of James' first quodlibet. See Eelcko Ypma (ed.), Jacobi de Viterbio, O.E.S.A., *Disputatio Prima de Quolibet* (Würzburg: Augustinus-Verlag, 1968), pp. v-xxvii, for general introduction and background and pp. v-vi for biographical data. Other biographical data may be found in P. Glorieux, *Répertoire des maîtres en théologie de Paris au XIII^e siècle*. Vol. XVIII of *Etudes de philosophie médiévale*; edited by E. Gilson (Paris: J. Vrin, 1934), pp. 309-312.

⁴) Jacobus de Viterbio, *Quodlibet* II, q. 5 (*Disputatio secunda de quolibet*, ed. Eelcko Ypma [Würzburg: Augustinus-Verlag, 1969], pp. 59-96). (Hereafter cited as *JQL* II.) Material on the relation of seminal reasons to the rational soul may be found in question ten of his third quodlibet.

Procedure

In this paper we shall follow with some modifications the outline of James' exposition in his quodlibetal question and conclude with the critiques of Bernard of Auvergne and of an anonymous master of arts at Paris.

The actual argumentation of this theory, preceded by an etymological examination of the phrase «ratio seminalis», comprises the following. The first and major part of his argument is a discussion of the necessity and nature of the inchoation of form and its identification with seminal reason. This includes a discussion on the potency of matter and some ten *dubitationes* which James solves himself. Second the necessity of an active principle in generation and its identification with the seminal reason is discussed. The third section of his question treats of the agreement and disagreement of his theory with current opinions, and lastly, a summary of his theory as well as a conclusive and affirmative answer to the question, «Whether there are seminal reasons in matter».

For our purposes in this paper, we shall dwell mainly on the portions of James' presentation which deal for the most part with the nature of the seminal reason, and to the examination of several *dubitationes*.

James' argument begins with an appeal to authority centered on Augustine, particularly in the view that the seminal reason must be both active and causative⁵). This contention is partially borne out in an etymological examination of the phrase «ratio seminalis».

The word *ratio* or *logos* has numerous meanings, but the most appropriate for the purpose are its equivalence with a *via* or a cause or principle of action, such as that by which the agent acts. In this latter sense it is used in the same way as the word «form», as, for example, when one says that the form is the *ratio* of acting, just as heat is the *ratio* of heating, and this is the same sense in which *ratio* is used in the phrase «ratio seminalis». Further, the inchoation of a thing can be called the way to that thing, as motion is called the way to the perfected form.

James next considers the significance of the term «seminalis». This word is derived from *semen* or *seminarium*. Since the former term refers to organic reproduction, there must be present in the seed some active

⁵) *JQL* II (p. 59): «Rationes seminales esse in rebus corporalibus ab omnibus doctoribus catholicis est concessum, cum beatus Augustinus in pluribus locis has ponat expresse». Also cited in *JQL* II, (pp. 62-64): Augustine: *De Trinitate* III, 9, 8.

power, which power may also be called seed. A *seminarium* is also the beginning of something, as is the case with seminaries of sciences and virtues⁶). From the foregoing, James concludes that «ratio seminalis» denotes both an active causal principle and some beginning or inchoation.

The Inchoation of Form

This brings us to the major part of James' theory of seminal reasons, the necessity of the inchoation of form, variously referred to as *inchoatio formarum*, *inchoativum*, or *exordium*. James' treatment here covers two areas: the potency of matter and the inchoation of form itself. His treatment of the potency of matter in turn deals with three topics: (1) the reasons why matter is not equivalent to the potency of matter, (2) the factors constituting the potency of matter, and (3) the relation between the potency of matter and the inchoation of form.

James begins by citing Averroes⁷) as holding that potency seems to differ from the potency of matter for two reasons. First, the essence of matter is not corrupted by the coming of the form, as is the potency of matter. Second, potency denotes a relation toward something, while matter, being something absolute, does not. Unlike potency, it may be considered substance, since it is a principle and a part of a composite substance. James admits, however, that a difficulty occurs here, for some points in Averroes' *De substantia orbis* seem to contradict the foregoing, especially where he says that the substance of matter is *posse*⁸). James interprets this to mean that although matter is never freed from all potency, potency is not substance of matter *secundum se*. Rather, it is either the relation of matter toward a particular form or matter considered together with that relation. Further, it is the substantial difference of matter just as act is the substantial difference of form.

⁶) *JQL* II (pp. 63-64).

⁷) Averroes, *Physics* I, text. comm. 63 (*Aristotelis de Physico auditu Libri octo cum Averroes Cordubensis in eosdem commentariis...*, Vol IV of *Aristotelis opera cum Averrois commentariis* [9 vols.; Venetiis: apud Iunctas, 1562-1574; reprinted Frankfurt am Main: Minerva G.m.b.H., 1962], ff. 37vb-38rb), as cited in *JQL* II, q. 5 (p. 66).

⁸) Averroes, *De substantia orbis*, ch. 1 (*Sermo de substantia orbis, Destructio destructionum philosophiae Algazelis, De animae beatitudine, seu epistola de intellectu*, Vol IX of *Aristotelis opera cum Averrois commentariis* [9 vols.; Venetiis: apud Iunctas, 1562-1574; reprinted Frankfurt am Main: Minerva G.m.b.H., 1962], fol. 3vb; hereafter cited as *DSO*, as cited in *JQL* II, q. 5 (p. 66)).

Besides denoting the relation or *respectus* of matter to form, the potency of matter may also denote a privation, one which is accompanied by an aptitude for the lacking form.

In summary, the potency of matter denotes matter, lack of form, suitability for that form by means of the proper accidents, a substantial form having an immediate ordering to the one lacking, and a relation to the form as educible by the agent. This potency is the natural appetite of matter by which it desires form. However, we shall see that these factors alone do not constitute potency of matter nor are they sufficient for the reception of a material form. In addition, an inchoation of form is necessary, which is the form in potency.

This is one of James' most crucial and controversial points, the seemingly contradictory idea that a form, which is by nature act, can be potential. James holds that it is not the form existing per se which is potential or actual but the form in conjunction with matter and as forming a potential or actual composite.

James here cites Simplicius on the second kind of quality, that of inborn capacity. Simplicius holds that generation occurs through the potency in a subject, and that matter in receiving the species or form through potency comes to perfection in itself⁹). This sort of aptitude or potency includes a lack and privation of the actual form, and in this comment about the second kind of species Averroes is also said to concur¹⁰).

The inchoation, then, is the whole form *secundum rem*, but according to potential being, and this inchoation or form in potency is called the potency of matter, just as the actual form is called the act of matter.

As we have seen before, it is necessary to hold that the form pre-exists before change but *not* because of (1) pre-existing matter, nor (2) because of privation of said form, nor (3) because of relation or *respectus*, nor (4) certain accidental predispositions, nor (5) any other form having an immediate ordering to the lacking form. It remains to say that the form pre-exists *secundum se* but according to a potential mode of

⁹) Simplicius, *Praedicamenta*, tractatus secundus (*Expositio Simplicii in decem Praedicamenta Aristotelis* [Venetiis: Octaviani Scoti Modoetiensis et Sociorum, 1516], fol. 39b): «In toto autem mundo si qua producat generatio; non aliter quam per potentiam in substantiam producit, et perficitur vel materia suscipiendo species per potentiam in ipsam provenit». (The 1550 edition is cited in *JQL* II, q. 5 [p. 71]).

¹⁰) Averroes, *Meta.* V, text. comm. 19 (ed. 1562, VIII, fol. 127rb), as cited in *Ibid.*

being. If this were not so, the change from potency to act would result in numerical increase, which, according to Averroes, is not the end result of perfection¹¹).

In the process of generation, the form is reduced from potency to act by the agent, and it is the whole composite rather than the form per se that comes into being, so that nothing new is added. It must be noted here that what the agent reduced from potency to act is not relation or lack of form nor matter itself but only form.

We will continue this topic with a discussion of two of James' ten *dubitationes*. His fourth problem raised is that if potency implies that potential form, which, as potential, denotes aptitude or preparation, and which belongs to the second kind of quality, that of inborn capacity, it follows that the substantial form is in the predicament of quality as well. James' solution is that the substantial form taken as that which it denotes belongs to the predicament of quality. The substantial form considered as an aptitude and as potential belongs to the second kind of quality, but considered as actual, belongs more to the first, that of firmly established habit or disposition¹²).

James' sixth problem states that if the potency of matter is form itself as potential, then it would follow that matter is not in potency per se through something added to it. This is not proper, since matter by nature is imperfect and potential.

James agrees that matter is by nature lacking form, but this lack (*informitas*) is twofold: (a) it lacks all form and (b) it lacks a specific form, but one for which it is suited, because it possesses suitable pre-dispositions. This is like Simplicius' *potentia naturalis*, and that which is added to the matter is not only the requisite relations but also the form in potency¹³).

The Active Principle

Having answered several anticipated objections to his position on the inchoation of form and its relation of the seminal reason and the potency of matter, James now examines the second aspect of his theory, the necessity and nature of the active principle in generation. He claims

¹¹ Averroes, *Meta.* VIII, text. comm. 15 (ed. 1562, VIII, fol. 224 ra), as cited in *JQL* II, q. 5 (p. 76).

¹² Simplicius, *Praedicamenta* (ed. 1516, fol. 38va), as cited in *JQL* II, q. 5 (p. 80).

¹³ *Ibid.* (fols. 38vb-39ra, 39rb-39ya).

that this principle should be designated as active in two ways: first, by the inclination of the potency of matter to act, and secondly, by its mode of change. This active principle should be posited in addition to the inchoation of form. Although the latter inclines matter toward actualization, that inclination alone is insufficient. Rather, some extrinsic agent is necessary, one which acts in virtue of the power bestowed on it by the creator. Thus, in every instance of natural generation a threefold active principle occurs: (1) the inchoation of form as inclining, (2) the extrinsic agent as changing, and (3) the divine agent as operating principally in both. Further, since the inchoation of form cooperates with the extrinsic agent by inclining it, natural productions are not said to be violent.

The second point under consideration is how this active principle may be called a seminal reason. As we have seen before, the expression «seminal reason» implies activity. Since the active principle is as much that which acts as that which is the reason of acting, then, when this active principle is called a seminal reason, the former is the reason of acting, since it is a power or active potency. Further, just as the proximate potency in matter is properly called the seminal reason, so also the active power existing in the proximate agent is called the seminal reason.

James concludes his presentation on the existence, nature, and manner of existence of seminal reasons with the following summary. The seminal reason is in the matter of the thing coming to be, and is the whole form in potency, and is also an active principle through its mode of inclination. It is further necessary to posit some extrinsic active changing principle, and the power of such an agent, one which is also proximate, is similarly called a seminal reason. Since this latter agent is material, the seminal reason so taken exists in matter which is other than the thing coming to be. James cautions that whatever conclusions have been reached as a result of his endeavors, are not to be considered as boldly asserted, but only as probabilities, due to the difficult nature of the material, which the very diversity of opinions indicates.

Since the University of Paris boasted of many scholars outside the Augustinian tradition, it is not surprising to find a number who would reject James' theory on seminal reasons, especially with respect to this inchoation of form theory. We shall next examine two such attacks.

Among those finding fault with James' theory we find three Dominicans from the school of theology at the University of Paris, Harvey Nédellec, Bernard of Auvergne, and John of Naples, and one anonymous writer connected with the faculty of arts.

Bernard of Auvergne

Bernard's attack on James' theory of seminal reasons appears in the former's *Impugnationes contra Jacobum de Viterbio*,¹⁴) written sometime before 1307¹⁵). His treatment is divided into two main sections: first, a discussion on matter, potency, and the inchoation of form, and secondly a critique of James' ten *dubitationes*. Of the various points attacked, we shall mention the following: James' views on matter and the potency of matter, and their relation to the inchoation of form.

The first point which Bernard attacks, and the one on which he bases much of his opposition to James' total position, is his theory of matter and the potency of matter.

James, says Bernard, is correct if he understands seminal reasons to be active and passive causes in active and passive natural things, but in fact James does not hold such a view. Rather, Bernard states, James says that the seminal reason or inchoation of form is identical with matter. This position, mistakenly assumed to be James', he strongly opposes, for the seminal reason, unlike matter, always refers to some active, efficient cause. But as we have seen, James does not equate the inchoation or seminal reason with matter, but rather with the potency of matter. Bernard, however, as we shall see, *does* make this equation; hence his somewhat startling statement.

Bernard's reasons for equating the potency of matter with matter are the following. First, in any substantial or accidental change, when one thing is produced from two, one of them must be in potency to the other. If matter were not its own potency, then two things would be the subject of generation. We know that matter is such a subject and also that whatever is in potency to the form is also the subject of generation. These must be identical, otherwise one would have to be actual with respect to the other. Potency cannot be act, its contrary, nor can matter be act, for there would have to be something inferior to prime matter in

¹⁴) Bernard of Auvergne, *Impugnationes contra Jacobum de Viterbio*, Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, codex Burghesianus 298, fols. 157r-201v; hereafter cited as *VB*. The section on seminal reasons is found in fols. 188rb-190rb.

¹⁵) No dates are available for these writings, but from other evidence we may assume that they appeared around the turn of the century. From Stegmüller (*Repertorium commentariorum in Sententias Petri Lombardi*, Vol. I [Herbipoli (Würzburg): apud Ferdinandum Schoningh Bibliopolam, 1947], pp. 51-52), we learn of his writings and that Bernard's *floruit* was around 1300. Glorieux in his *Repertoire*, Vol. I, p. 172, informs us that nothing more was heard of Bernard after 1307.

¹⁶) See Averroes, *DSO*, ch. 1. (ed. 1562, IX, fol. 3vb) as cited in *JQL* II, q. 5 (p. 66).

terms of potency. Secondly, potency must be the same as matter, for whatever is in potency to receive the form is the same thing into which the form recedes when it ceases to be, because this potency is the subject of generation and corruption, and Aristotle says that when form is corrupted, it goes back into matter.

Bernard's view is that potency may be taken in the following three ways. First, it may be that which constitutes matter as a substance; second, it may be the lack of form or a relation to form; lastly, it may be an aptitude for a determined form.

At this point Bernard agrees with James when the latter says that the essence of matter is not corrupted by the coming of the form, as is potency. Thus potency in the second sense (that of lack of form) is corrupted but not potency in the first sense (that which constitutes matter as a substance). Similarly, potency taken in the third sense (aptitude or disposition for a certain form) is also corrupted with the coming of the form. Further, while potency is just as absolute as matter, matter denotes something more absolute than does potency, for the latter denotes relationship and cannot be understood without reference to form.

Matter and potency taken in the first sense do not exist in some other thing, but potency taken in the second and third senses does exist in another in the same way that privation or aptitude or disposition do. As we have just seen, the word «matter» denotes something more absolute than potency, but this does not mean that there is a real and absolute difference between matter and potency. The potency of matter is numerically the same as the substance of matter, but a wider meaning is given to potency, namely, relation to act. This relation, however, is not the essence of potency.

When James cites Averroes as saying that matter is substantially the same as potency, he understands him correctly, but when he says that potency is not the same as matter, he improperly takes potency for the lack of form toward which it tends. When James discusses Averroes' dictum that matter is substantiated by *posse* and that potency is the essential difference of matter, he misunderstands the express intentions of Averroes, who means that potency is not just any difference of matter but the substantial difference, and who expresses this by saying that «*materia substantiatur per posse*».

Another point with which Bernard agrees, although with qualifications, is that an inchoation in matter is required for matter's dis-

position to receive a form. This inchoation, however, is matter itself in potency to the composite instead of an inchoation of form, as James of Viterbo would have it.

Bernard next criticizes James' position that potency and act indicate modal rather than real differences. He claims that Aristotle's divisions into potency and act or into the ten predicaments represent differences *secundum rem*. As applied to the composite, one may properly speak of its potential and actual being, but in the case of the composite in potency, one must emphatically say that it may denote two things *secundum rationem*, but only one *secundum rem*. Further, James errs in saying that form in potency is numerically distinct from matter, as is the form in act, for only that which is actual can be numbered¹⁷). There is a real, not merely a modal distinction between actual and potential, so the potential form must be something really different from actual form, and this something is matter, which does not become form.

Bernard concludes his critique of James by saying that seminal reasons are not all *exordia* of forms, but only those things through which natural things are produced, such as the seed of fruits. The powers by which particular agents produce natural things are properly called seminal reasons. Those who hold that activity is due to a special mode of inclination are wrong, for all matter possesses inclination to some form, not through something added, nor through the natural agent, but simply by the power which God has given matter.

Having seen highlights of Bernard's critique based on the identification of the form in potency with matter itself, we now turn to our critic from the faculty of art at Paris.

Anonymous Master of Arts from Paris

For our next rebuttal to James' theory we have chosen the work of an anonymous writer connected with the faculty of arts at Paris. The work¹⁸) is of interest for several reasons, not the least of which is that

¹⁷) Bernard, *VB* 298, fols. 189rb, 189vab: «Unde quod dicit, quod forma habet duplex esse, . . . non videtur verum, quia Philosophus dividit ens in actu et potentia, sicut in decem praedicamenta . . . Sed omnia alia dicunt diversas res et non solum diversos modos essendi . . . «Sed compositum in actu dicit duas res, scilicet materiam et formam, compositum in potentia non dicit duas res nisi in potentia tantum, et unam secundum rem . . . «Nihil enim numeratur nisi secundum quod est in actu».

¹⁸) Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, codex I. iii. 6 (Conventi soppressi), fols. 89ra-108va. (Hereafter cited as *FBN*). For a detailed discussion on this work, see Charles J. Ermatinger, «Notes on Some Early Fourteenth Century Scholastic Philosophers», *Manuscripta* III (1959), 155-164.

one from the discipline of arts rather than of theology should concern himself with James' theory. The work treats of twelve questions and is intended as a commentary on Averroes' *De substantia orbis*. Included in the questions is a refutation of certain views of John of Jandun and of James of Viterbo, and a discussion of divine infinity.

From internal evidence we know that the writer was either a socius or a student of Jandun, that he had studied medicine, and that his treatise was written some time before 1317¹⁹), since that is the date of Jandun's reply to the writer's criticism²⁰).

The refutation of James' views is made under the heading of the question of whether something can come from nothing. Anaxagoras' opinion is mentioned as one which treats of natural generation as non-creative, and James' position is introduced as being similar in this respect to that of Anaxagoras.

Our writer refutes seven points of James' theory in detail, particularly those based on alleged misinterpretations of Averroes. Of these seven, we shall deal with three.

The first concerns James' position that every material form has two modes of existence: actual, belonging to the first species of quality, and potential, belonging to the second. The form, under either mode of being, differs numerically from matter. Further, matter of its own nature can receive from a natural agent only through its potency of matter or the form in potency (the *potentia naturalis* of Simplicius).

As does Bernard, the master attacks the theory that form has two modes of being. Such modes, he says, must be either substantial or accidental. They cannot be substances, for they would either be (a) the same form of which they are modes or (b) another substance. (A) will not do, for something cannot be its own mode. Further, numerically identical things are substantially the same among themselves and would be such in the form of which they are the modes. The modes cannot be (b) another substance, or accidents, for the same line of reasoning would apply and so would go on to infinity. One would simply end with an infinite number of substantial or accidental forms.

¹⁹) For a discussion of this anonymous author's relations to John of Jandun, both the man and his writings, see Charles J. Ermatinger, «John of Jandun in his Relations with Arts Masters and Theologians, *«Actes de quatrième congrès international de philosophie médiévale: Arts libéraux et philosophie au moyen âge* (Montréal: Institute d'Etudes Médiévales, 1969), 1175-1184

²⁰) Rheims, Bibliothèque de la Ville, codex 493, fols. 151ra-166va.

If one identifies these modes or any form under them with the first and second species of quality, it would seem that all generable and corruptible things, and indeed, all change, would be in the genus of quality.

If one holds instead that the change takes place within the category of substance, this reasoning is inconsistent with James' position, since the latter states that the newly acquired something is not a substance *secundum se*, but only a new mode of being, and that this change occurs within the predicament of quality. This, however, is opposed to Aristotle's dictum that change must occur within the third degree of quality.

The master here seems to have neglected the context of James' claim here, for James goes on to say that potencies which are perfected through habit can also be said to be perfected through things in the third kind of quality, and that the same thing according to different modes of being can belong to different species of quality.

Continuing his discussion of the modal differences of potency and act, the master cites James as holding that the opposites of potency and act permeate every being and species of being. For example, in the form of donkey there will be potency and act, so that an actual donkey will not differ specifically from a potential donkey. This latter is more than mere matter, and that which is added to matter is the potential form of donkey.

The Master of Arts agrees that any being possesses potentiality and actuality, such as potential and actual man. However, while the latter do not differ, properly speaking, they are still not the same in species, for potential man is simply matter, while actual man is the composite of matter and form. Potential man is not the same species as the composite or anything else, for matter is not a species.

Another alleged case of misinterpretation of Averroes' comment on an opinion of Aristotle is mentioned, namely, that in the process of change the agent's reduction from potency to act is similar both to creation and to *latitatio formarum*. It is like creation in that matter goes from potency to act, but like *latitatio* in only one sense: that which was formerly potential becomes actual.

Aristotle's true opinion is halfway between those of the creationists and of the proponents of *latitatio formarum*, the master states. What Aristotle presupposes to have pre-existed of the whole composite is not matter plus form in potency, as James contends, but is only matter, from

whose potency the whole composite is educed. The master claims that James' position, despite the latter's denials, is really that of Anaxagoras, but one yielding even more difficulties²¹).

This anonymous writer, in treating of some points from James' theory on seminal reasons, has shown himself to be quite knowledgeable of both James' work and of the sources from which the latter draws his theory. Further, as far as one can ascertain, his opposition does not stem from rivalry between religious orders in support of official doctrines held by each.

In conclusion we would like to draw a comparison between James' theory of seminal reasons and the decline of scholasticism. His is perhaps the last flowering of an age-old doctrine before its demise. That no later doctrine on seminal reasons is found, but only reactions against it, is significant. Although living some time before the end of scholasticism and the birth of renaissance philosophy, James nevertheless reflects the beginnings of the twilight of scholasticism. One wonders whether James, if gifted with clairvoyance, would have gone ahead with the development of his theory, knowing that the doctrine of seminal reasons would soon fall into disuse, or whether instead, to paraphrase Churchill's words, he would have declined to preside over the dissolution of an integral concern of scholasticism, and, indeed, of scholasticism itself.

MARY PHELPS

²¹) *FBN* I. iii. 6, fol. 98ra: «Sed si opinio quam ponit iste esset vera, tunc non esset aliud nisi ponere latitationem, immo maiora sequerentur inconvenientia quam ad positionem Anaxagorae».