Olivi’s discussion of the cogitative power (cogitativa) is remarkably short. He briefly takes up and refutes a view that the cogitative power accounts for the interconnectedness of all the functions of the internal senses (that is, function (10) in the list presented at the end of chapter nine). The central idea in this view is, as we have already seen, that various psychological processes are often interconnected: for instance, the perceptual qualities and the harmfulness of an object are combined in an estimative perception. One of the possible ways of explaining how these processes are interconnected is to claim that the soul contains one power which is capable of combining all the information from other powers of the soul. Olivi describes the position that he is about to refute in the following way:

Does the cogitative power which combines and compares all the acts and objects of the aforementioned [powers differ from them]? It is the opinion of some of those mentioned earlier that it differs from the aforementioned powers. They say that to bring everything together belongs to a power which is superior to other powers and common to all of them. Some call it logical (logistica), that is, rational, because it participates in the order of reason more than the other powers. And they say that it exists in the middle part of the brain, as a mediator, conferrer, and collator of everything. Some of them say that estimation suffices for this operation in beasts, whereas in human beings reason is sufficient with the other powers which it moves and governs completely.¹

Olivi does not identify the sources of these two pluralistic positions, and therefore it is difficult to know with certainty against whom he is arguing. Bernardus Jansen, the editor of the second book of Olivi’s Summa,

¹ “Quantum etiam ad septimum, an scilicet cognitativa quae omnium praedictarum actus et obiecta componit et confert. Est quorundam praedictorum opinio quod differat a praedictis. Quia, ut dicunt, conferre omnia est potentiae superioris et communis ad omnes; unde et a quibusdam logistica, id est, rationalis vocatur tanquam prae ceteris participans ordinem rationis. Dicuntque quod est in medio cerebri tanquam omnium mediatrix et collatrix seu comparatrix. Quidam vero ex eis dicunt ad hoc in brutis sufficere aestimativam, in homine vero cum his sufficit ratio istas altius movens et regens.” (Summa II q. 66, 609.)
takes it (for granted) that Olivi reacts against Aquinas’ theory. Although the objections Olivi deals with are mostly compatible with Aquinas' theory, it is clear that his discussion of the internal senses is not directed against any particular theory but against the general idea that there are several internal senses. He presents two versions of the same general view. According to the first version, the cogitative power combines the information from the other internal senses. Thus, there are five different internal senses in each creature: the common sense, the imagination, the estimative power, memory, and the cogitative power. The other version distinguishes between human beings and non-human animals: the estimative power is the cognitive centre in non-human animals, and the intellect performs the same function in human beings. The cogitative power is not an independent power, and thus there are only four internal senses: the common sense, the imagination, the estimative power, and memory. The intellect also modifies the functions of the internal senses—for instance, it controls the power of memory in such a way that memory gains a new name: recollection (reminiscentia).

On the face of it, both of these theories differ from Aquinas’ view. In contrast to the latter, Aquinas does not attribute function (10) to the intellect, and he thinks that the cogitative power is the human counterpart of the estimative power of animals. It must be admitted that Olivi’s description of the latter position is very short and sketchy, and it is possible that the idea is not to attribute function (10) to the intellect but to say that the intellect directs the estimative power of human beings to the extent that it receives a new name, the cogitative power. Be that as it may, the former theory is clearly not Aquinas’ because it posits five internal senses, whereas Aquinas accepts the existence of only four. It does not seem to be Avicenna’s either because Avicenna does not attribute function (10) to the cogitative power—as we have seen, the cogitative power is just another name for the compositive imagination of human beings.

The central idea in these two versions, however, is the same: one of the powers of the soul brings together all the separate psychological processes that are necessary for accounting for more complicated forms of cognitive activity. Olivi does not spend much time in refuting this view since

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2 Jansen, “Prolegomena,” xii.
3 Sylvain Piron has suggested that the philosophantes against whom Olivi argues in the questions concerning the internal senses (written during 1281–82 in Montpellier) may have been from the Montpellier medical school (Sylvain Piron, “Olivi et les averroïstes,” 259, footnote 26).