In his *Categories and Logic in Duns Scotus*, Giorgio Pini offers a cogent and persuasive interpretation of Scotus’s thorny and difficult *Categories* commentary. Nevertheless, I shall argue that his interpretation is flawed. Pini claims that Scotus distinguishes the domain of logic from that of metaphysics in a different manner from his most notable modist contemporaries, such as Martin of Dacia, who argue that there is a strict isomorphism between words, concepts and things. In particular, Pini reads Scotus as saying that categories taken logically, like species and genera of substances, do not correspond to distinct proper parts in the thing cognized; I shall contend that they do.

On my interpretation, Scotus holds that some distinct common entity in the thing corresponds to each of our generic or specific logical concepts. For instance, I hold that Scotus believes there is both a foundation for our concept of the genus—say, *animal* in the substance cognized and a distinct foundation in the thing cognized for our concept of the most specific species, say, *human*. The foundation in neither case simply has the universality belonging to the respective logical category. For instance, there is no generic proper part with universality in the thing that corresponds to the logical genus’ universality. Indeed, with Pini, I read Scotus as saying there is a common proper part that corresponds to the logical genus in the intellect. I depart from Pini by adding that Scotus implies that a universal species in the intellect, *human*, has its foundation in a corresponding common entity distinct from the entity corresponding to the genus, *animal*.

Scotus is not concerned to establish a foundation in the thing cognized with a universality that matches the universality of the concept. Rather, I argue that Scotus is concerned to show there is a foundation...
in the thing cognized that can be the very same item as that which is present in the cognizing intellect. Scotus’ *desideratum* is not a matching correspondence with respect to universality, but rather unity between an entity in the thing cognized and the concept in the intellect.

1. *Pini’s Reading of Scotus*

I shall begin by explaining Pini’s interpretation of Scotus, with emphasis on the problem of how Scotus portrays the relationship between logical features of our concepts and features of things apart from the intellect. Pini argues that Scotus does not claim something universal in the thing corresponds to any of our specific or generic concepts—Pini successfully makes that point. However, I contend that he has not succeeded in two other parts of his argument. First, Pini locates the essence of the thing as the foundation for the universality of all of our logical concepts; I disagree. Second, he claims that no proper parts of the essence correspond with our logical concepts—here I disagree as well.

Pini points out that Scotus shared with his contemporaries a conviction that Aristotle’s *Categories* was primarily a work of logic, not of metaphysics. Logic considers properties, for example the universality of generic concepts, attributed to items from the activity of the intellect. Scotus writes:

> Between a thing and speech, or voice, is a concept. Thus, just as there is a science *per se* of things, and some sciences *per se* of significant speech, like Grammar and Rhetoric which consider the passions of the voice…so there can be a science *per se* of the concept, and this is logic. Whence it follows necessarily that logic is called a rational science not only as it is carried on through reason, as is every other science, but because of this: that it is about concepts formed through an act of reason.²

As the logician seeks knowledge of properties of our concepts, and our concepts belong to the intellect, the properties that the logician studies are mental entities. These latter are to be distinguished from the properties that the metaphysician studies, the properties of beings independent of the operations of our intellects.³

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³ In their understanding of the *Categories*, Scotus and his contemporary logicians diverge from our contemporaries—among whom there is a consensus around taking the work as a piece of Aristotle’s early ontology. In addition, what Scotus and his