

the like of which has been frequently perceived, sight will perceive its quiddity in the smallest amount of time, i.e. in the second instant between which and the first instant in which it perceived colour *qua* colour there exists no sensible time. If the colour is an uncertain one the like of which sight previously perceived a few times only, or if it exists in a dim or faintly illuminated place, sight will perceive its quiddity only after a sensible interval of time. If the visible object is dark, with only a little light in it, such as objects seen at night or before dawn, or objects in very dim places, the sentient will fail to discern the colour and only perceive its darkness. It is therefore clear from the perception | of colours in dimly lit places that perceiving colour *qua* colour occurs before perceiving its quiddity; but in the case of bright and familiar colours in illuminated places, it does not become clear that perception of the quiddity of colour occurs after discernment, subsequent to perceiving colour *qua* colour.

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[55] Unusual colours also furnish proof that sight perceives colour *qua* colour prior to perceiving what colour it is. For when sight perceives an unusual colour the like of which it has not previously seen, it perceives it to be colour but without knowing what colour it is, but, upon contemplating it further, sight will assimilate it to the closest colours known to it.

[56] Thus, from experimenting with visible objects such as those we have described, it becomes clearly manifest that perception of colour *qua* colour occurs before perceiving what colour it is. It is also manifest from these experiments that perception of the quiddity of colour must be achieved by discernment and by comparing the colour with colours known to the sight. That being the case, the quiddity of colour can be perceived only by discernment, inference | and recognition. Similarly, the quiddity of light, and how strong or weak it is, can only be perceived by discernment, inference and recognition. Therefore, that which sight perceives by pure sensation is colour *qua* colour and light *qua* light. Nothing else is perceived by pure sensation, and all properties other than these two can only be perceived by discernment, inference and recognition. The first things that sight perceives of the form are light and illuminated colour; anything else is perceived after the perception of illuminated colour or of pure light.

II 42b

[57] Moreover, we say that perception of the quiddity of colour must take place in time. For perception of the quiddity of colour can only be achieved by discernment and comparison; but discernment must take time; and, therefore, perception of the quiddity of colour must take time. A clear and visible proof that perception of the quiddity of colour must take place in time is furnished by what can be observed in a revolving¹ top. If the top is painted in different colours forming lines that extend from the middle of its visible surface, close

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to its neck, | to the limit of its circumference, then forcefully made to revolve, it will turn round with great speed.² Looking at it the observer will now see one colour that differs from all the colours in it, as if this colour were composed of all the colours of those lines; he will neither perceive the lines nor their different colours; if the top moves with great speed, he will also perceive it as if it were stationary. Now if the top is moving fast, then no point in it will remain fixed in any one place for a sensible interval of time but rather traverse, in the smallest amount of time, the whole circle on which it moves; the form of any point will therefore trace out in the eye the circumference of a circle in the smallest amount of time. Sight must therefore perceive the colour of that point in the smallest amount of time through the circle produced in the eye, and consequently perceive the colour of that point as a circle in the smallest amount of time. Likewise, sight will perceive the colour of each one of the points in the surface of the top on the whole circumference of the circle on which the point moves in the smallest amount | of time. But all points at equal distances from the centre will move with the top's rotation on the circumference of a single circle. In consequence of this, the colour of every one of the points at equal distances from the centre will appear on the circumference of one and the same circle in the smallest amount of time, which is the same as the duration of one revolution; therefore, the colours of all those points will appear in the whole circumference of that circle as mixed and undiscerned by sight; and thus sight will perceive the colour of the top's surface as one colour that is mixed of all the colours in its surface.

II 43b

[58] Now if sight perceived the quiddity of the colour instantaneously, i.e. at every instant¹ of the time during which the top revolves, it would perceive the quiddities of all colours in the moving top distinctly. Because if sight needed no time to perceive their quiddities, it would be able to perceive them in a part of the time of revolution, just as it perceives their quiddities when the top is stationary. For the quiddities of all the colours of familiar objects | are the same whether the top is moving or at rest. Thus the colour of a visible object remains the same and unchanged at every one of the instants through which the object moves, and the quiddities of the colours of visible objects remain the same and unchanged at any one instant as well as through an extent of time, provided that the time is not too long. If, therefore, sight does not perceive the quiddities of the colours in the top's surface when the top moves quickly, but perceives them when the top is at rest or moving slowly, then sight does not perceive the quiddity of colour unless the colour is fixed in one place for a sensible interval of time, or moves in a sensible interval of time through a distance whose magnitude does not greatly affect the position of that colour in regard to the eye.

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[59] It is seen from this state of affairs that perception of the quiddity of colour must require time; it is also seen from the same state of affairs that