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Francisco Suárez, S. J.  
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<414, col. b>

SECTION V.

*Whether matter is pure potentia and in what sense that should be accepted.*

1. The solution to the arguments that were presented in the previous section against our view depend on the resolution to the present question. For it should not be denied by us that matter is pure *potentia*<sup>2</sup> since all the philosophers seem to agree in that assertion. But the true meaning of that locution needs to be explained.

*Various views.*

2. The disciples of St. Thomas, then, are commonly interpreted as saying that matter is pure *potentia* because it does not have any existence from itself or in itself except through form. On the other hand, Scotus, Henry, and others cited above distinguish two *actus*, namely, a formal *actus* and an entitative *actus*. And they teach that matter has an entitative *actus* of itself but not a formal *actus*. Consequently, they say that matter is called pure *potentia* in relation to the formal *actus* but not in relation to the entitative *actus*.

3. But certain modern authors, who do not dissent from

Capreolus in I, dist. 3, q. 3, art. 2, and II, dist. 13, art. 3, and Soncinas and Iavellus in *Metaphysics* IX, q. 2 and in the other places cited above.

Fonseca, *Metaphysics* I, ch. 7, q. 3, §§7–8, and the Coimbrans in *Physics* I, ch. 9, q. 3, art. 1.

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<sup>1</sup>Translation is based on the 1597 edition. Paragraph numbering, however, in which the 1597 and Vivés editions do not agree in this case, follows the Vivés edition, since it is the most widely used edition (The 1597 paragraph numbers are included in square brackets). Numbers in angle brackets also indicate page numbers in the Vivés edition for ease of reference.

<sup>2</sup>Because they are the key technical terms and because it is unclear how best to translate them, I will leave ‘*actus*’ and ‘*potentia*’ untranslated in this section. Generally, ‘*actus*’ could have been translated either with ‘act’ or with ‘actuality’, while ‘*potentia*’ could have been translated either with ‘potency’ or ‘potentiality’. In other contexts, ‘*potentia*’ can also mean ‘power’ but that is probably not the right translation in this context. Suárez also uses ‘*actualitas*’, ‘*potentialitas*’, and cognates; these I will render into their closest English cognates.

Scotus in reality, do, nevertheless, disapprove of that way of speaking. For they admit that matter has a proper existence distinct from the existence of the form. Consequently, they teach that matter actually is other than nothing. Yet they deny that it should be called an entitative *actus*, first on account of the argument made above that <415> there is neither an informing *actus* nor a subsisting *actus* and also because, although matter has an *actus* of existence proper to itself, it, nevertheless, is not its own existence, since in every created thing existence is distinguished *ex natura rei* at least from essence.

4 [3]. But still, if the thing that these authors teach does not displease, I do not see why the way of speaking can displease. For Aristotle does not oppose such a way of speaking, as we will show, and it is not out of keeping with the common and received use of the terms. For in as many ways as *potentia* can be said, in so many ways *actus* can also be said. But a thing is said to be in *potentia*, either in passive *potentia* because it can receive an *actus*, in active *potentia* because it can effect, or in objective or logical *potentia* because it would not be repugnant to be although it is not. In the same way, therefore, a thing can be said to be an *actus* or to be in *actus* either with respect to a receptive *potentia* or with respect to an objective *potentia*, omitting active *potentia* for now since it is not relevant at present. Therefore, although prime matter is pure receptive *potentia* and thus in its essence includes no formal *actus* (which is signified through the expression 'pure'), it can, nevertheless, after it is created not be said to be in pure objective *potentia*. For this reason, therefore, it is rightly said to be or to have an entitative *actus*.

5 [4]. Nor is it relevant that it is or is not by its own existence. First, indeed, because when matter is called pure *potentia*, what is denied is not only that it is *actus* but also that it is constituted from *actus* and *potentia*. Moreover, if matter has a proper existence, even though in the end it is not its own existence, nevertheless we cannot deny that it is constituted from its own essence and existence. Therefore, it includes *actus*, for actual existence is *actus* of an essence, according to everyone and especially according to that opinion. Therefore, matter cannot be said to be pure *potentia* in relation to an entitative *actus*.

Also, according to that view, *actus* is not sufficiently divided into formal and subsistent. For beyond those there is also the *actus* of existence which is not subsistence since it is received in the essence and it is not properly formal since it is not a

form. But it can be said to be a terminative *actus* of essence. Therefore, since matter insofar as it is really distinguished from form includes this *actus*, it cannot be called pure *potentia* in relation to entitative *actus*.

Furthermore, according to that view about the real or *ex natura rei* distinction of existence from actual essence it cannot be denied that actual essence as co-distinguished from existence has some actuality that an essence <col. b> conceived only in objective *potentia* does not have. Therefore, an actual essence, even if it is not by its own existence, is some entitative *actus*, that is, something other beyond pure objective *potentia*. In fact, unless an actual essence is conceived in this way, one cannot understand that opinion which distinguishes it from existence, either as thing from thing or as from a real mode.

6 [5]. Whatever we think about the distinction between essence and existence, then, matter as distinct from a form in a thing is certainly some entitative *actus*, yet in a different way. For those who do not distinguish *ex natura rei* existence from essence but only in reason say that matter insofar as it is an actual entity is by its own existence and actual essence which are the same in the thing. And since, according to this opinion, the entitative *actus* of a thing is nothing other than existence or its actual entity, for this reason one rightly concludes that matter is some entitative *actus*. But according to that other opinion which distinguishes *ex natura rei* existence from actual essence yet admits that prime matter has its own proper existence which it retains under whatever form, one should say that matter is its own actual essence beyond the *actus* of form and that it has a proper *actus* of existence. But those who posit a real distinction between essence and existence such that they deny that matter has proper existence beyond the existence that is bestowed by form consequently say that matter is pure *potentia* in relation to formal *actus* as much as in relation to entitative *actus* or to the *actus* of existence. Nevertheless, they cannot deny that there is some actual entity in the being of the essence. Although, since they think that the actuality of the essence wholly depends on a distinct existence, for that reason they can say that matter, even if in the thing it has the entity of an essence, nevertheless, it is potential in such a way that it is not capable of existence except by means of a form. And in this sense they can call it pure *potentia*, even in relation to entitative *actus*.

7 [6]. Since, therefore, we think that matter has its own

Matter existing *per se* in a thing is an entitative *actus*.

partial existence and that the existence is not distinguished on the part of the thing from the actual essence but is only distinguished by our way of conceiving it, we also think it most true that matter as it is an actual entity in the thing is also some entitative *actus* in the thing. And according to reason or our way of conceiving it is composed from being and essence as from a terminating *actus* and an objective, as it were, *potentia*. <416> Each point is sufficiently clear from what was just said about the preceding view. Moreover, I always speak about matter as it is an actual entity, since if it is conceived according to only that which it has of itself, excluding every efficiency, in that way it has no actuality in itself and is only in the force of a cause and of itself only has a non-repugnancy to being. But this is not proper to matter, for even form—in fact, every created thing considered in itself—is pure *potentia* in this way. Therefore, one must speak about matter as it is an actual entity, or, what is the same, insofar as it has in itself a proper *actus* of existing distinct from the *actus* of a form.

8 [7]. But in order to resolve the difficulties touched on in the previous section and to explain the philosophers' way of speaking and to remove every ambiguity from the terms, I note that the name '*actus*' can be taken in different ways. For sometimes it is said absolutely and sometimes respectively. Sometimes something is called an *actus* because it actualizes something. This is the way in which form is the *actus* of matter. And I call this a respective *actus*, since it is the *actus* of something else. But sometimes something is called an *actus* because it is in itself something actual rather than potential, even though it does not actualize anything else. This is the way in which God is called an *actus*. And this I call an *actus* absolutely speaking.

In turn each of these *actus* can be subdivided. For a physical and formal actualizing *actus* (for example, a physical form) is one thing, but a metaphysical *actus* is another thing. The latter is multiple: for one is the *actus* of essence (e.g., difference), another is the *actus* of existence (e.g., existence), and the *actus* or mode of subsistence can also be added. But *actus* said absolutely is sometimes the *actus* of something else without qualification, but sometimes the *actus* of something else with qualification. The former is that *actus* which in the genus of being without qualification or of substance is complete in such a way that it is neither constituted through a physical *actus* distinct from it nor actualized through it or requiring it for existence. Or it can be

explained differently: that being is called an *actus* without qualification which by the force of its own actuality includes the formal perfection that other composite beings usually have through a substantial informing *actus*. Hence although an absolute *actus* of this sort is not an actualizing or informing *actus*, it can, nevertheless, not be called a formal *actus* in the most eminent way, that is, as having *per se* that complement of perfection that is usually conferred through an informing *actus* on those things that are completed through composition. But that being is called a qualified *actus* which has some actuality insofar as it actually is beyond nothing, yet has incomplete <col. b> and imperfect *actus*, because it is not sufficient in such a way that it does not need another *actus* both in order to be completed in the *ratio* of being without qualification and also in order to exist.

*The resolution of the question.*

9 [8]. Therefore, it should be said, first, that matter is not called pure *potentia* with respect to every metaphysical *actus*, that is, because it includes no metaphysical *actus*. For this cannot be true. First, because prime matter in its essential concept cannot be understood to be composed from genus and differences, as, for example, if the matter of the heavens and of these lower things were distinguished in species, the matter of generable things that we are talking about now would be composed of the genus of matter in general and the proper difference that can be taken from its relation to the form of generable being. This matter, therefore, has its own metaphysical formal *actus*, by which it is constituted in its essence.

Matter does not exclude every *actus*.

And it is confirmed: for matter by its nature has some perfection and transcendental goodness, as St. Thomas also teaches in *SCG* 3 ch. 20. For it is certain that a composite of matter and form is something more perfect than a form by itself.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, matter has something of perfection that it adds to the composite. Likewise, matter itself is desirable and agreeable, not only as a means but *per se*, since by reason of its perfection it is agreeable to this form or composite. Matter, therefore, has by its own nature some proper perfection. But perfection cannot be understood without some actuality, at least transcendental actuality.

St. Thomas.

Furthermore, matter has a proper *actus* of existence, as was shown.

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<sup>3</sup>See *DM* 15.7.6.

Finally, it has a partial and proportionate *actus* of subsistence. For it entirely needs that in order to be a first subject. For a first subject stands underneath everything, but to subsist in itself comes before standing under other things. We will say more about this below when discussing subsistence. Therefore, prime matter cannot be pure *potentia* in such a way that it excludes every metaphysical actuating *actus*.

10 [9]. I say, second: matter is not such a pure *potentia* that there is not some qualified entitative *actus*. This assertion was sufficiently shown and proven from what was said about the opinion of Scotus. And it is sufficiently gathered from the *ratio* of a first subject: for it is necessary that in a first subject there be a real passive *potentia*, or, rather, it itself essentially is a passive *potentia*. Nor can a real passive *potentia* be understood without some <417> entitative actuality. For how can it be understood that something truly and really is receptive to something else without itself being something? Hence, the Commentator rightly says in *On the Heavens* III, comm. 29, that every passive potentiality is grounded in some actuality. And St. Thomas says in *ST* Ia.46.1 ad 1 that matter is not called being in *potentia* in the way in which possible being is called in *potentia* solely from the non-repugnance of the terms. He, therefore, presupposes that there is some being actually grounding the real passive *potentia*, or, rather, that there is a real passive power in the genus of substance.

Which *actus* matter admits.

Commentator.

11 [10]. I say, third: matter is said to be pure *potentia* with respect to informing or actualizing *actus* and with respect to *actus* speaking absolutely and without qualification. It is shown: for in the first place, matter is neither an actualizing nor an informing *actus*, as is clear *per se* from the *ratio* of a first subject. Furthermore, it does not include in its intrinsic and essential concept a physical informing *actus*. For we showed that it is a simple entity, which is also gathered from the *ratio* of a first subject. In addition, matter is such an entity that it is not *per se* sufficient for existing without a substantial *actus* perfecting and actualizing it. Hence, it formally or eminently includes no formal *actus* by the force of its own precise entity. And, therefore, it is not an *actus* absolutely and without qualification. Finally, whatever the entity is in prime matter, it is entirely for exercising the function (*munus*) of a power receptive to a substantial form. For this is what it was primarily and *per se* made for. For this reason, as we said above, it includes in its essential *ratio* a

In what way matter is pure *potentia*.

transcendental disposition (*habitudinem*) to form.

From these things, therefore, it is clear that it is deservedly called pure *potentia* in the genus of substance and is best explained in the stated way. For, since matter is a simple entity and is in its entirety a receptive *potentia*, it is very well called pure *potentia*. Moreover, just as it is customarily said that an exclusive expression does not exclude concomitants, so also the expression ‘pure’ does not exclude the qualified entity and actuality necessary for the *ratio* of a real *potentia*. But it does exclude in particular every other function besides passive potentialities and, furthermore, it excludes the *ratio* of a completed *actus* or an unqualified *actus*, speaking absolutely. And, what comes to the same thing, it excludes every formal *actus*, both as properly informing and as unqualifiedly constituting a perfect and complete *actus*.

12 [11]. <col. b> But for the sake of considering the use of words, speaking strictly, one thing is signified when matter is called pure *potentia* and another thing if it said to be in pure *potentia*. For the first is strictly true and has the legitimate sense just explained. But the second is at the very least ambiguous. For to be in pure *potentia* taken strictly signifies the privation of actual existence. For this reason it is usually said only of that which actually is nothing yet could be. But that cannot be said of matter after it is created or co-created. For although it is nearly nothing, it nevertheless is not nothing but a true thing, as we said earlier with Augustine.

What the difference is between being *potentia* and being in *potentia*.

We can distinguish in a similar way between the locutions ‘to be in *actus*’ and ‘to be *actus*’. For ‘matter is in *actus*’ is strictly true, since it signifies nothing other than that there is matter in the nature of things and that it exists, which is true, just as it is true that matter is created, receives form, and composes a composite. All of those include its existing. But ‘matter is *actus*’ is at the very least ambiguous. For in an absolute sense it seems to signify that it is an actualizing *actus* or certainly that it is an unqualified *actus*. And for this reason it should not be taken absolutely, but it should be taken with some diminishing addition, namely, that it is an entitative *actus* that is imperfect and qualified.

‘Being *actus*’ and ‘being in *actus*’ differ.

13 [12]. Moreover, that this explanation of matter in the nature of pure *potentia* is harmonious with what Aristotle and other philosophers said is obvious. For in *Physics* I, text. 69, when comparing prime matter to the matter of artefacts, he says

The just given explanation of the *potentia* of matter agrees with Aristotle.

that it is related to form and essence strictly speaking as wood to a statue or to the form of a statue. From this he concludes that matter is what is formless. Through this and other similar expressions he only excludes from matter every formal and complete *actus*, but not the entitative *actus*, incomplete and inchoate, as it were, without which it could not be a real receptive *potentia*.

Furthermore, it is understood from the definition of matter that he gives in *Physics* I.9, text. 82, where he says that matter is ‘the first subject, from which something *per se* comes to be, since it is in it’. For matter is said to be in the produced thing, since it remains through its own entity in the produced thing, composing the latter through itself. And in that very place Aristotle says that matter according to its own entity is prior to the produced thing and is ungenerable and incorruptible. And, finally, he says that matter is a being *per se*, but *per accidens* is not a being by reason of privation.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, he does not exclude <418> every entitative actuality from matter, but only the formal [actuality] to which it is in *potentia*.

Finally, in *Metaphysics* VII and in other places, when he says that matter is not a certain quantity or a certain kind or a this something, he only excludes the composition resulting from an informing *actus* and every formal *actus* from the entity of the matter. Nor is anything else really necessary for the function and office of matter, as is clear from the reason that Plato also reports in *Timaeus* and from him Aristotle in *On the Heavens* III.8, namely, because that which is receptive to other things must not actually have that to which it is susceptible but only have it potentially. But matter is susceptible to formal *actus* and complete being. Therefore, it must be said to be pure *potentia* with respect to these, but not with respect to the entity properly its own.

In addition, Averroes says in the same sense that matter substans through being able, since it substance such that its whole [entity] is ordered to receiving, and for this reason it is essentially incomplete and potential. And St. Thomas explains the potentiality of matter in the same way in *De spiritualibus creaturis*, art. 1, citing Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* I.14–15.

Plato.  
Aristotle.

Averroes.  
St. Thomas.

*The arguments remaining from the previous section are resolved.*

<sup>4</sup>Compare to modern translations of 192a4–5.

14 [13]. Through these things, then, there is a sufficient response to all the testimonies that were presented against our view in the preceding section. Indeed, even the arguments are also almost resolved, for they at best show that matter is pure *potentia*, but not in any other sense than the one that we explained. This will become clearer by responding in form to the argument made there.

For when it is said that matter is not composed of *actus* and *potentia*, we concede that that is true concerning proper physical *actus* and *potentia*. But it must be conceded that metaphysically matter is composed from *actus* and *potentia* proportionate to it, that is, from genus and difference, essence and existence, nature and incomplete subsistence. But when it is inferred that there is a *potentia* prior to matter, it is responded that with respect to physical *potentia* this is disagreeable and plainly repugnant. Nevertheless, that does not follow from what was said, since we do not say that matter is composed of physical *potentia* and *actus*. But if the discussion is about metaphysical *potentia*, it thus is true that matter in general is conceived as prior than this species of matter, and the essence of matter is conceived as prior to its existence, not insofar as it is a being actually but absolutely. Likewise, the nature <col. b> of matter is in some genus prior to its partial subsistence. Nevertheless, taken strictly, it does not follow that there is given in the thing itself some *potentia* prior to matter, but in the matter itself there is given one *ratio* prior to another. Yet in that *ratio* that is conceived as prior there is always included the *potentia* of matter itself, either confusedly (as in the concept of matter in general) or as possible (as in the precise concept of the essence of matter or through the mode of a partial nature only, considered apart from the partial mode of subsisting).

15 [14]. But to the second part by which it was proved that matter in no way is an *actus*, we concede that it is not an actualizing or informing *actus* and that it is not an *actus* unqualifiedly complete and perfect in itself. What the arguments by which this was proven there show at most is that matter is not a subsisting *actus*, but they do not show that matter is not an incomplete and entitative *actus*. In this sense, therefore, I deny that a partial entity or subsisting *actus* is more perfect than any informing *actus* whatever since that partial entity participates less in the *ratio* of *actus* than an informing *actus* does. Furthermore, I deny that an incomplete subsisting *actus* cannot be given. For the

Matter is metaphysically composed from *actus* and *potentia*, but not physically.

very subsisting essence of matter is a proper partial subsistence, and with that having been added it can be designated an *actus* in a respect, that is, with respect to its own entity, by which it is separated from nothing and from [merely] possible being.

But all the remaining things that were brought up there proceed with respect to complete *actus* subsisting and including formal *actus* through a simple and more excellent mode. And in the same sense what was supplied in a certain confirmation in that very place—namely, that every *actus* is the principle of some operation—is true. For that is true concerning *actus* that are formal or informing or subsisting completely. Yet it is not necessary that it be universally true of every partial and entitative *actus*, since it is not necessary that every entity be the principle of some operation properly and in the genus of efficient cause. For it could have been made for exercising another genus of cause. And thus the entity of matter is for receiving rather than for acting.

Whether every *actus* is a principle of some operation.

*Objections to the above resolution.*

16 [15]. But there are still some other objections yet to be resolved, objections that are customarily made against the last assertion of this section. First, because apart from being there is no *actus*, since nothing has actuality except insofar as it is. For this reason being itself is the actuality of all things, <419> as St. Thomas says in *ST* Ia.4.1 ad 3. But matter does not have being except through a form, as Avicenna says in *Metaphysics* II.2. And Boethius says in *On Unity and the One*<sup>5</sup> that all being in created things is from form. Therefore.

Second, because otherwise nothing *per se* one would come about from matter and form. For something *per se* one does not come to be from two beings in *actus*. This is the reason why nothing *per se* one comes to be from a subject and an accident, since it is one thing to be a subject and another thing to be an accident.

Third, physical matter is entirely simple. Therefore, either it is entirely *actus* or entirely *potentia*, since a simple entity cannot be composed of a physical *actus* and *potentia*. But that it is entirely *actus* cannot be said, since it is essentially *potentia*. Therefore, it is entirely *potentia* and includes no *actus*.

Fourth, because pure *actus* is *actus* in such a way that it has

<sup>5</sup>This work is now ascribed to Domenicus Gundissalinus, a twelfth century philosopher in Spain.

nothing of potentiality or receptive *potentia* mixed in. Therefore, contrariwise, pure *potentia* is *potentia* in such a way that it has nothing of actuality mixed in. For they have the character of opposites, and pure *potentia* must stand maximally apart from pure *actus*. But pure *potentia* would not stand maximally apart if it were to include something of actuality.

Fifth, because if matter is something actual, then it is either a substance or an accident. But it is not the second, as is obvious *per se*. But neither is it the first, since it is a *potentia* for substance. But that which is a *potentia* for something is not actually that, since these two are repugnant [to each other].

Last, because otherwise matter could be cognized *per se* and directly and by a proper cognition, which the philosophers seem universally to deny with Aristotle and Plato in the cited passages.

17 [16]. The first and second objections will receive a full explicit treatment below in the disputation on the essence and being of creatures.<sup>6</sup> For now the principle that ‘every being is from form’ can briefly be explained in two ways. The first is about specific and complete being. The second is that every being is from form either intrinsically giving and composing it or at least terminating its dependency in some way. And in this way the being of matter can be said to be from form insofar as it depends on it, as was said.

But the other axiom that ‘something *per se* one does not come to be from two beings in *actus*’ cannot be understood about any actual entities. Rather, it is impossible that a being *per se* and complete actually be composed except from incomplete actual beings. For what is nothing, as we have often said, cannot really compose [anything] and, in particular, not a being *per se* one. <col. b> Therefore, the axiom must be understood as concerning beings complete in *actus* in their genera. For those are not order *per se* and do not cohere in the right way for composing a being *per se* one. We do not say, however, that matter is in this way a being in *actus*, but instead we say that it is, as it were, a certain kind of inchoate being that is naturally inclined to and *per se* conjoined with form as completing an integral being, as we will explain more fully later.

18 [17]. To the third objection, it is responded that matter is entirely *potentia* and entirely *actus* in the way that we explained, not through a composition of *actus* with *potentia* but through identity and (if I may speak in this way) through intimate and

In what way every being is from form.

How one should understand that something *per se* one does not come to be from two entities in *actus*.

See DM 4 concerning *per se* unity.

<sup>6</sup>DM 31.

transcendental inclusion. For not every *potentia* is opposed to every *actus*, but with proportion. Consequently, receptive *potentia* is not opposed to incomplete entitative *actus*, but rather essentially includes it.

19 [18]. To the fourth objection, it is said, first, that just as pure *actus* includes no *potentia* receptive to another *actus*, so also pure *potentia* includes no *actus* actualizing something. In this respect the analogy holds, but not with respect to entitative *actus*. Hence, if this is what the discussion is about, the consequence is denied, since it involves the repugnance that there is a real receptive *potentia*, however pure, without intimately including the actuality of being.

How pure *potentia* is equal to pure *actus*.

But, the other way around, it is not repugnant to include the actuality of being in such a way that it involves no potentiality. For potentiality expresses imperfection, but it is not repugnant for there to be perfection so pure that it excludes every imperfection. But it is repugnant for there to be real imperfection so pure that it is without any perfection. For it would rather be nothing and the pure negation of every perfection. Hence, just as the theologians say that there is a highest good that includes no evil and yet there is no highest evil such that it has no goodness or is not founded in it. Thus, although a pure *actus* that excludes all *potentia* be given, yet a pure *potentia* that excludes all actuality, including entitative and incomplete actuality, cannot be given.

But the objection was also raised concerning the highest distance between pure *potentia* and pure *actus*. This can be resolved, first, by denying that it belongs to the *ratio* of pure *potentia* to be maximally distant from pure *actus*. For celestial matter is pure *potentia* and yet is not maximally distant from pure *actus*. For the matter of these lower things is more distant, since it is more imperfect. And so far it is uncertain whether there could be other matter less perfect than this lower matter and consequently <420> even farther from the perfection of God than prime matter. Accidents are also more distant than prime matter from divine perfection. Two kinds of distance can also be distinguished: one can be called negative, which is the sort of distance there is between being and nothing, and the other positive on the part of two extremes. Therefore, it does not belong to the *ratio* of pure *potentia* to be distant from God in the first way, but rather in the second way. And for this reason, although we admit that pure *potentia* is maximally distant from pure *actus*, it does not follow that pure *potentia* includes no actuality, since

that distance is not the highest compared to a negative but [a comparison] between two positives. For this reason it requires some agreement between the extremes in entity, even if that agreement is minimal.

20 [19]. To the fifth objection, it is responded that matter is a substance, as Aristotle explicitly teaches in *Metaphysics* VIII from the beginning, and in many other places. Hence, matter is not in *potentia* for the whole breadth of substance but for form and for the being of the composite. But it is not in *potentia* for the substantial entity of matter, but actually is such entity. For it is repugnant that there be given a real *potentia* receptive with respect to the entire genus and breadth of substance so that it includes complete and incomplete substance. For substance is prior to accident. And for this reason such a *potentia*, since it is the first subject, cannot be an accident but must be a substance. Nor can it be in *potentia* to itself. Therefore, it cannot be in *potentia* to the entire breadth of substance. In this there is a great difference between substantial form and accidental form. For an accidental form presupposes a being of a more noble genus, namely, substance. For this reason it can happen that a subject or *potentia* for an accident not be an accident in any way, that is neither complete nor incomplete. But a substantial form does not presuppose a being of a more noble genus. For this reason a *potentia* for such a form cannot be anything other than some substance, at least incomplete.