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<428, col. a>²

SECTION IX.

What the causality of matter is.

1. There are various opinions about this matter. For some say that the causality of matter is nothing other than the matter itself, which presents itself to the composite and through itself sustains the form. For its causality does not consist in the production of some thing distinct from itself, as the causality of the efficient cause [does], but only in the fact that it provides itself to its effect. <col. b> But this view cannot be true. For, although it is true that matter does not cause otherwise than by sustaining or composing that which it causes, nevertheless, the fact that it sustains or composes something is in reality distinct from the matter itself. For the matter can be *in rerum natura* and yet not cause this form or this composite. It can also successively vary its causality concerning different effects while its entity remains unchanged. Therefore, the causation itself is something else than its entity. In fact, by absolute power matter can be conserved without any form, as we will show below, and in that case it actually causes nothing, but would of itself only have the potential to cause. For by this reason alone we prove that in an agent cause action is something different from the potentiality of the agent. But if someone perhaps says that matter causing does not add something to the matter itself but connotes the existence of a form in it, this will not satisfy. For, whatever the case may be with that having been added, which we will see later, that a form exists in matter is not for the matter to cause, formally and precisely speaking, but rather for it to be caused or to be informed. Therefore, something must be designated from which that denomination of causing is taken, and it must be shown whether that is intrinsic or extrinsic to matter.

The causality of matter is not the entity itself of matter.

¹Translation is based on the 1597 edition.

²Numbers in angle brackets indicate page numbers in the Vivés edition for ease of reference, given that it is the most widely used edition.

2. Second, others say that actual causality adds nothing to matter beyond the relation of cause to effect. But if the discussion is about a proper categorial relation, this view cannot be true, since this relation follows an effect that already has been caused, with the foundation and terminus having been posited. Therefore, it presupposes the causality as the proximate *ratio* on which it follows. Therefore, causality cannot consist in this *ratio*. That and what was said above about cause in general and what was said about all the causes is understood, lest it be necessary to repeat it more. But if the discussion is about some transcendental relation, this opinion coincides with the fourth one that is to be mentioned shortly.

The causality of matter cannot be a categorial relation.

3. The third view can be the one asserting that this causality of matter is the very effect itself, but signified and conceived in a different way. For this suffices to explain this causality, and one can hardly imagine or think of anything else. But although this is perhaps true of some effect—for example, of generation and union, as I will show shortly (for these are related just as action to an <429> agent cause, which also can be called its effect)—this cannot, however, be universally true, both because causality in all causes is some medium between the cause and effect, and also because a material form is an effect of matter and cannot be its causality. For the soul of a horse, for example, which now is materially caused by its matter, can be conserved in the thing without such causality. Therefore, that causality is something other in the thing than that soul and its entity. Just as the quantity of the Eucharist that earlier was conserved by means of the material causality of the substance of the bread is afterwards conserved even though that causality has ceased. This is a sign that that causality is something different from the reality of the quantity. But if a form according to its absolute entity is not the causality of matter, then neither can the whole composite be, especially since the matter itself is included in the composite, but is not caused by itself. And in any composite—certainly, in a human being—the form is also included, which is not caused by the matter. How, then, could the whole composite be the causality of matter?

The causality of matter is not the same as every effect of it.

4. The fourth opinion can be that the causality of matter is a certain real mode of the matter that is *ex natura rei* distinct from it. For if the entity of the matter is considered absolutely, only this mode is contained in potentiality in it. For if the occasion of an agent inducing a form is offered, the matter also actually exhibits this mode that it receives in itself, it fosters the form, and, consequently, composes the composite. But if such a form withdraws with another

The opinion of certain people.

form a, the matter also dismisses the former mode and exhibits another one with respect to the arriving form. The Conimbricenses think this in *Physics II*, q. 6 and 8. The foundation is taken both from a sufficient enumeration of the parts and also because such a mode is necessary, since it was shown that this causality is something but it is not necessary that it be a distinct entity, since matter is through itself immediately united to form. Therefore, it must be some mode that in fact is really identified with matter, but is modally and *ex natura rei* distinct since it is separable from it.

Conimbricenses.

The resolution of the question.

5. Nevertheless, this view seems false in part and doubtful in part. In order to show that and to make my view clear, I distinguish four things that I said above are caused by matter: generation, the union <col. b> of the form, the entity of the form, and the composite itself. With respect to generation, then, I think that it is directly caused by matter without any other thing or mode added to the matter beyond the generation itself that inheres in it. And for this reason the causality of the generation itself from the matter is nothing other than the generation itself as it is an eduction from the matter. Just as action comes from an agent not through another action but through itself and has the *ratio* of an action insofar as it is an emanation from the agent cause and as such is the very causality of the agent, as I will say below, so likewise eduction or passive generation insofar as it essentially depends on the subject and through itself is necessarily conjoined to it is materially caused by it not through another causality but through itself. This is especially shown by the explanation itself of the subject. For the causality of matter with respect to generation is very well understood in this way, and nothing else is necessary. Therefore, imaging something else is superfluous.

The causality of matter with respect to generation is the generation itself.

It is shown, second, from accidental changes and unions. For when wood heats, the heating is in such a subject and from the subject. There are not, however, two changes in that subject, one of which is the passive heating itself and the other of which is some mode by which such a subject materially causes heating or is united to it. For multiplying these changes is superfluous. The very fact that there is such a heating as intrinsic implies a disposition (*habitus*) of actual union and dependence on such a subject in the genus of material cause. It itself is caused by the subject, the subject causes it, it is united to the subject, and the subject remains

united to it. It is superfluous, then, to add another change in the subject. The same, therefore, is the case in the material causality of substantial generation.

Hence, it is confirmed, third: for the cause causes through the same thing or through the same mode by which the effect is caused, since causation itself as such essentially includes this two-fold disposition: to the cause as to a principle and to the effect as to a terminus. For this reason it denominates both, the one as causing and the other as caused. But by the very fact that generation depends intrinsically and essentially on matter, it is directly caused by it. Therefore, for the same reason, matter is denominated as causing something insofar as that thing is from matter. Therefore, no other thing or mode is necessary in order for matter to be denominated as actually causing generation. In fact, it is also unintelligible how matter would cause generation through another mode.

Which is explained, fourth: for matter causing generation is nothing other <430> than to sustain it as a subject. But it sustains it immediately in entity and through its entity by the fact that generation comes to be in it. Therefore, every other mode is irrelevant for this causality, nor can it confer anything to this sustaining.

6. I argue, last, that if the causality of matter were some distinct real mode beyond generation itself, it would have to be made by some agent. For every new real mode must be made by a new cause. But there is no agent by which such a mode is made. Therefore. The minor is proven: for just as an agent only acts through its substantial or accidental form, so in that way it also does not concur effectively except for the eduction of a form—which is, for example, heating—or for generation. Therefore, it does not make some mode beyond that. You will say: although it does not directly make another mode, one results, nevertheless, since by the very fact that this thing is united to that, a union of this to that results. But to the contrary, first, because it was shown that there is no necessity for such a resultancy for causality, nor does it seem necessary for the union. For another thing can be denominated united through a union of another thing to itself, without a new mode of union in it, as theologians say of the mystery of the Incarnation. And in natural cases when, for example, a human being sits, the sitting is united to the human being and the human being to the sitting. Would someone imagine that the human being is denominated united to the sitting through a new mode distinct from the sitting rather than through the sitting itself that is directly united to the subject?

A response to an objection.

Otherwise, there would be an infinite regress. Likewise, then, matter is denominated united to generation because the generation comes to be in it. Nor any other mode that results in the matter necessary. Hence, I will inquire what kind of thing that resultancy is and from where it is. For it can be understood in two ways. The first [way is] that that mode results from the matter once the action of the agent educating form is posited in the matter. But in this way matter effectively makes its material causality, which cannot be said even if that efficiency is said to be through a natural resultancy. Second, it can be thought a resultancy that is made by an extrinsic agent by means of a form that it induces in the matter. In this way the induced form effects the material causality through which it itself is caused and it would be prior in nature in the matter to the mode that results. From this it is easy to be convinced that such a mode is irrelevant to the causality of matter.

7. <col. b> From these things, therefore, as I think, it is clear enough that in the case of the material causality of generation the causality of this kind is not distinguished from the generation itself as it is in the matter and by which the matter is denominated as actually causing insofar as it is from that, just as from the same thing the generating thing is denominated actually acting insofar as it is from that. Hence, just as the denomination of agent is not from some mode that is in the agent itself but is extrinsic to the action, so also the denomination of actually causing in the matter itself is not from some mode that is intrinsic to it in such a way that is identical to it in reality but from the generation itself insofar as it is from that. For this reason such a denomination can be called extrinsic, even though, since the generation is in the matter itself, it can for that reason be called intrinsic. In that it differs from the denomination of agent.

You will say: it is possible for God to conserve numerically the same generation separately from the matter, but in that case it would not be caused by the matter. Consequently, it would not denominate that as actually causing. Therefore, it is not denominated as actually causing precisely from the generation as such. Therefore, some other mode must be added. It is responded that, in the first place, the assumption is false, since it implies that an action of generation is or is conserved outside a subject and apart from the causality of matter. This is both because generation essentially is change and change cannot³ be understood without a subject, and also because generation in all cases other than human

Generation cannot be conserved outside a subject even supernaturally.

³I am omitting a duplicated 'potest' in the 1597 edition.

beings essentially is an eduction of a potentiality in matter. But in the human case it is a uniting of the form with the matter. In either way it is repugnant to understand it without the concurrence of matter. Finally, also because an action without the concurrence of a subject is a creation, whether productive (if it is new) or conservative (if it concerns a pre-existing thing). Therefore, the action is necessarily changed by the very fact that the form that was in the subject and was depending on the subject is conserved outside the subject. Hence, it is concluded that the change that is generation essentially includes a union to matter and the causality of the matter. For this reason matter is denominated as causing from that [generation] precisely taken. Furthermore, even if we gratuitously granted what is assumed, one could not thereby infer that a special mode is necessary in the matter for that denomination, but that in the generation is distinguished the entity and the formality of generation from its union with the matter, just as we will say below about the form itself. But since that is not true in the change that is generation, we will not linger on this point here. <431>

8. From these things it is further concluded that the causality of matter insofar as it is a cause in becoming, whether of the form or of the composite, is nothing other than the generation itself as essentially depending on the matter. For by its mediation matter concurs in the eduction of the form or in the composition of the composite. But the causality of a cause is nothing other than its concurrence. Furthermore, since to cause some thing in becoming is nothing other than that the coming to be of such a thing is from such a cause, therefore, a thing in becoming is caused through the same causality as that through which the coming to be of the thing is caused. This is clear by similarity with the agent cause. For the very same action that is directly from the agent is its active causality with respect to the terminus or to the thing in becoming. Therefore, the same relationship should be preserved in the case of material causality.

Finally, many of the arguments already made can be applied here, especially the one about this *ratio* of causing being sufficient for that denomination by which matter is said to cause the thing that is generated, and that once that *ratio* of causing is posited—and with any other mode set aside through the intellect—that denomination necessarily follows. Therefore, anything else that someone comes up with is superfluous and without foundation.

One should only note the differences in this causality with respect to the form and with respect to the composite. With respect

Matter influences the form and the composite by generation as by causality.

to the form matter remains extrinsic in a certain way, insofar as it sustains the form in itself as informing, but not intrinsically composing it. For this reason, it seems most obvious that the causality of matter with respect to a form in becoming is nothing other than its eduction or uniting insofar as it is from matter, which we show is nothing other in reality than the generation itself. But with respect to the composite, matter is related more intrinsically, since it through itself composes that. For this reason, with respect to the composite it seems necessary that the matter itself be included intrinsically. But this is indeed true with respect to inclusion in the caused effect, but not, however, with respect to the path or with respect to the coming to be by which it tends to such an effect in this genus of material cause. For matter is not a cause in becoming of the produced thing in such a way that it itself also comes to be. For it was always presupposed to have been made. It only communicates to the composite what is generated in its genus of cause. And, insofar as this communication is in becoming and matter is its cause, it is said to be the cause of the produced thing in becoming. But this communication is not in becoming except by means of eduction or generation. And for this reason, this whole causality, insofar as it is understood to be <col. b> a medium between matter and the effect or composite, in reality is nothing other than the generation itself insofar as it is from matter.

The causality of matter persevering after motion.

9. It remains to speak about the causality of matter in the case of being already having been made. In order to explain that, one should begin with the causality of the union of form with matter. For we say that this [union] is also caused by matter, but we add now that it is not caused through some causality distinct from such a union but through itself. This can be demonstrated easily from what was said about generation, since the reasoning is proportional. We show it in this way: for this union of form with matter is also conjoined to matter in the way in which it can be. Therefore, it through itself depends on matter in the way in which it can depend. Therefore, it is caused through itself. For it is caused to the extent that it depends. Therefore, conversely, matter causes that union through itself. For, as I said, it is the same causality by which the effect is denominated as being caused and the cause as causing. All of the proven consequences are above, but the antecedent is clear, first, a posteriori. For it is impossible for that union to be conserved

The union of form to matter is caused through itself by matter and depends on matter.

without the concurrence of matter or rather it being in matter in the way that it can. This, therefore, is a sign that it through itself immediately and essentially depends on matter. For if it were to depend by the mediation of some mode distinct *ex natura rei*, God could conserve that union without the matter by removing that mode. This is the reason he can conserve the form, as I will say below. The antecedent is clear, because union cannot remain unless it actually unites, but it cannot actually unite unless the extremes are conjoined and it reaches each in the way that it can and must. And this is the reason a priori on account of which that union in itself depends essentially both on the form and on the matter, on each in its genus, since it is as their actual bond and does not require any other intervening bond or mode by which it reaches them or is conjoined to them, lest there be an infinite regress. Finally, this is confirmed by the reasoning given above, since this is sufficient for this causality and cannot be posited without it. But once it has been posited and with every other mode set aside, such causality of matter is sufficiently understood. Therefore, everything else is fictitious and without foundation. Nor is there any difficulty with this beyond what should be touched on at once. <432>

10. From here I add further that the causality of matter in the form itself (when the form is such that it is caused by the matter and depends on it) is nothing other than the proper union of such a form with the matter, insofar as the union itself materially depends on the matter and by means of that form itself also depends on the matter. I said 'is nothing other than the proper union of such a form' because not just any union suffices for this causality. For a rational soul has a proper union with matter, where the union is also materially caused by the matter and yet the soul itself is not caused [by it]. Therefore, not just any union is the causality of the form itself, but those that are through the eduction of the form. From which, incidentally, we understand the union of the rational soul with matter to be singular and of a different essential *ratio* from every union of a material form, which we can call substantial inhesion. And this we say is the causality through which matter causes such a form.

11. You will say: why can we not distinguish two modes in the material form, one of which is the mere union of form and matter (of which kind is the one in the rational soul, and that form does not through it depend on the matter but is only united to it for composing the composite), while the other mode is the dependence of such a form on matter? I respond: because to distinguish and

The enduring causality of matter in the case of a material form is union.

What the nexus of a rational soul with matter is.

An objection is resisted.

multiply such modes is either plainly impossible or entirely superfluous. First, because we do not distinguish two modes in the case of an accident, one of which is union and the other is inherence or the dependence of the accident on the subject. Rather, by the same inherence it is united and depends, and so on. Second, because proper dependence on a material cause intrinsically and essentially includes union such that it can neither come to be nor be understood except it intimately includes that. Therefore, inhesion, which is the same as that material dependence, is not a mode that is *ex natura rei* distinct from the union of the inhering form but is like a species of union in general. For one is inhesive, but the other is not. Therefore, just as genus and species are not modes that are distinct *ex natura rei* in the same individual, so union and inhesion or material dependence are not distinct modes in the same form. From these easily proven things, then, the posited assertion is left. For this form depends on matter through its union. Therefore, by the mediation of that it is caused by matter in its genus. Therefore, matter also <col. b> causes the form by the mediation of that, according to the principle posited above that to be caused and to cause express the same causation under different respects. Therefore, this very union is the causality of matter with respect to such a form. Second, because the causality of a cause mediates in a certain way between it and the effect. But nothing mediates between matter and form except this union and, as it were, inhesion. Therefore, that is the causality of matter in the form. Third, because this suffices for this genus of causality, even with everything else whatever having been set aside through the intellect.

12. You will say: this also does not seem necessary, since form and matter are immediately united, as was said above. It is responded: an immediate union does not exclude a mode of union really or *ex natura rei* distinct from the extremes, but excludes an intermediate form that stands in between as a common terminus in which the extremes are conjoined. But a mode of union cannot be excluded when the extremes are such that they can be separated. For, unless one or the other of them holds itself differently than when they are divided, they could not be really united. For this reason theologians posit a mode of union on the part of humanity even in the mystery of the Incarnation.

How many unions in a material composite.

13. But from here another difficulty arises, which seems to be

of some import only in this view, which is why we said that the fourth opinion is doubtful in part: namely, because if the form is united to the matter through a proper mode of union, then the matter is also united through a proper mode of union. Therefore, matter causes not only through the union or inhesion of the form, but much more through its proper union by which it is conjoined to the form. And thus the causality of matter will be the proper mode of the matter itself rather than [the proper mode] of the form. In response to this difficulty, I confess that it is a doubtful issue whether matter has a proper mode of union distinct from the union of form in a composition of matter and form. Nevertheless, I say two things. One is that the denying side is very probable, since one simple mode of union is sufficient for the union of two extremes that are immediately united to each other, and a special reason can be assigned for why such a mode pertains more to the form and is really identical to it rather than to the matter. Therefore, it is not necessary to multiply multiple modes of this sort.

The major is proven: for every mode of union <433> is a bond between two extremes. Hence, it expresses a disposition to each one, without which it could not be. Therefore, any mode of union whatever unites two extremes, of which it is the union. Therefore, one is sufficient for conjoining extremes of this kind. And for this reason we said above that the union of form to matter cannot be or be understood in the nature of things without conjunction or dependence not only on form but also on matter. And therefore, if through the intellect we prescind from every other mode identified with matter, we will understand matter and form to be perfectly united to each other through the union of form to matter alone, and we will understand matter to exercise the whole causality it has in the form. Therefore, two modes of union are not necessary; one is sufficient.

But the minor—namely, that this mode pertains to the form rather than to the matter—is proven: for the entire efficiency of a natural agent formally and proximately has its terminus in a form, in educating it or in uniting it to matter. Therefore, whatever new is made is in the form as in the formal terminus of action, but in matter only as in a subject. For this reason, it does not unite matter to form by directly effecting a special mode in the matter, but only by uniting the form to the matter and by effecting informing and union or inherence in it. And this is fitting for the way that matter and form relate and concur. For matter stands under the action of an agent and under the adventing and recess of forms. Hence, it

remains unvaried with respect to its own entity and with respect to all of its intrinsic modes. It is only varied or changed by reason of privation, either of a form receding or advening again. John of Damascus seems to say this by these words in his *Physics*, ch. 3, where he says of matter: ‘in order for it to possess the *ratio* of subject and insofar as it attains to the fact that it is potentiality, it is furnished with substance and exists with privation; and with a form actually present, it remains and conserves the former [that it, potentiality] free from every change, and from this it happens that it does not migrate from its being a potentiality to actuality, but remaining true in its state, it receives the form, and, if the form recedes, it again retains its former state’. But form is what advenes to matter and recedes from it. For this reason, every change that comes to be in matter is by reason of a form, and, likewise, every union is through the conjunction of the form with it. This is further explained through a material example: for the base that supports a column is not in itself changed and it does not change location or any <col. b> other mode from the fact that a column is placed on it, removed from it, or changed. Rather, the whole change is in the column that is placed above, from which arises every denomination in the base that is said to support the column. And likewise in the case of accidental changes. For example, in the case of wood that heats, there are not two changes in the wood, one in the adhesion of heat and the other in the union of the wood to the heat. Rather, there is only one, which consists in the introduction of heat.

John of Damascus.

14. I add, second, that, even if we were to admit gratuitously that there is a proper mode of union in matter that is distinct from the union of the form, nevertheless, one could not attribute to it that it is the causality through which matter causes the form. For the matter does not sustain the form through such a mode nor does the form depend on matter through such a mode. The former part is clear, since matter does not sustain form through a mode but through its entity. The latter part is proven: for form depends through its inhesion on matter. Hence, if there is such a mode of union in matter, it would instead be as an effect following on the informing, and, insofar as it itself is concerned, it will be of the same *ratio* whether the form depends on matter or not. Another discussion about the union of matter will come up when treating the formal cause.⁴

15. From these things is further concluded that the causality of matter with respect to the composite adds absolutely nothing to the

By what causality the matter constitutes the composite.

⁴See especially *DM* 15.6.

matter itself beyond the union of the form, and thus the causality of the composite is nothing other than the causality of the form or of the union. It only adds with respect to the composite that the matter by means of the union offers itself for intrinsically composing the composite. Hence, if the very entity of matter more intimately enters into the causality of the composite than of the form or of the union, in reality, nevertheless, nothing else comes up other than the entity of the matter and the union or causality of the form.

16. Lastly, it is understood from what has been said what was suggested above: that there are only two causalities of matter that are *ex natura rei* distinct, although more can be distinguished by reason. For material causality with respect to a thing in becoming or in having been made are *ex natura rei* distinct, just as generation is *ex natura rei* distinct from the form or from the produced thing, and uniting in becoming from union as having been made. But we show that the causality of a thing in becoming is not distinct in reality from generation itself or from the uniting. But the causality of a thing having been made <434> likewise is not distinguished from a union as having been made and formally serving as the terminus of the uniting. Therefore, it is necessary that the causalities of this sort be *ex natura rei* distinct from each other. You will say: these two causalities can be reduced to one, since a thing in having been made is not caused except by the mediation of action. Therefore, its whole causality consists in the action and in the generation itself as it is in matter. For all that is left is what is caused rather than causalities, just the whole causality with respect to an agent consists in the action or the uniting, and a union in having been made is not the causality of the agent but what is caused. It is responded: these are not equivalent, since a material cause is through itself the cause of the thing in having been made, even if every action ceases, such that if *per impossibile* a material composite does not depend on some agent in becoming or in being conserved, matter would, nevertheless, have its causality with respect to such a composite or with respect to its form. There is, therefore, in matter a certain proper causality which is not directed at action or at change and does not come about through that, but is immediately directed at the being of the whole composite, insofar as it includes the union of matter with form. And from the following section it will be clear that sometimes matter is the cause of a thing and not of the production of the thing. Therefore, these causalities are *ex natura rei* distinct. But each of them can be compared and precisely conceived in relation to different things and can be explained according to different dispositions in relation

Matter contributes two distinct causalities.

An objection is addressed.

to the form or the composite. Nevertheless, that whole distinction is inadequate through reason or through our concepts, as is clear from the above.