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<402, col. a>²

SECTION III.

Whether the single first material cause of generable substances is some simple body or a whole (integra) substance.

1. As Aristotle and the other authors cited in the preceding section report, the ancient philosophers who posited only one material principle of all natural things almost all thought that it is some whole substance or simple body (of the sort that Averroes thinks celestial body to be). But there were many opinions among them about that body or material cause.

The opinions of the philosophers about the one material principle.

2. First, it was asserted that this principle is water. The author of this view was Thales of Miletus. But others, such as Plutarch, think the origin is more ancient and drawn from Orpheus.³ The second opinion attributes this function to air. Anaximenes [of Miletus] and Diogenes of Apollonia taught this, as Aristotle reports in *Physics* I.3 and as Simplicius shows in the same place. The third opinion was that fire is a cause of this sort. Hippasus and Heraclitus taught this and the Stoics followed the same opinion, as it in Cicero, *De natura deorum* 3.⁴ <col. b> The fourth view can elect earth to this office from the fact that it stands under all things and is, as it were, the common mother of all things. Nevertheless, Aristotle says in *Metaphysics* I.7 that this was the vulgar opinion but that none of the philosophers are inclined towards it by the fact that

Anaximenes.
Diogenes.
Aristotle.
Simplicius.
Hippasus.
Heraclitus.

¹Translation 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.

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

³*De Isis et Osiris* 34?

⁴Vivés edition cites book 2 instead.

earth on account of its excessive density and dryness seems to be unsuitable for receiving the forms or figures of other things. Nevertheless, Hesiod in his *Theogony* unreservedly calls earth the material principle of all things and Theodoretus in *De materia et mundo* reports that Pherecydes [of Syros] thinks the same thing. The fifth opinion attributes this function to none of these four elements but to a certain insensible body in the middle of or between water and air, as Aristotle reports in *Metaphysics* I.7, or between air and fire, as Anaximander reports, who adds that this intermediate body is infinite lest generation cease at some point. From this it seems to be gathered that this philosopher did not consider this body incorruptible. Otherwise, there would be no reason to fear that it could be consumed through a succession of generations if it were finite, although one can hardly understand how he made it corruptible if he considered it to be simple and the common subjects of generation.

Hesiod.
Pherecydes.

3. It would be long-winded and superfluous to report the proper motive of all these philosophers, as a result both of being uncertain and of not wearing any probability or verisimilitude on their sleeves, so that it will become clear from what will be said along the way. But what seems to have been common to all is that they thought that nothing new could come to be strictly speaking. For from nothing nothing can come to be. For this reason they seem to recognize neither substantial forms nor substantial generation or corruption. In fact, many of them proclaimed that there are no accidental forms that are true beings, since they did not understand that some new true thing can come to be. They thought that every change that we experience consists in various ways (*in variis modis*) of holding itself of that thing which they thought was common matter.

A judgement is brought regarding the aforementioned views.

From this some progressed further than that so that they did not say that the material cause of all beings is one but that all beings are one, not in number but in substance and essence. Although what they said is false and improbable, nevertheless they spoke logically (*consequenter*) if they were dealing only with generable bodies. For if these are not transformed substantially and do not differ through substantial forms but only through accidental forms or through <403> holding themselves in different ways, no material cause of substance is really given, but only a simple substance that is not essentially one and another, but is one holding itself in one way and another way under different accidents.

4. And this was the opinion of Xenophanes, Parmenides, and Melissus, who in this sense said that everything is one being and

Xenophanes.
Parmenides.
Melissus.

whatever is beyond that is not being. For they do not count accidents or the modes of those beings as beings. Consequently, they get rid of every generation or change strictly speaking by the fact that they make that being ungenerable and incorruptible and by the fact that they do not think that accidental changes merit the absolute title of change since they do not give being strictly speaking.

But some of these philosophers are interpreted in other ways, namely, that through one being they understood one universe that contains all things, as Aristotle hints at in *De generatione* I.8 and Simplicius in *Physics* I.2. Or through one being they understand God, who alone truly is. For Aristotle in *Metaphysics* I.5 and Cicero in *Academica* 2 report that Xenophanes named that one being God. And thus many, weighty authors deem these philosophers to have spoken through enigmas and to have hidden the truth through figurative expressions. But Aristotle attacked their views insofar as they seem to be advanced through the surface appearance of those words. Concerning this matter, one can read St. Thomas in *Metaphysics* III, text. 15; Philoponus and Simplicius in *Physics* I.2; Agostino Steuco, *De perenni philosophia* III.5; Giovanni Francesco Pico della Mirandola⁵ *Examen vanitatis doctrinae gentium* VI.1, and Basilios Bessarion, *Contra calumniatorum Platonis*. What these philosophers think or what mystery they hide with their words is of little importance for us. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that if they disregard substantial forms as they seem to have disregarded them, given that they make no mention of them, they could consequently easily and sufficiently have fallen into that view as described by us. Hence, this a proof and confirmation of substantial forms will refute this view just as well as others.

5 [4]. But one can refer in this place to another view, which many of the modern philosophers follow and which places in prime matter a form of corporeity that is coeval with it and inseparable from it. For although with respect to such a form its material cause is simple—that is, apart from essential and physical composition—nevertheless, the common subject that <col. b> remains through every transformation and that is the universal material cause of every generation and of every substantial form that comes to be through eduction and of every composit that is generated, that subject, I say, is not simple according to the just-mentioned opinion. Rather, it is essentially composite and is some body that is not mixed, nor something from the elements, nor something intermedi-

St. Thomas.
Philoponus.
Simplicius.
Steuco.
Mirandola.
Bessarion.

The opinion asserting that the form of corporeity is coeval with matter.

⁵An Italian philosopher and nephew of the better-known Giovanni Pico della Mirandola.

ate between them through a participation in them, but is absolutely a body through the cutting away of all lower forms. Avicenna holds this opinion in *The Book of Healing* I.2. Its foundation is that the subject of generation must be corporeal and extended and consequently a quantity, but it cannot be something of this sort unless it has some substantial form.

Avicenna.
Scotus.
Henry.

Scotus and Henry of Ghent follow this view in part. For the former thinks in IV, dist. 11, q. 3, art. 2, that this kind of form of corporeity or of mixture (as he puts it) is necessary in all and only living things. But the latter in *Quodlibet* 2, qq. 2 and 3, and *Quodlibet* 3, qq. 13 and 14, thinks that it should only be admitted in the case of human beings on account of the divisibility of the rational soul. Hence, these two authors do not posit this form as inseparable from matter nor as *per se* necessary for the first material causality of the subject of generation, but on account of other special reasons. For this reason their opinion does not pertain to the present topic.

Resolution of the question.

6 [5]. It should be said first, then, that the material cause that is universal and first in its order is not something from the sensible bodies or elements that are affected by contrary qualities. This assertion is contrary to the first four opinions and it is evident from what was said in the preceding section. If these elements and all sensible bodies are substantially transformed into each other, none of them can be the first subject of transformation. For the first subject, which is the first material cause which we are seeking, is not transformed and neither does it withdraw from its substance. Otherwise, it would resolve into some prior subject and thus would not be the first subject.

The first conclusion.

Furthermore, since generation takes place between contraries, it is necessary that the common subject of generation not have any of the contraries naturally innate in itself. Otherwise, it will either never be capable of the other contrary or it will be destroyed through the casting down of what is connatural to it, just as an element is destroyed when a quality <404> that is necessary to it is removed. Since, therefore, the individual elements are affected by proper qualities having contraries, none of them can be a suitable subject of generation. Therefore, neither can any of them be the first material cause of natural beings.

7 [6]. From here a third argument arises, since there is no

reason why this causality is attributed to one element rather than to another, nor why it is more repugnant to all of them at once than to some one of them. But it was shown that it cannot agree with all of them. Therefore, it is not truly attributed to any of them. The former part of the major proposition is shown by the fact that the individual elements are simple bodies. And each of them is designed for and suitable for the generation of mixtures, and none of them can in any way be constituted from the others. For each has proper qualities repugnant to the others. Therefore, in all of them there is an equal *ratio* or repugnance, so that they cannot be the common matter of all generable things. For that in certain things there are certain conditions accommodated to the office of common matter—as is, for example, subtlety in fire, by reason of which it can easily penetrate all things, and in air, which almost is the common place of all things and easily receives external impressions, and humidity in water since it is conjoined to density, which seems to be proportionate for constituting nourishment for all things—these conditions, I say, are of no relevance. First, because they are of more help for the *ratio* of effecting or for the *ratio* of transient matter than for the proper and intrinsic *ratio* of a material cause. Second, because these conditions also are just as accommodated to certain things as they are repugnant to others. For the subtlety of fire has proportion with the matter of subtle things but not with the matter of dense things. Likewise for the others. But the first material cause, since it is common to all things, must of itself be indifferent to all things.

8 [7]. The other part of the major proposition is proven by the fact that all elements at once cannot be the common matter, since they are substantially transformed into each other. But this argument works equally well for each element taken in itself. Therefore. Hence, finally, it is confirmed: for no element can be the matter of other elements, as seems to be known *per se*, since they are repugnant to it. Nor can it be the matter of some mixture while remaining in its own nature, since the form of the mixture is also repugnant to the form of the element. Therefore, no element <col. b> can be the common matter of all natural things. And these reasons *a fortiori* establish [the case] concerning all mixtures, especially since these are constituted from the elements. For this reason no one has so far attributed this causality to any mixture.

9 [8]. I say, second: prime matter is not some body or some complete substance, both whole in essence and in a species of substance. That matter is a substance of this sort can be understood in

The second conclusion.

two ways. First, such that it alone is the substance of all generable things and is formed through its distinct accidents. This is the sense in which the assertion was proved from the fact that natural things differ not only in accidents but also in substance and essence, as we argued in a previous section against Epicurus and others.⁶ It should also be rejected (and this comes to almost the same thing) from the truth of substantial forms, which we will demonstrate in the 15th Disputation. For when that truth is supposed, it obviously follows that matter is not the whole substance of material things. And these things differ not only in accidents but also in essence and substance. They are transformed not according to accidents only but according to substance. This is also sufficiently evident from experience itself. For when a thing is changed with respect to accidents only, some trace of its properties and operations remains in it, or at least it returns to its state and nature when the contrary agents are removed.⁷ But we see that some things are changed and destroyed in such a way that the former properties and operations are completely lost, even if every contrary action ceases. Conversely, other things are produced and generated in such a way that they constantly remain in that being that they acquire as if it were proper and connatural, and they have their proper and connatural operations and dispositions in accordance with it, which they preserve as long as they can. If sometimes they are made to waver or to be diminished by some contrary, they return to them from their proper and intrinsic nature as soon as the contrary action ceases. This is a sign, then, that things are corrupted and generated not only with respect to sensible accidents but also with respect to proper substance. In these ways the five opinions listed above are attacked as much as the opinion that asserts that all things are one in the explained sense.

10 [9]. In another way, then, someone could imagine matter to be a whole complete substance in some species of substance and yet <405> being apt for receiving further substantial forms and with them composing the different substances and essences of material things. This sense, too, is improbable. For matter would be a complete substance that is either entirely simple or that is a composite of some *potentia* and substantial *actus*.⁸

⁶*DM* 13.2.

⁷Cf. *DM* 15.1.8 and 12.

⁸Because 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',

But the latter cannot be said, first, because in that case it would not be the whole composite that is the first material cause but rather the *potentia* from which it is composed. Perhaps it will be said that this is true with respect to the composite that is being imagined as ungenerable and incorruptible, but, nevertheless, with respect to every generable being or generation the first material cause is the whole composite. But against this is objected, second, that such a composite is imagined without any foundation. For there is no indication or sensible sign of that form placed between pure matter and the other forms that are introduced through generation. For that form has no sensible property by which it is discerned (*dignoscatur*). For the primary qualities follow *per se* on the forms of the elements and the temperament composed from those qualities on the forms of the mixtures. But all the remaining qualities or properties that we experience presuppose the prior qualities at least in the genus of material and dispositive. There is, then, no sensible or material indication of such a form. Hence, there is a third [objection] as it is wholly superfluous, since there is no physical effect for the sake of which it is necessary. For it is not for the sake of effecting, since it has no quality through which to effect, and from elsewhere the proper form that is connatural to a quality suffices for that quality. Nor is it for the sake of receiving, for that *potentia* that is said to stand under such a form is sufficient for this. For why would that not also immediately be made the subject of the form that is introduced through generation? For the same reason such a form is also not necessary for conserving the *potentia* whose *actus* it is said to be. For the form that is introduced through generation is sufficient for this. Therefore, such a form is imagined superfluously and without foundation.

11 [10]. Fourth, there is added the impossibility of conjoining those two forms to the same *potentia* or matter. For, although it is in question whether a generic, as it were, and a specific form can actualize matter simultaneously (something we will touch on a little farther down), it is, nevertheless, plainly impossible for two specific forms to be conjoined simultaneously for actualizing the same substantial *potentia*. Almost all the authors <col. b> agree about this. Either those two forms immediately actualize the matter or one would be the *actus* of the other or the *actus* of the

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.

matter as informed through the other. The first cannot be said, especially according to that view, since otherwise the prior form would not necessarily be presupposed for the latter form. Nor can the composite of matter and such a form be the proximate *potentia* and material cause of the subsequent form. The second also cannot be said, since a substantial form constituting a whole and complete substance has the *ratio* of a last *actus* in the *ratio* of substantial and essential *actus*, since it constitutes a certain ultimate species of substance. Therefore, it cannot be related in the way of a substantial *potentia* to the further form.

Finally, there is a general reason, since one and the same substance cannot be essentially and *per se* constituted in two ultimate species. But it would be constituted in a proper and complete species through any one of those forms. Therefore, those two forms cannot be simultaneously conjoined to the same matter. Otherwise, any substance, regardless how complete, could be actualized through a further substantial form, since no better reason can be given in one case than in another.

Also relevant here is that common argument that a form coming to a being already constituted in *actus* cannot make something one *per se* but only something one *per accidens*, according to Aristotle in *Metaphysics* VII, text. 49, and *De anima* II, text. 7. For this reason it cannot be a substantial form but only an accidental form, since a substantial form constitutes something one *per se* rather than something one *per accidens*. The reason is that substantial form gives being unqualifiedly and essentially, and for that reason cannot presuppose a thing constituted in unqualified being and in a complete and consummate essence. But an accidental form gives being in a qualified way, which is joined *per accidens* to a consummate essence. It is impossible, therefore, for the subject that is the material cause of generable things and of substantial generation to be a complete substance and to be constituted through a proper and specific form.

12 [11]. And these arguments equally effectively show that that subject cannot be a simple substance that is whole and complete in a *ratio* and species of substance. For it would be impossible for such a substance to be further actualized and completed through a substantial form. For if this is repugnant to a composite substance, it is much more so to a simple substance that through itself is in complete and perfect *actus*. For that repugnancy does not arise from composition, but from <406> complete actuality in a *ratio* and essence of substance, which cannot within that genus be further

actualized substantially and essentially. This argument of repugnance, moreover, has a place by the same or greater reason in the case of simple substance, if a whole and complete being is supposed in that genus of substance. By this reason an immaterial substance cannot have the *ratio* of a substantial *potentia* to a further form, since it is a complete simple substance. The same is true in the case of celestial substance if it is physically simple, as many wish. For it is complete in a certain species of substance and, therefore, it cannot be further actualized substantially. Prime matter, therefore, which can be actualized substantially and which can compose together with a substantial form a being that is one *per se*, cannot be a simple substance of the sort that is whole and complete in the genus of substance.

13 [12]. I say third: the material cause of generable things is not a substance composed of a substantial *potentia* and some substantial form that is incomplete and quasi generic. Almost all the authors endorse this assertion against Avicenna, especially those who deny that there are multiple substantial forms in the same composite, as St. Thomas does in *ST Ia.76.3–4*, in *SCG II.58*, and in *Metaphysics VII*, lect. 12. The Thomists follow him: Capreolus in II, dist. 15, q. 1; Cajetan in the cited place in the first part of *ST* and *De anima II.1*; Ferrariensis in the cited place from *SCG*; Soncinas in *Metaphysics VIII*, q. 8; Javellus in q. 4; Soto in *Physics I*, q. 7; Astudillo in *De generatione I*, q. 1; Marsilius in the same place, q. 6; Albert of Saxony in q. 5; and, more widely, Giles of Rome in *De pluralitate formarum* and in *De anima II*, dub. 6. The same is taught by Philoponus in *De generatione* in the beginning of book I; Themistius in *Physics V*, text. 7; and the Commentator in *De substantia orbis*, in *Metaphysics I*, text. 17, and in *Physics I*, text. 65 and 69. In fact, even Avicenna in *De anima I*, p. 1, ch. 3, indicates that only the matter remains in corruption and in *The Book of Healing I*, ch. 3, he questions whether corporeity also passes away in corruption, as he himself said. Aristotle also clearly indicates the same view in *De generatione I*, text. 12, and in the other places cited above. Various arguments are made by the doctors. Nevertheless, two suffice, since they can be taken with proportion from the proofs for the previous assertion.

14 [13]. The first argument is that there is no indication in nature of such a form that is coeval with and inseparable from matter nor is there any effect for the sake of which it is necessary. Therefore, <col. b> to imagine such a form is without foundation or necessity. The antecedent is shown: for that form has no quality

The third conclusion.

St. Thomas.
Capreolus.
Ferrarienses.
Cajetan.
Soncinas.
Javellus.
Soto.
Marsilius.
Astudillo.
Albert of Saxony.
Avicenna.

proper to it through which it is cognized nor can it be gathered from substantial transformation. For all that can be gathered from transformations of that sort is that there is some substantial subject for it. But that it be composite is not necessary for it to have the *ratio* of a subject and it cannot be inferred from any other indication.

You will say that being extended and divided from other things is necessary for the *ratio* of a subject of physical change, and for this it is necessary that it have some form. For matter alone through itself does not have the capacity for extension and division, since it is an *actus* that distinguishes. For this was the foundation of the contrary view.

But this reason is of no moment, since either we suppose that in the order of nature quantity and extension strictly precede substantial generation in prime matter or we suppose that they follow on the form introduced through generation and affect the whole composite. In neither way is it necessary that the subject of generation be a composite of matter and some form. Each part is shown: for if quantity is presupposed for the form introduced through generation, it can easily be understood as inhering in the entity of matter itself. For, as we will show below, matter has true and substantial entity.

15 [14]. It is confirmed: for this composite of matter and the form of corporeity that is being imagined is incomplete in what it is and potential such that it naturally seeks a further form without which it either cannot be at all or at least cannot be in a connatural way. Nevertheless, it is said that this composite is by nature first a sufficient subject of quantity before it receives a further form. Therefore, it would be much better and easier to attribute that whole capacity to the simple entity of matter, since no greater repugnancy can be imagined with respect to this in simple entity than in that composite. Nor will the actuality of such an entity, of whatever sort it is, be more repugnant with union and *per se* composition with an ultimate substantial form than the actuality of that composite of matter and the form of corporeity. Therefore, that form is not necessary according to this way of supposing.

Much less is it necessary if we suppose that quantity follows the form that is introduced through generation. For according to this view quantity in the order of nature presupposes a substance composed of matter and proper form. Hence, according to this opinion it should consequently be said that before <407> the intrinsic instant of generation, in the whole time in which the previous alteration happens there is presupposed matter in itself extended and divided from other things through the quantity and form of the

thing that will be corrupted, but in the instant of generation it is conserved extended and divided through the introduced form and the quantity concomitant with it in the same instant. Therefore, there is no natural effect and no sign by reason of which such a form or composite on the part of matter should be admitted.

16 [15]. The second argument is that a form of this sort is impossible in matter with the subsequent forms. This is commonly shown from the maxima that something one *per se* does not come to be from two entities in *actus*. For the first substantial form constitutes a being in absolute and unqualified *actus*, since it gives unqualified being. Therefore, no additional (*superveniens*) form can constitute a being that is one *per se* and unqualifiedly.

But it can be responded to this argument that it only proceeds with respect to a substantial form that gives specific and ultimate being. For a form that precisely gives generic being, then, although it has the *ratio* of *actus* with respect to the matter, it nevertheless is related as *potentia* to the lower form. And since it is of the same genus, it will be able to constitute a being *per se* one with its *actus*. For in this way these authors philosophize in the case of physical forms just as we all argue in the case of metaphysical differences. In the latter sort of case, the subalternate difference is the *actus* actuating the higher genus and constituting a proper species. Yet that species is a *potentia* towards a lower difference, with which it metaphysically composes a being *per se* one. According to the aforementioned view, the same thing should be said in the case of physical forms. Hence, when it is said that every substantial form constitutes a being unqualifiedly in *actus*, it will be responded that this is true in due proportion. For a generic form constitutes a being in *actus* in a generic grade, but a specific form in a specific grade. And the maxim ‘that what comes to a being in *actus* comes to it accidentally’.⁹

17 [16]. For this reason, in order to attack that view at the root, we must prove that there cannot be a form that precisely gives generic being lest it also give some specific being in that genus. For once this has been proved, the given reasoning will proceed well enough, since every substantial form constitutes a being unqualifiedly in *actus* and in some ultimate species of substance. And for this reason it is impossible for a composite constituted through such a form to be further actualizable through a substantial form.

That assumption, moreover, <col. b> is proven first by induc-

No form can precisely give a generic grade.

⁹On the issue of how many substantial forms one substance has, see *DM* 15.10.

tion, first in the case of accidental forms and then also in the case of separate forms. For qualities are also conceived as giving specific being (for example, being white) and generic being (for example, being coloured, etc.), and yet there is no accidental form that in the thing precisely gives generic being and not some specific being. Likewise, in the case of angels there is given the generic *ratio* of spirit and the proper specific difference. But there cannot be—in fact, there cannot be conceived—some separate form that is a spiritual substance and that in the thing itself stops precisely in this generic *ratio*. Therefore, for the same reason, in the case of substantial forms, which are as it were intermediate no form can be given that in the thing precisely gives a generic grade. For no reason can be given for the difference.

Whence, I argue, second, from the proper *ratio* of the forms themselves, since one cannot understand a form existing in the thing itself that is not essentially constituted in some ultimate species of substantial form. But every form communicates its whole being and its whole essence to the composite. Therefore, it constitutes the composite in some ultimate species of composite substance. The consequence with the minor are evident and can best be shown by the induction made in the first argument. But the major also seems most certain, since every substantial form has a proper entity distinct in the thing itself from matter or from other forms. Therefore, it is necessary to understand in that entity the ultimate and proper difference or *ratio* through which it is essentially distinguished from the other forms having different essences but with which it agrees in the common *ratio* of substantial form. Therefore, every substantial form is necessarily constituted according to its entity in some ultimate species of substantial form.

18 [17]. You will say: prime matter also has its own proper substantial entity and yet according to itself is not constituted in some ultimate species but is only reduced to the genus of material substance until it is determined to some particular *ratio* through form. Therefore, the same thing can be said about the form common to coeval matter.

I respond that the assumption is false, for the prime matter of generable things, which we are now discussing, is essentially constituted in some ultimate species of matter. It retains this under every form and cannot change it; at most it can be accommodated to this or that form through superadded accidents. But since <408> this essence of matter, although in itself it is specific and ultimate, is such that it can itself really be communicated to multiple

The prime matter of generables is a stable indivisible and claims a species for itself.

substances essentially diverse. For this reason, as far as it itself is concerned, it is said to be reduced to the material substance of generables as such and not to some species of that. From this is gathered in passing that the concept of generable substance as such is not generic by reason of matter but by reason of a common grade or agreement in form.

19 [18]. You will press on and say that even if matter in its essence has the ultimate specification of matter, it nevertheless is common to multiple substances essentially diverse. Therefore by equal reason although a form of corporeity in its entity and essential concept has some ultimate specification, it nevertheless could be common to multiple substances having further *rationes* essentially diverse.

I respond that the reasons are not equal. For the essence of matter is as it were the foundation of a whole substantial and composite nature. For this reason it is only a kind of inchoate essence (if I may put it this way) through the mode of *potentia*, and for this reason it of itself is indifferent so that it may be completed through different *actus*. Form, on the other hand, is the complement of substantial nature and essence. For this reason, by the very fact that it has a determinate and specific *ratio* of form, once it is conjoined to matter it completes with it a whole substantial nature and is constituted in some ultimate substantial species. For this reason it does not leave that nature indifferent to a further species. On account of this all those who posit a form of corporeity in all things or in all natural things consequently say that that form is precisely constituted in the subalternate grade of corporeity apart from any essential contraction, which really is unintelligible.

20 [19]. And they consequently also admit that the composite of matter and form of that sort, if it were conserved in reality apart from a further form, is an individual of a genus of corruptible body and not placed in any of its ultimate species. Moreover, that it can be thus conserved in that way through [God's] absolute power seems evident, speaking consistently, since the lower forms really are distinguished from that composite and *a fortiori* will be clear from the things that we will say below about matter. But Scotus also thinks it is possible naturally, as, for example, in the death of a human being or other similar cases. For he admits substantial corruption in that case without generation and that a cadaver is nothing other than this individual body affected by these accidents and not constituted in any lower <col. b> substantial species.

This consequence, however, to me seems in itself absurd and

incredible. For no more can this individual body existing *per se* without any specification be conceived than this spirit beyond all species or this coloured thing affected by this colour but by no species of colour. And the reason was given above. For individual entity necessarily differs essentially from others and therefore it is necessary that it in itself be constituted in a proper essence not common to others. Hence, it is confirmed, for it follows from the stated position that the generic and specific *rationes* are really distinct in one and the same thing, since they are taken from really distinct forms. But that the consequent is false is clear from what was said above concerning universals and will also be shown in the following arguments.

21 [20]. The third argument is taken from the difference between essential composition that is physical and that is metaphysical. To make these equivalent in this is the cause of the error, since one composition exists in things but the other in concepts. For this reason, I argue: for if physical form that only confers a generic grade can be given, then really distinct substantial forms should be multiplied to as many as there are generic and specific grades of material substances. The conclusion is false. Therefore.

The inference is shown by equivalent reason. For what reason can be offered on account of which a certain generic grade is given through a really distinct proper form but not the other ones? Especially given the fact that according to the view that we are combatting the form that gives the being of a body is distinguished from the form giving the being of fire or of a stone or others like them not only in the case of things that seem to be elevated to a higher grade of body (for example, living things) but also in the case of the lowest inanimate bodies. This contraction exists with the minimum of difference that there can be between some genus and a substantial difference. If, therefore, that suffices for a real distinction of forms, any difference whatever will suffice.

Hence, although philosophers who admit that conclusion are not lacking, it is, nevertheless, not only false but also ridiculous. First, because it stands evidently by the induction made earlier that that real distinction of forms is not necessary for abstracting the concepts of genus, difference, and species (for example, in the case of angels and accidents).¹⁰ Second, because it follows that in the case of human beings soul should be multiplied to three, which is a view that is entirely false, as I assume from the science of <409> the soul. In fact, they would have to be multiplied even more, since

The absurdity from the opinion of those asserting a form of corporeity.

¹⁰See n. 17.

within the grade of sentient things some essential agreement can be abstracted between human beings and some perfect animals that is not common to all animals. And in the *ratio* of intelligent things a generic *ratio* can be abstracted that is common to human beings and angels but that is contracted through a proper difference to human beings. Hence, it follows further that innumerable really distinct forms must be asserted in individual composites. For generic and specific differences can be multiplied in different ways according to difference agreements and differences that can easily be considered in things and according to which different common or particular concepts can be abstracted.

It is, therefore, a serious error in metaphysics and philosophy to distinguish real and physical forms on account of our confused or distinct way of conceiving from which the multiplication of genera and differences often arises. Otherwise, not just one but two or three forms of corporeity must be posited. One is of body in general insofar as it is a genus of corruptible and incorruptible things, simple or mixed. Another is of corruptible or mixed bodies as such. All of these are ridiculous. Hence, not only is it not necessary to multiply these forms on account of those operations of the mind, it is also truly repugnant to them. For it belongs to the *ratio* of proper genus and proper difference that they express the same essence of a thing conceived in different ways. Worthy of note.

22 [21]. This, finally, is confirmed: for it is impossible for there to be a substantial form giving a specific grade of substance that does not also give that generic grade and formal effect that is thought to be a distinct form of corporeity. Therefore, such a form is both superfluous and impossible.

The consequence is evident, because the same essential predicate and the same formal effect cannot apply to the same thing through two really distinct forms. The antecedent is proven: for a substantial form that confers a specific grade and does not essentially include the common and generic *ratio* of a substantial form informing matter cannot be given; rather, precisely this *ratio* is sufficient to constitute a form of corporeity. Therefore, the form of corporeity is not a special form, but is any substantial form whatever considered according to the common *ratio* of an informing substantial form. The minor is proven (for the remaining premises are clear): for precisely from the fact that some substance is understood a composite of <col. b> matter and substantial form, it is essentially a corporeal substance or a body in the category of substance. For from the force of such a composition it is both

essentially distinct from incorporeal substance and is capable of quantity or the three dimensions in which the *ratio* of corporeal substance consists. Hence, the form of corporeity as such does not imply or require that it itself be corporeal or extended, but only that it informs matter. In virtue of the composite resulting from that informing, it is capable of the three dimensions. An intermediate form that gives the generic being of a body is, therefore, neither necessary nor possible. Rather, any substantial form by the force of its generic *ratio* confers that [generic being].

23 [22]. What remains, then, from all that has been said is that the first material cause of generable substances is not some whole substance, nor is it any body or composite of matter and form. And hence for the generation of substances, no ingenerable and incorruptible body is presupposed in the mode of a subject in which the generation is received. Only prime matter is presupposed. (Only, I say, with respect to substance. For what should be said with respect to accidents, we will see later.)

The conclusion is inferred from all that has been said.