

Questions on the Third Book of *On the Soul*

By Simon of Faversham

Edited by D. Sharp

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In Vat. Lat. 10135, there is an anonymous copy of the entirety of the Questions on *On the Soul* of Simon, coming to 114 questions. Five are introductory, 25 on Book I, 57 on Book II, and 27 on Book III, matching those translated below. In Kassel, Murhardsche Bibliothek der Stadt Kassel und Landesbibliothek, 2o Ms. Phys. 11, there occurs qq. 1, 3, 4, 9, 15, 16/17, 19, 20, 22–26, 33–35, 41, 47, 48, 59, 60, 62–69, 72, 71/73*, 88–113, 114*. The questions on Book III match those of the Vatican ms. quite closely, the rest looks like a different redaction. In addition there are two groups of five additional questions here, associated with 71/73 and 114. The first are: *Utrum omnibus viventibus inferioribus sit naturalissimum ut quodlibet eorum faciat alteram quale ipsum*; *Utrum ignis sit causa alimenti vel causa illius quod aliquid nutriatur*; *utrum anima sit principium corporis animati seu vivi*; *utrum sensus particularis decipiatur circaproprimum obiectum*. The second are: *Utrum potentiae animae sint de substantia animae*; *utrum potentia distinguantur per obiecta*; *quaeratur de distinctione sensuum interiorum et exteriorum, utrum bene distinguantur a philosopho*; *utrum intellectus sit principium movens in animali*; *utrum, secundum quod philosophus vult, oporteat esse sensum communem*. There are other fragmentary pieces in a number of other mss.

The questions, then, are as follows (Vennebusch, *Die Questiones in tres libros De anima des Simon von Faversham*)

1. Whether there can be a science concerning the soul.
2. Whether this science is practical or speculative.
3. Whether the science of the soul is natural.
4. Whether this science concerns the soul as its subject, or the animated body.
5. Whether the science of the soul is useful.

Book I

6. Whether this science is a science is a good and honorable thing.
7. Whether every science is a good thing.
8. Whether every science is good and honorable.
9. Whether the soul is in the genus of substance.
10. Whether it is difficult to receive certitude concerning the soul.
11. Whether this science is the most difficult.
12. Whether the soul is composed from potentiality and actuality or from matter and form.
13. Whether one can arrive at what a thing is from the cognition of its accidents.
14. Whether accidents are understood before substance.
15. Whether the definitions of genus and species are definitions of realities outside the soul.
16. Whether there is a proper function of the soul.
17. Whether understanding is the proper function of the soul.
18. Whether the universal is nothing, or posterior.
19. Whether natural things are defined through sensible matter.
20. Whether the soul is moved.
21. Whether a spherical body on a plane touches it at a point.

22. Whether the understanding differs from sense.
23. Whether every soul is incorruptible in its substance.
24. Whether the soul is composed of all things so that it cognizes all things.
25. Whether the soul a soul departing from one body can enter another.
26. Whether the whole soul is in every part of the body.
27. Whether an atom is a body.
28. Whether an atom is a natural body.
29. Whether the soul is a number.
30. Whether the elements have a soul.

Book II

31. Whether the Philosopher here provides a division of substance.
32. Whether the division by which the Philosopher divides into matter and form and composite is good.
33. Whether the soul is a substantial form.
34. Whether the soul is actuality.
35. Whether the soul is the actuality of the body.
36. Whether one thing arises from soul and body.
37. Whether any definition is common to every soul.
38. Whether the understanding or the intellective soul is destructible.
39. Whether the soul is corruptible.
40. Whether the parts of worms have soul.
41. Whether the capacities of the soul belong to the essence of the soul.
42. Whether the soul is the cause of its capacities.
43. Whether the capacities of the soul have any order among themselves.
44. Whether potentiality and actuality are distinguished through their object.
45. Whether a flavor necessarily agrees with nourishment.
46. Whether fire increases indefinitely.
47. Whether the capacities of the soul are distinguished by their objects.
48. Whether the generative, nutritive, and growth are capacities of the soul.
49. Whether to nourish oneself is the work only of those things having a soul.
50. Whether growth is the work only of those things having a soul.
51. Whether generation is most natural to living things.
52. Whether it is necessary, for a living mortal to be preserved in being, that nutriment is required.
53. Whether a living being in the act of nutrition remains one and the same in number throughout its life.
54. Whether generation is most natural to living beings.
55. Whether the senses are a passive power.
56. Whether, in order that sensibles should move the senses, it is necessary to assume an agent sense.
57. Whether the leading forth by which someone is led from ignorance to scientific knowledge is a suffering of action.
58. Whether the sense can err concerning its own object.
59. Whether common sensibles are sensible per se.
60. Whether sensibles act on the senses accidentally.
61. Whether light, in order that color be seen, is required because of color.
62. Whether light is always per se visible.

63. Whether color is what is seen per se.
64. Whether light is a body.
65. Whether light has real or intentional being.
66. Whether vision necessarily arises through a medium.
67. Whether sound has being in the air as in a subject, or in what makes something vibrate, or in the vibrated.
68. Whether bodies striking one another is the active cause of sound.
69. Whether the sound that is in the whole air continuously between being heard and the place where percussion occurs is real in being or intentional.
70. Whether an echo is identically the same sound in number as the first sound.
71. Whether odor is in the medium really or intentionally.
72. Whether odor multiplies itself in the medium all at once or successively.
73. Whether odor multiplies itself in the medium really or intentionally.
74. Whether human beings have a worse sense of smell than other animals.
75. Whether the visual and olfactory powers, and so on, are of the same species in human beings and in other animals.
76. Whether what can be tasted is also tangible.
77. Whether sense is of one of contrary things.
78. Whether the sense of touch is one.
79. Whether flesh is the medium or organ itself in touch.
80. Whether touch always feels through air as through an extraneous medium, or through water.
81. Whether sense is universally susceptible of species without matter.
82. Whether an excelling sensible destroys the sense.
83. Whether natural color and the species of color are of different genera or species, and thus concerning the other senses.
84. Whether the common sense is one.
85. Whether a particular sense senses itself sensing, for instance, does vision see itself seeing color, and so on for the others.
86. Whether it is necessary to assume a common sense distinct from the other particular senses.
87. Whether four interior powers are to be distinguished, namely common sense, imagination (*fantasia*), *estimatio*,¹ and memory.

[Merton College, Ms. 292, ff. 364r–370v.]

Here begin the questions on the third book of the *De Anima*, disputed by Master Simon of Faversham, and the preceding questions are by Master Siger on the same third book.

Question 1(88)

¹Estimatio is the immediate perception of a particular causal relation, for instance, that this ball's striking this wall on this occasion produced a noise.

It is asked about our understanding² whether it was made new at some time (*de novo*) or exists from eternity.

And Averroës seems to intend that it is not made at any time when commenting on *Physics* VIII, where he says that the old will does not make something new except by using something old, namely the motion of the sky. From this it is argued that everything made at some time is made using the motion of the sky. But the soul is not made using the motion of the sky,³ for it is produced immediately by the First. Therefore etc.

Again, Proclus says that whatever the First made it made through its being. But the First Agent is always the same (*eodem modo se habet*). Therefore whatever is immediately produced by the First will always be the same (*eodem modo se habebit*), and so is not made at some time.

Again, Avicenna in his *Metaphysics* VI said that if something arises by motion that was not earlier <than the agent was>, this is not through the substance of the agent. But the soul arose through the substance of the First <Agent>. Therefore it is not made at some time.⁴ And this is clear.

On the other hand, it is argued that the Philosopher says in *Metaphysics* XII that no material form is before the production of the composite, but some remain after the destruction of the composite, for instance, if it is the soul, not all of it, but the understanding. So the understanding is not before the composite, although it remains after its destruction, and so it originates at some time.

The Commentator replied to this question that the understanding is from eternity and moves a body from eternity, even though it is sometimes separated from any body. And this argument moved him—a sufficient agent in which nothing is lacking produces an effect similar to itself. But the First Agent is like this. Therefore etc. And so the soul does not originate at any time, but is eternal. And this seems to be the Philosopher's view in *Physics* VIII, since otherwise something new would occur in the First Agent. This argument seems to presuppose something false, for it supposes that the First Agent acts from a necessity of its nature, and if this is assumed, the proposition follows. Now this is false, since the First Agent must act in such a way that it is master of its action; but if it acted from the necessity of its nature, it would not be master of its action, since it could not refrain from acting. Therefore etc.

Now although power, form and will are the same in the First Agent, they differ as far as we are concerned, for power executes, reason discerns, and will commands. Therefore, he produces all things through the will. Hence I reply that it is not contradictory for the understanding to have been from eternity, but neither is it necessary. Proof of the first: Although the cause precedes the effect without qualification according to perfection, it can occur at the same time according to duration, as is apparent in the sun and its rays, and in principles and conclusions of demonstrations, for both are eternal. Hence, although the understanding is caused by the First Agent, it is not contradictory for it to have been from eternity. Now this same is not necessary, since the will of God is the cause of realities. Therefore because God does not necessarily will it to be from eternity, it is not necessary that it be from eternity. But God does not necessarily will the understanding to be from eternity. for he does not necessarily will anything to be from eternity except Himself, for everything else is destructible at his will. Therefore etc.

²I have decided to render *intellectus* as “understanding,” while rendering *intelligibile* as “intelligible,” and *intellectualis* as “intellectual.” This is not entirely consistent, but it makes for the most easily understood English, I think.

³Being immaterial.

⁴Since at every time we can say that the First Agent existed earlier, and so it could not have arisen from His substance at that time, but only through some motion or other accident not to be identified with the substance, which arose at the time in question.

As to the arguments, in reply to the first, when it is argued that everything that is made etc., I reply that everything that is made through movement and change he makes through the motion of the sky. But since the soul is not made through movement and change, therefore it is not necessary that it arise through the motion of the sky.

To the second, when it is argued that whatever the First does etc., it is true that whatever the First does it does through its being, which is its will. You will claim that its will is its own. I hold that this is true, yet it can produce something new. And you will claim, that in that case a change will occur in it <which is absurd>. I hold that this is not necessary, and this is clear from the opinion of the Expositor which he puts in *Physics* VIII: If I have a will to run after three days have passed, and I run once those three days are past, no change occurs⁵ in my will. Thus if⁶ the First Cause, willing from eternity to produce the understanding of Socrates in a certain time, should then produce it, His will is not changed. And still, you will say that now He produces and earlier He did not, therefore He is changed. I reply that this novelty does not attend on the producer, but on the product.⁷

In reply to the third argument, when it is argued that if something makes a motion, etc., I reply that if the saying of Avicenna has any truth, it must be understood to apply to agents having matter, for among these what produces the effect is not a sufficient cause of the effect. But the First is a cause sufficient for its effect, and therefore, notwithstanding its being produced as a new thing (*novitate*), the effect can be produced by the First through its substance.

Question 2 (89)

It is asked whether the understanding is made through natural change (*motum et transmutationem*).⁸

And it seems that it is, since everything produced at some time by a particular agent arises through natural change. But the understanding arises at some time by a particular agent. Therefore etc. The Commentator explains the minor premise commenting on *Metaphysics* VII, and he says that the agent giving the form and changing the matter is the same—but a particular agent changes the matter, therefore etc.

Again, according to the Philosopher a human being is from a human being bringing it to be naturally (*ab homine generante*). But a human being is a human being through its understanding. Therefore the understanding is from a natural coming-to-be.⁹

Again, the intellectual and the sensitive are from one substance of the soul, that is, denying any degree in them. But the sensitive is from a natural coming-to-be, and therefore so is the intellectual.

On the other hand, it is argued that everything changed through natural change is corporeal. But the understanding is not corporeal. Therefore nothing is brought to it through natural change.

⁵Emend *facit* to *fit*.

⁶Emend *non* to *si*.

⁷His action occurs in eternity, the thing is produced in time. One might worry if this is possible, I suppose, if one is strong enough a NeoPlatonist, but no Christian thinker would have had any trouble with it.

⁸Natural change = change which is brought about through something potential coming to be actual through the natural operation of something actual.

⁹*Generat* = a natural coming into existence, through some change in preexisting matter, for a substance.

As the Commentator reports here, Alexander assumed the understanding to be a certain power caused by the elements, which the Agent Understanding above illuminates. Now he proves that every kind of form is produced by the elements arranged in various ways, first the form of minerals, of which the kinds are stones, silver, and so on, which are produced in the belly of the earth, then the form of plants, and so on. And Alexander's argument was this—every form of changeable matter is introduced through natural change, but the understanding is a form of changeable matter; therefore etc.

Albert¹⁰ says that although Alexander often spoke well, here he explained things in the worst possible way, for the power which cognizes immaterial and incorporeal realities is not caused by the elements, but the understanding is like this; therefore, etc. He argues the contrary in two ways. The first is that if it were from the elements, it would be material, and then it would not grasp all things, which is contrary to the Philosopher. Again, the understanding would grasp the particular and not the universal, but this is false, for the understanding deals with universals, and the senses with particulars.

Hence it must be held that the understanding does not arise through natural change, nor from any particular agent, since the effect is not nobler than its cause. But the immaterial is nobler than the material, and the understanding is immaterial. Therefore it cannot be produced by any material agent. Therefore it cannot be produced through natural change. Therefore it is brought into being by creation, from which it immediately follows that it is produced immediately¹¹ by the First Agent, since every instrumental agent acts with something presupposed. Now every agent other than the First Agent is an instrument with respect to the First. Therefore every such agent presupposes another. Therefore that which produces something with nothing presupposed is the First Agent. Now nothing is presupposed in the production of the understanding, for it does not arise from matter; therefore it is produced immediately by the First Agent.

In response to the arguments, to the first, when it is said that every effect etc., I grant the major premise, and deny the minor. To this assumption the Commentator responds that the agent giving the form is the same etc. I reply that "form" is two-fold. There are some which are brought forth from the capacity of matter, and such are those which do not have any being other than their existence in matter, and the understanding is not such, and the Commentator did not mean to talk about such. Others are not¹² led forth from the capacities of matter, and the Commentator means to talk about these. And you will say that prime matter is potentially all forms which are in actuality in the Prime Mover, according to the Commentator on *Metaphysics* IX. But the understanding is in actuality in the Prime Mover, therefore it is in prime matter potentially, and so it is brought forth from the capacity of matter. I reply that all forms that are in the Prime Mover, considered as a mover, are in prime matter potentially, and such are as many as are brought forth through motion, but understanding is not in their number.

As to the second argument, I reply that a human being brings a human being to be because he disposes semen to the leading in of the understanding by changing the matter as regards certain active and passive qualities, and, the matter being thus disposed, the giver of forms, that is, God, infuses the understanding.

As to the third argument, when it is argued that the sensitive and intellectual etc., I grant the major premise. And you reply next that the sensitive is in a human being through what brings it to be. I reply that the substance of the sensible soul in a human being is not from what brings it to be, for it is the same soul in a

¹⁰Albert the Great, *De Anima* III tome 2, chapter 4.

¹¹I.e., not using an instrument.

¹²Emendation—add *non*.

human being that is animal, vegetable, and rational. And therefore as the substance of a rational soul is not caused from what brings to be, thus neither is the substance of the sensible soul. This is because when a human being is most complete, it is not brought to be by a single bringing to be, like a mineral, but first the vegetative is brought in, and, this withdrawing, the sensible comes next, and this withdrawing, the understanding, which has all these virtually, is introduced.¹³

Question 3 (90)

It is asked whether the understanding is immaterial; and first, it is asked whether it is a passive power.

And it is argued that it is not. Every attribute (*passio*) that is produced arises from a substance. Therefore everything passive is corporeal.¹⁴ But the understanding is not corporeal. Therefore etc.

Again, the Commentator says on Book IX of the *Metaphysics* that every active capacity reduces to a primary actuality, and so every passive capacity reduces to a primary passive thing, which is matter. Therefore everything that suffers action suffers it through matter. But the understanding has no matter. Therefore etc.

On the other hand, everything that is sometimes thus, and sometimes not, suffers action. But the understanding is like this. Therefore, etc.

As to the question, I reply that two things are required in an attribute (*passio*) strictly so-called, change (*transmutatio*) and reception (*receptio*). Hence I hold that the understanding is not strictly said to suffer (*patitur*), because it is not changed, though it is said to suffer in so far as it receives. I prove that it does not change since every change is by reason of contrariety,¹⁵ but what comes to the understanding is not a contrary, since it is not material as such. Therefore etc.

Hence, Themistius says that the manner of reception is four-fold, for some receive true, real forms, some intentional forms. Of those receiving real forms some receive forms at a time, like matter, and some forms not at any time, like the sky.¹⁶ And of those receiving the intentions of forms, some receive them at a time, as the possible understanding, and some not at a time, as an intelligence¹⁷ does.

In reply to the arguments, when it is argued that every attribute etc., I reply that it is true concerning the attribute which arises through a change (*per transmutationem*). And you hold that everything passive is corporeal. This is true of those things that are passive, strictly speaking, but the understanding is not passive strictly speaking, and therefore it is not corporeal strictly speaking.

As to the other, I reply that if the Commentator understands that every passive capacity leads back to a capacity of matter, which is subject to things that produce and destroy, this is a false understanding. For four kinds of matter are found in beings. One of these kinds of matter resides in a capacity to receive the form and be deprived of it, and such is the matter of things that can be produced or destroyed, Another resides in a capacity for the form alone, and such is in supercelestial things. And another resides in the capacity to understand, and such is the possible understanding. But a fourth is found in the capacity for being, and every

¹³This is, of course, the Thomist doctrine of the Unity of Form of the human soul.

¹⁴I.e., it has at least a matter in which it resides, namely the substance from which it arises.

¹⁵Every *transmutatio* is from one contrary to another, as from hot to cold.

¹⁶Alexander assumed the sky always was, and always had its present form.

¹⁷A separated intelligence, that is, an angel, without a body, which has the form all along.

passive capacity is reduced to this passive capacity. Hence I hold that everything that suffers action suffers it through matter. Now the understanding does not have matter. Therefore the understanding is not strictly passive.

Question 4 (91)

It is asked concerning the possible understanding whether it is necessary that it have an intelligible innate in it for it to understand actually.

And it seems that it is. That which has a cognition innately within it before it receives any learning has an intelligible innately within it. But the possible understanding before it receives any learning has a cognition innately within it. Therefore etc. The major premise is obvious, and the minor will be explained. Aristotle held in *Posterior Analytics* I,¹⁸ against Plato, that everything anyone learns, they know beforehand universally, but are ignorant of beforehand in particular. Therefore before the possible Understanding learns something it has knowledge of it universally, and this is innate.

Again, Averroes claims, on *Metaphysics* II, that there are some things in the genus of beings that are like the doorway in a house, and are hidden from no one and are naturally possessed by us, and such are first principles. From this it is argued that whoever has first principles innately has some intelligible innately. Therefore, etc.

Again, Averroes in the same place, the second chapter, where the Philosopher proves the situation with material causes, he claims that a knower is not produced from a knower within, nor from a knower without, but in some middle way. Therefore the understanding, when it learns something, is not in pure potentiality for understanding. But it is in pure potentiality if it does not have any intelligible innate to it. Therefore it must have some intelligible innate to it.

Again, the Philosopher says here¹⁹ that the understanding is like a blank tablet prepared to receive pictures. Therefore there is some preparation for the understanding to understand, and that would not happen unless there is an innate intelligible. Therefore it will have some intelligible innately.

On the other hand, it is argued thus: A power which is not of any intelligible²⁰ before it understands in actuality does not have any intelligible innate in it. Therefore etc.

Some have held that the possible understanding has an intelligible innately, and this is nothing other than the agent understanding illuminating the possible understanding. And they explain this through an example when they say that there is light in the case of vision, and through it the vision is moved to seeing every visible thing. Thus they assume in the understanding an agent understanding as an innate intelligible, and through this the understanding is moved to understand every intelligible. This position is not true, for if the understanding had such an intelligible, it would be maximally proportioned to the understanding, but this light is not proportional to it, since the understanding is in a way material, and in a way not, and so this must be true as well of that intelligible. But those who take up this position assume that this light is wholly immaterial, and so it cannot be innate to the understanding. Again, what they advance is also false, namely that the vision has light engrafted by nature, and that it is the primary object of vision. Even if it were true that light is engrafted in it by nature, still it would not be the primary object of vision, since then vision would always see, since that light

¹⁸*Posterior Analytics* I 2, 71a19.

¹⁹*Metaphysics* 993b27.

²⁰Emend *aliquod intelligibilium* to *aliquorum intelligibilium*.

would always be present to vision.

There is another opinion which assumes that the possible understanding has the intelligible innately within it. And they hold that these innate intelligibles are first principles. And this is what the Commentator seems to intend, and also the Philosopher in *Metaphysics* II [993b27], who says that it is not possible to err naturally about first principles, since they come to one who has them. This is not true, since just as the possible understanding is that from which all things arise <as understood>, so the agent understanding is that by which all things are made <as understood>. But if first principles are innate in the possible understanding, then the agent understanding did not produce them, and this is contrary to what the Philosopher means.

Again, if anything is a first intelligible, it will have no other intelligible before it. But it is clear that these intelligibles have intelligibles before them, namely terms, for we cognize principles insofar as we cognize their terms. Therefore etc.

It must be replied that the possible understanding does not have any intelligible innately within itself before it actually understands. For the Philosopher says that the understanding is like a tablet upon which nothing is written, but on which many things can be written. But on such a tablet nothing is actually written. Therefore neither is anything in the understanding, I hold, considered as it is possible.

Again, it is clear by the argument that as it is in the senses so it is in the understanding. But there is no sensible innately in the senses, since this would impede the senses. Therefore etc.

Again, as matter is related to particular forms, so the understanding is related to universal forms. But matter has no particular form in actuality. Therefore etc. But whoever says that the possible understanding has an intelligible in actuality ignores the signification of this word “possible,” since the possible as such is only suited to receive all things, and such a thing is empty of all things.

As to the arguments, to the first, when it is said that before all teaching etc., I hold that it does not have any cognition in such a way that the understanding has some intelligible innately within itself. Still, there is an order in the genus of intelligibles, because first principles are understood first, and so they are not cognized through any argument but offer themselves immediately to the understanding. But those which are intelligible secondarily are cognized through argument, and so, strictly speaking we understand first principles, but learn the others. Hence I reply to the major premise that it is falsely assumed to the extent that it is assumed that if anything is not cognized through argument and teaching, then its cognition is innate, for first principles are not cognized through teaching, and yet their cognition is not innate.

As to the third, when it is said through the Commentator that first principles etc., I reply that first principles are called innate not because they are in the nature of the soul, but because they offer themselves immediately to the understanding, and are understood first by the understanding and are the causes of the intelligibility of all the others. The same remarks make it clear how to reply to the second argument.

Question 5 (92)

It is asked whether the understanding is a material power.

And it is argued that it is by the argument of Avicbron: Everything in which several things share is caused by something primary in their genus. Now several things, namely matter and understanding, share in the reception of forms and potential being. Therefore this reception is caused by something primary in their genus. But such a thing is the matter of the understanding. Therefore, since it is a receptive power, it is a material power.

Again, a power that is not abstracted from matter is material. But the understanding is a power not abstracted from matter. Therefore etc.

Again, every power abstracted [i.e. withdrawn] from matter according to its nature is actually

understanding and actually understood. But the understanding is not always actually understanding, since it is sometimes potential. Nor is it always actually understood since it does not understand itself except by understanding another, and it does not always understand another, therefore it does not [always] understand itself.

Again, what is actually understood is not withdrawn from matter, therefore neither is the understanding. The consequence is clear. Proof of the antecedent: What is actually one is not diversified except in accord with matter. But an actual understanding is one in actuality. Let it be assumed, then, that the same thing is understood by you and by myself. Then that thing is diverse in you and myself. Therefore the understanding is also diverse in you and myself, and consequently the understanding will have matter.

On the other hand, it is argued that whatever is neither body nor a power in a body is an immaterial power. But the understanding is like this. Therefore etc.

It must be understood that the understanding is not matter, nor is it something that has matter, nor does it arise through the capacities of matter.

Proof of the first: the understanding receives universal forms, but matter receives particular forms, therefore etc. Again, this is clear from the understanding's manner of reception, inasmuch as matter receives through changing, but the understanding does not, therefore etc. Again, privation is connected with matter, and privation is the principle of change, and therefore there is a principle of change in matter, and there is no principle of change in the understanding; therefore etc.

And I prove that the understanding does not have matter because matter does not give being. If it is thus, there will be both matter and form in the understanding, so that by reason of matter it receives being, and by reason of the form it gives being. But then it is only part of the soul as it gives being. If, then, it only gives being as a part, and not as a whole, not as a whole is it part of the soul, which is contrary to the Philosopher, where he says "concerning part of the soul etc." [429a10].

Again, neither does it arise through the capacities of matter, and this is explained by the argument of Avicenna: A universal has being in some manner. I ask whether a universal exists in the understanding or in a reality outside the understanding. Not in a reality <outside the understanding>, since then realities would be universal in actuality, and could move the understanding of themselves, and thus an agent understanding would be unnecessary, and this is false. So the universal is in the understanding. Therefore the understanding is universal, and separated; and consequently it does not arise through the capacities of matter.

Now it is true that there is in the understanding something material and something formal, for in everything other than the First what it is and that by which it is differ. So in everything other than the First there is some composition, and therefore there is something material in the understanding, that is, the possible understanding, and something formal, that is, the agent understanding.

In response to the arguments: as to the first, when it is argued that everything which is shared in etc., I reply that the major premise is true, if it is shared univocally and according to the same form, and not equivocally. To the minor premise, I reply that reception and such is shared by prime matter and the understanding equivocally, since prime matter receives forms through changing, but the understanding through apprehension. Again, there is a difference, because the understanding receives universal forms, and matter particular forms. Again, matter is the subject of the forms it receives, but the understanding is not.

As for the second argument, when it is argued that every power etc., I reply that every power that is entirely abstracted [from matter] is understanding and understood. The Philosopher says this in *Metaphysics* XII, that everything separated is immediately being and immediately one in number, giving and receiving, understanding and understood. But the understanding is not separated in this way, though, since it does not

use any bodily organ, it is still a power of a form that perfects matter.²¹

As for the third argument, I deny the antecedent of the proof. When it is claimed that whatever is one in form etc., I answer that this is true in the case of these material things, for here what is one according to form differs only through matter. And you reply, what is understood is one according to form. I hold that it is not necessary that what is understood be actually withdrawn from matter, and although it differs, this is not through matter, or in such a way that we can speak contradicting the first proposition²² and the second²³ in the same way. And when you say that what is understood is different in me and in you, therefore it is another in me than it is in you, I reply that what is understood is the same, but the species²⁴ is other by which it is understood by me and by you. And you will say, “it is all the same, for I have a doubt concerning this species, since if it is a different species in me and you, then this is through matter.” I reply that it is not necessary [that it occur through matter], that this species is another than that merely because it is in different understandings,²⁵ for it is like whiteness, which in this part of matter is other, and other in number from the whiteness in another part of matter, but is still the same in species with it. In the same way, what is understood by me is the same in species as what is understood by another, but different in number since it is united to the other.

Question 6 (93)

It is asked next whether the understanding is the form of a material substance.

And it is argued that it is not, as the Philosopher intends in *Metaphysics* VII (1045b16 ff.), the cause why the composite is truly one is that the matter attains to actuality through the form, so that the agent draws out the form, which is in the potentiality of the matter, from the matter. But the matter does not attain to actuality through the understanding, since understanding is not drawn from it. The understanding, then, does not become truly one in this way.

Again, the Philosopher intends that the composite does not function through the form alone. But the understanding functions by itself alone and understands the whole. Now the composite does not understand through itself, since if it did, the act of understanding would not be more abstract than the act of sensing.²⁶ Therefore etc.

Again, the understanding exists *per se*, therefore it does not inhere by nature in another. I prove the conclusion: whatever one contrary is in,²⁷ what is contrary to it will not be in that by nature. To subsist *per se*

²¹And so, of course, it is not a material capacity to receive forms after the manner of matter.

²²I.e. that what is understood is abstracted = withdrawn from matter, which Simon wants to deny.

²³I.e., that the understanding is immaterial, which Simon does not want to deny.

²⁴Here the ‘species’ is the representation in the understanding.

²⁵The manuscript adds here “And you will say, ‘it is all the same, for I raise a doubt concerning the understanding, since if it is a different species in me and in you, this is through matter.’ I hold that this is not necessary,…” This seems to be the same line copied a second time (homoteleton), with an emendation (from species to understanding) in an (unsuccessful) effort to make sense of the resulting text.

²⁶Thus, the act of understanding arises through a part of the composite, not the composite as such, namely, through the understanding.

²⁷The edition mistakenly has “merit” here, instead of “inert.”

and to inhere are contrary opposites. Therefore whatever *per se* subsistence is in, inherence will not be in it. But the understanding subsists *per se*, and therefore it does not inhere in anything. But the form inheres by nature in matter; therefore the understanding is not the form of any matter.

Again, every form which is a perfection of matter is brought forth through change. But the understanding is not brought forth through change. Therefore it is not the form of the body.

On the other hand, it is argued, that is the form and perfection of a reality by which it differs from other things by a specific difference. But man differs from other things through the understanding, and this is a specific difference. Therefore etc.

The intention of the Commentator was that the understanding is a separate substance and not the perfection of the body. Still, because he sees that each experiences himself to understand he found a way in which the possible understanding could be joined to us, through images, and the way in which it is joined to us is this, according to him—just as the sensible is related to the senses, so images to the understanding. But the sensible is received in the senses, thus the image is received in the understanding, and so the same in species is in the image and in the understanding, and as it is in the understanding it is its form. Hence he seemed to argue thus: whatever the form of something is joined to, that of which it is the form is also joined to it. But the form of the understanding is joined to us. Therefore the understanding is joined to us in some way. And in this way he took it that a human being can understand. Last, since the understanding is a substance separated from us, he took it that one person does not differ from another through the possible understanding, but through the passive understanding which is the cogitative power, and he assumed this understanding to be by corrupted upon the corruption of the body, but not the possible understanding.

This can't be right, since it cannot preserve human understanding in any way. For just as sensibles are related to the senses, so images are related to the understanding. But even though the senses abstract species from sensibles, it is not because of this that they sense sensibles. Therefore even though the understanding abstracts intelligible species from images it is not because of this that it understands images, or even ourselves through images. For if the image is the principle of understanding intrinsic to us, since it is necessary to understand the principle of understanding, it is necessary to understand the image; but it does not understand it; therefore etc.

Again, the species which is in the image is only the principle of understanding insofar as it is intelligible, but it is not intelligible as it is in the image; therefore it is not the principle of understanding in us as it is in the image. Therefore, if we understand, it is necessary to say that the understanding is in us.

Now what he says, that the understanding is a separated substance, is not true, since if it were we would not need the senses in understanding, for the manner of being presupposes action, and the manner of action. Therefore whatever has being separated from matter has action separated from matter. If, then, the understanding were to be separated in being, it would understand in separation, and thus it would not need the senses. Again, if our understanding were separated, it would understand itself through itself, just as other separated substances understand themselves. But this is not true, since nothing is actually intelligible before our understanding learns or discovers, but if it understood itself through its substance, something would be intelligible before learning or discovery.

Hence it must be held that the understanding is the form of the body, and this position is clear from the authority of the Philosopher, asserting in *De Anima* II [412a21], that the soul is the actuality of the body etc. And he says that this definition agrees with every part of the soul, but the understanding is part of our soul, therefore it is the actuality of the natural (*physici*), organic body etc. And this proved by argument thus: In order that something be the substantial form of something, it is only required that it give substantial being, being without qualification, to that of which it is the form. But our understanding is like that, although it subsists *per se*, still it gives being without qualification to matter, for the being it has it entirely communicates to matter.

Hence it is not absurd that the same thing should be being by which the form subsists and also a composite, because the composite subsists through the form. Therefore the understanding, since it imparts being without qualification, is the form of its matter

Again, the Commentator says that a function (*operatio*) produces knowing the form as a change of matter, therefore that by which something functions is its form. But a human being understands, and this whoever finds this in himself, and this is only through the understanding. A human being therefore understands, therefore he understand by something formal, and it is only by the understanding. For just as the Philosopher says, I call that the understanding by which the soul has wisdom and understands. The understanding, then, is the substantial form of a human being.

But you will reply, in what way is it the substantial form of human being? I hold that it is its form thus, because while the intellective power is separated, still, according to its nature, it is also the actuality and perfection of the body. And that it is a form of body according to nature is clear through the Philosopher, *Physics* II [194b11], when he says that there must be a natural cognizing of separate forms that are in matter, and this can only be the understanding. Therefore the understanding is a separated capacity, and yet it is also the perfection of the body. Hence the consideration of the understanding is in a certain way natural, and in a certain way metaphysical. And this what the Commentator says on *Physics* II, that the understanding is the middle form between purely material and separated things. And this is not otherwise than was said.

But there is one doubt, because if the understanding is the substantial form of the body, the body is naturally united by it. From this I argue that if the union is natural to it, then separation is violent, and so the understanding will be corporeal, since nothing violent is unending. The theologians say that the argument concludes that the understanding cannot remain eternally without a body, and because of this they assume a resurrection of the dead so that the understanding should reassume the body, and possess its perfected state. And truly this is well said, perhaps because the Philosopher said this when it was said that of which union etc., namely that if a union is natural so that through that union the thing acquires its perfection, the separation is violent. But when the understanding unites with the body it is not united because of any need of the understanding, but through the need of the body which desires that the understanding be united with it. Hence I reply that this union is more natural as far as the body is concerned than it is for the understanding. Hence this separation is not violent for the soul, and thus it can always remain separated in this way.

As to the arguments, as regards the first, when it is argued that the composite of matter and form is truly one, I reply that form is twofold, for some are drawn forth from the capacities of matter, and some from what is extrinsic to matter. Hence I reply that in the forms drawn from the capacities of matter, a composite is truly one, because the agent draws the form out from the capacity of matter; but in forms induced in matter from what is extrinsic, it is not so, but there it is a composite inasmuch as it is one because the understanding imparts to body its whole being. And since it is united with the body the being imparted is not being of that understanding alone, but of the whole composite imparted in actuality through the understanding.²⁸

As for the second, I grant the Major premise.²⁹ As for the minor, some have said that the

²⁸The sense seems to be that the understanding does not simply introduce something into the independently existing body, but rather causes the body, at least insofar as it is capable of understanding, to exist in the first place, as well as introducing into it the elements of understanding (the image illuminated by the understanding, say). So a body capable of producing images is produced by the understanding, and then the images are illuminated by the understanding so that they acquired intentional being, and represent the forms.

²⁹The edition's "*dico concedo*" should probably be "*dico concedendo*."

understanding is the substantial form of the body, and yet the action of the understanding is not shared by the body, but, they have said, only the understanding understands. These two cannot stand together,³⁰ namely that the understanding is the substantial form of the body, and yet that the whole composite does not understand, because, given this, its function would be more noble than the substance, because the understanding is actuality conjoined to body. If, then, its function were separate, its function would be nobler than the substance.

Again, the understanding as it is the actuality of the body is not always. But if its action is separated, it would be eternal, and so the action would be an eternal substance, but corporeal, which the author of *De Causis* denies, holding that nature is a reality of which the substance falls under time and its action under eternity. Hence it must be replied that the whole composite understands. Then you might say that it [the act of the composite in cognizing] is no more the action of the separated understanding than the action of the senses. I reply that because the act of understanding is of the whole composite, still it is not so as the composite is divided into organs, but the actuality of sensing is not so abstract because it is of the body as it is divided into organs. And so the act of the understanding is more abstract than the act of sensing [and so not the same action].

As for the other, when it is said that the understanding is per se subsistent etc., I reply that the understanding is a per se subsistent insofar as and because it is an incorporeal substance, and it is an inherent in another because it is the perfection of the body. And thus it is not a per se subsistent and inherent in another in the same respect. And therefore, as such these are not opposed, the per se subsistent and inherence in another, and therefore as such they can both be in the same as understanding.

As for the other, when it is said the every form etc., I reply that every form which is a perfection of matter and is educed from the capacities of matter is educed through change and motion (*per motum et transmutationem*). But the understanding is not led out from the capacities of matter. Therefore etc.

Question 7 (94)

It is asked whether the understanding is wholly in each part of the body.

And it seems it is not. For that power which is the actuality of no part of the body is not in every part of the body. But the understanding is the actuality of no part of the body. Therefore etc.

Again, a human is human through the understanding. If, therefore, the understanding were wholly in every part of the body, every part of a human being would be a human being. The consequent is false, therefore the antecedent is also.

Again, a power which has nothing in common with any is not in every part of the body. But the understanding has something in common with any. Therefore etc.

On the other hand, it is argued: the soul does not function anywhere except where it is. But the soul functions in every part of the body. Therefore etc. But the understanding is part of the soul. Therefore the understanding is in every part of the body.

In response to this, it must be understood that “understanding” can name the whole substance of the soul or a part of it. As it names the whole substance of the soul, namely that vegetative, sensible, and intellectual, it is thus in every part of the body. And this is explained thus: a form is not separated from what it is form of, but is something of what it is of, according to the Philosopher in *Physics* I [190b23 sq.], because matter and form are intrinsic principles of a reality. Now whatever the substance of the soul is, this is the form of every part of the soul. Because of this the Philosopher says that when the soul departs, neither eye, nor any other part remains, except equivocally. Therefore the soul is in every part of the body, and consequently the

³⁰The edition has “*hoc non stant similiter*”, which should probably be emended to “*haec non stant simul.*”

understanding as it names the whole soul is as well.

Again, this is explained, that soul is the actuality of the natural body etc.; therefore the soul is the actuality of different parts of the body, therefore it is in different parts of the body. Therefore the understanding is, and in the same way, considered as it names the whole substance of the soul.

But the understanding is not in any part of the body as something is located in a place, because place contains, and the body does not contain the soul, but rather the contrary. The proof of this is that when the soul departs, the parts of the body do not remain except equivocally. Again, it is not in the body in the way that a point is in the continuum, for if it were then there would be different souls in the parts of the body, not one and the same soul, just as the same point is not present everywhere in the continuum. But it is in the body as form is in matter, but not in such a way that it is in one part more and another less, or in one part more and another less intensely, but the whole perfects the whole.

Now if “understanding” names a part of the soul, I hold that the understanding is not in any part of the body as its actuality, because in a human being there are some operations that arise through extrinsic parts, as seeing through the eye, hearing through the ear, but also some that do not, such as understanding. Since then capacities are functional principles, it is necessary that in the soul there be different capacities, so that one should be the functional principle which arises through organs, and of this sort is sensitive capacity, but the other should be the functional principle that arises without organs, and such is the understanding. From this it is argued that a power which is a functional principle that does not arise through any part of the body, is not in any part of the body. But the understanding is a functional principle which does not arise through any part of the body. Therefore etc. And seeing this³¹ the Philosopher said that the understanding is the actuality of no part of the body. No one can deny that the understanding is in the feet, since it is a power of the soul, and wherever the essence of the soul is, there will be its power, in particular, in such a that it is not tied to a specific organ. And therefore the understanding is in the feet, and in the other parts of the body, but not as their actuality.

But you will reply, a capacity is not more abstract than a substance, for if it were it would be nobler than the substance. Since, then, the understanding is not separated according to substance, therefore neither is it separated according to capacity. It must be replied that the abstract is threefold.³² In the second way the abstract is what does not have matter, nor is in matter, nor is the actuality of matter, and such is God. In another way it is what does not have matter, is in matter, but is not the actuality of matter. In the third way it is what does not have matter, but is in matter and is the actuality of matter. Hence the substance of the sensitive soul is in matter and is its actuality. But the understanding, as it is in the substance of the soul, is in matter, but is not the actuality of matter so that it is joined to an organ, and nothing forbids this. But because of this it is not a capacity nobler than the substance because this, that the understanding is a separated capacity, understanding has from the substance of the soul. Since the human soul is a middle between natural and divine forms, it is necessary that this nobility is from the substance of the soul, not from itself, and because of this the substance of the soul is without qualification nobler than its capacity.

As for the second objection,³³ when it is said that a human being is human through the understanding, I reply that a human being is human through the substance of the soul, to which belong three

³¹The edition has *vides*, which is to be amended to *videns*.

³²The ms. Adds “*vel separatam*,” that is, “or separated,” apparently as an alternate reading, which, however, cannot be right.

³³The first objection was answered quite directly in the body of the determination.

capacities, and because the substance of the soul along with these capacities is not found in any part of the body, therefore no part of a human being is a human being.

As for the other, I hold that the argument proceeds because “understanding” here names one part of the soul.

Question 8 (95)

It is asked whether the understanding is one, and the same in number in all men.

And it is argued that it is thus, using the arguments of the Commentator. Every form which is multiplied by the multiplication of bodies is a material form, because multiplication is through matter. But the understanding is not a material form. Therefore it is not multiplied upon the multiplication of bodies, and consequently it is one and the same in every human being.

Again, what is separated from a body is not multiplied by the multitude of bodies. But the understanding is separated from the body according to the Philosopher. Therefore etc.

Again, whatever a reality does not depend on for its being, it does not depend on for its unity. But the understanding does not depend on body for its being. Therefore neither does it depend on it for its unity, nor, consequently, for its multiplication. And therefore it is one in all these.

Again, if my understanding is other than your understanding, then whatever is understood by me is other than what is understood by you. And if different things are understood by us, the understood is something numbered, and if numbered, it is singular. But this is false, namely that what is understood is singular, because the singular is sensed, but the universal is understood.

Again, the Commentator argues thus: The intelligible species which informs the understanding is one. For all human beings, then, the understanding is one, because one species is not found in different understandings. The antecedent is proved by the Commentator thus: Let us assume that different men understand stone, so that they understand stone through one species or several. If through one, I have what was proposed, if through several, then they will be different in number, and will communicate in some form of a common thing, because they lead to the cognition of the same thing. But such as are different in number and common in form have something common understood (*intellectum*), and I ask about this, as before, whether it is understood by different human beings through one species, or through several. Either there is an infinite regress, or there is one species informing the understanding of all human beings, and consequently one understanding in all human beings.

On the other hand, it is argued thus: If the understanding were the same in number in all human beings, since knowing and understanding are through the understanding, if one person knows, all would know, and if one did not know, all would fail to know, and also the same thing would be both known and unknown.

In this question the way of the Commentator must not be taken, because what he said here was not asserted, as is clear upon viewing his commentary, for he speaks thus: I ask you, my brothers, etc. Let us hold then that the understanding is not one in number all human beings, and the reason for this is that the same subject is not at one time³⁴ informed by something and deprived of it. But the possible understanding is the subject of knowledge. Therefore the possible understanding does not have knowledge at the same time³⁵ as it is deprived of it. But this would happen if the possible understanding were one in number in all human beings,

³⁴Emend *similiter* to *simul*.

³⁵Emend *similiter* to *simul*.

because some of them know, and some are ignorant, and many have knowledge that others do not have. And this is the reason the Commentator gives against himself, and he names it forcefully, and argues thus: The second perfection cannot be numbered unless the first is numbered, because one is referred to the other. Now the first perfection is the possible understanding, and the second is knowledge itself. But we see that different human beings have different knowledge. Therefore they will have different understandings. But the Commentator answers this, holding that even though the possible understanding is one, still it is united through different images, and because of this there are different knowings found in the same understanding. But opposed to the accident, they accept numbering and unity from the subject. But the understanding is the subject of instances of knowing. Therefore if the understanding is one in all, the knowing is one in all as well. I hold this notwithstanding the multitude of images. Neither do images bring it about nor even per se do they bring about knowledge, because it is necessary that images be abstracted to bring it about that they are understood.

In the second place, this is explained thus: Let us assume that different human beings understand the same thing at the same time. It is clear that the understanding of one is different from the understanding of the other. I ask what it is through which it is different—not on the part of the object, nor on the part of time; therefore it is a diversity on the part of that principle of understanding. But this is the understanding, and therefore the understanding is different in different [human beings].

Let us say, therefore, that the understanding is not one in number in all human beings. How then is it numbered? We must proceed thus: the understanding a certain power of the soul, and it is in the soul as in a subject. I will hold then that the understanding is numbered in me and in you because the soul is numbered in me and in you. But through what is the soul numbered in me and in you? I hold that it is on account of the formula of form that there is unifiable matter. If this is on account of the formula of that, therefore when one is numbered, the other is numbered. Therefore what unifies one and another body is one and another understanding. Therefore my understanding is other than yours, because they unify different bodies. Next, when does the soul have it that it unifies this body and that body? I hold that this is from the will that produces souls. Hence the first cause is the effective cause of the numbering of souls, and the cause of their diversity, and before we arrive at the first cause there is no stopping. Just as the being of the soul is from the first, thus also its undividedness, because from whatever something receives being, from the same it receives being one.

As for the arguments: As for the first, I grant the major premise, that such is the material form not because it is drawn from the capacities of matter, but because of its actuality. Hence I hold that the understanding is not the material form because it is drawn from the capacities of matter, but insofar as it is their perfection.

As for the other, when it is argued that it is separated and so on, I reply that that which is separated in this way from body is not drawn from the capacities of the body, nor is it a perfection of it not multiplied with the multiplication of bodies; but even though the understanding is not drawn from the capacities of body, still it is a perfection of body.

As for the other, when it is said by which it does not depend and so on, I grant the major premise. As for the minor, I reply that the understanding, as it is an incorporeal substance, does not depend on the body according to being. Now considering the understanding as form of the body, it depends on it because the actuality depends on that of which it is the actuality. Hence as the form does not have perfect being before matter is unified, and although the understanding is the form of matter, it does not have perfect being in that degree before the body is unified.

As for the second argument, I hold the particular is two-fold: one through matter, and one through subsistence, and it is in this last way that intelligences are particulars. Then I hold that my understanding is a particular, not it is not a particular through matter, but through a certain subsistence, inasmuch as it is a power subsisting per se, and not an actuality of any body. Hence I hold that that which is

understood by me is a particular because it is received in the understanding subsisting per se, and since this holds, that there is an actually understood when it is abstracted. Hence what is understood is a particular through comparison with the understanding in which it is; but it is universal in comparison to the images (*simulacra*) from which it is abstracted. And what is thus understood is numbered according to the numeration of the understanding it is in, but it is not enumerated according to the enumeration of matter.

As for the other, when it is argued that one is a species and so on, I grant the consequence and deny the antecedent. As for the proof, when it is said, let it be assumed that two men understand a stone and so on, I reply that they understand it through different species. And you say, therefore they differ in number and so on. I reply that these species thus differ in number just as the understanding in which they are does, and the understanding does not differ in number except because they are diverse this-somethings. And you hold that as they differ in number, they agree in a common form. I reply that as they differ in number by the numeration of matter they have something common, because they are not intelligibles of themselves, and therefore something common to them is needed which is understood. But this is not the way it is in the case at hand. Rather, given that the understanding is numerated thus, something impossible seems to follow. For it is proved that the world is eternal because an infinite number of human beings have preceded these human beings according to these fellows, and therefore, since their understandings remain and are incorruptible, an infinite number of understandings now remain in actuality. And so there will be something infinite in actuality because of the indefinite number of understandings, even though they deny that there is anything actually infinite.

The Expositor [Thomas Aquinas] says in *Contra Gentiles* [II 80–81] that on the occasion of this argument different people fall into different errors. Some have said that the understanding is destroyed upon the destruction of the body. And some that every soul is gathered up in one after separation from the body. Some that the same souls enter into other bodies. Some, for instance al Ghazali and Avicenna, prove that the understanding is infinite in actuality. And when it is replied that an actually infinite is absurd, they have said that among beings some are ordered essentially and some accidentally, hence in those ordered essentially it is absurd to assume something actually infinite, because there is a first there, and in an actually infinite there is no first. But in accidentally ordered it is not absurd to assume something actually infinite, and this is how the understanding is ordered. Whether this solution is good enough or not ought not to concern us at present.

Still, one can maintain it is otherwise, as follows: For the infinite, because it is of quantities without a boundary, to be in actuality is absurd, for such do not suffer that there should be any other beings with them. Hence whoever assumes such destroys the order of the universe. But such an infinite that is caused from aggregation of quantity or division is certainly possible, because it suffers that there should be other beings with it, since it does not circumscribe place, and such an infinite we attribute to the understanding, given that the world is eternal, which is not true.

Question 9 (96)

Now it is asked about the possible understanding whether the intelligible species remain in the possible understanding when they are not actually considered.

And it is argued that they do not. Avicenna says in the Sixth book On Nature: Whenever a form grasped remains in actuality in an apprehensive power, there is an apprehension in actuality. But since the intelligible species remain in the possible understanding, a form grasped actually remains in an apprehensive power. Therefore etc.

Again, a principle that is per se and proximate being assumed concerning some function, that function is assumed. But an intelligible species is a per se and proximate principle of understanding. Therefore, if it is in the understanding, there will be understanding in actuality.

On the other hand, it is argued: What is attributed to an inferior power must be attributed to a superior power in a most excellent way. But conservation of intelligible species is attributed to the sensitive power, for instance, in memory. Therefore much more is the conservation of intelligible species attributed to the intellective power. And consequently, it will not always actually consider the intelligible species existing in the understanding.

The opinion of Avicenna was that intelligible species do not remain in the understanding except when it actually considers, and his reason was that as in bodies, so it is in powers. But the same bodies are not receptive and conservative, as is clear from soft wax, which is quite receptive of forms, but does not retain them well. Stone, on the contrary, is very difficult of reception, and quite retentive. Therefore so it is in powers, that the same power will not receive well and also conserve well. But the understanding receives species. Therefore it does not conserve species. Since intelligible species are not conserved in the understanding, it is necessary that they be conserved in some other power having an organ, or that they are forms subsisting through themselves, or that they flow with a fresh beginning from another intelligence. The first cannot stand, because such forms are not intelligible save potentially. Nor the second, because this brings back the opinion of Plato. The third is left. Whenever, then, a human being understands there flow into him species from an intelligence.

The opinion of Avicenna has no truth, nor even is his argument valid, when he says “as it is in bodies” etc. I reply that it is true of powers tied to an organ. But understanding is not such a power, and therefore it might very well be that the same existing intellective power is equally receptive and conservative. And what he says next, that intelligible species flow from an intelligence, this is not true, because then in understanding he would not run back to images, but it would suffice that he turn himself to that intelligence.

It must be replied to the question then, that species remain in the possible understanding when it does not consider [them] actually. And this is apparent from the authority of the Philosopher, who says that the understanding when it first adds or discovers, acquires intelligible species at that time from scratch. But when it has been informed by these species it can be in potentiality to actual consideration, and so the species can remain in the soul when it does not actually consider [them].

Again, this is clear through reason. As the form of the heavy is related to heavy things, thus proportionally the intelligible species is related to the understanding, since it is a certain form of the understanding. But something has a form of heavy even though it is not perform the function of heaviness actually. Therefore etc. Hence even though a form cannot be without its primary actuality, which is to give being, still it can be without its secondary actuality. So the species in the understanding has a primary actuality, but does not have the secondary actuality. Although it belongs to heavy things to be below, what has the form of heavy is below if something does not prevent it from being so. In the same way, what has an intelligible species always considers it unless it is prevented. And what are the impediments? I hold there are two. The first is that the understanding, wherever it turns itself, is totally turned, and therefore when it actually considers one it is impeded from actual consideration of another. Again, because perhaps images which are in the imagination are not rightly disposed, hence this indisposition of the images can be a cause why there is not actual consideration. But you will reply according to what has been said, that it is necessary that even though species are in the understanding they must always be traced back to images [for actual consideration or discursive thought to occur]. But still, it does not happen that it receives these images from the senses, as it did before it had the species.

As for the arguments, each proceeds on its own way.

Question 10 (97)

It is asked whether an intelligible species is that which is understood.

And it is argued that it is. Understanding in actuality and the understood in actuality are one in actuality. But nothing about the thing understood is the understanding in actuality except the intelligible species. Therefore the intelligible species is that which is understood.

Again, the understanding is in something; therefore either in the reality or in the understanding, and not in the reality. Because every such [reality] is particular and such is not actually understood, therefore it is necessary that understanding in actuality be in the understanding. But nothing is in understanding except the species. Therefore etc.

Again, the word signifies and the understanding understands the same thing. But the word does not signify a reality, but a similitude of the reality, because words are marks of their passions which are in the soul, according to Aristotle, *On Interpretation* (16a4). Therefore etc.

On the other hand, it is argued, the Philosopher says in *De Anima* III that we cognize flesh through the senses, but through understanding [we cognize] what it is of flesh. But what it is of flesh is not its similitude. Therefore the understanding does not cognize a similitude.

It must be said that an intelligible species is not what is understood primarily, because form does not act, but the composite acts through the form, because each agent acts inasmuch as it is in actuality. But the form is not a being in actuality. Therefore etc. And just as the form does not act, thus neither does the species; a similitude is a form of the understanding and a similitude of an understood reality, and therefore it does not act on the understanding. Given this, I argue that everything that is understood acts on the understanding, but a species does not act on the understanding since it is a form of the understanding or a similitude of the reality understood; therefore etc.

But you will reply, since it is said that the composite acts etc., this is true concerning the agent that crosses over. But what is understood does not act on the understanding through change (*transmutatio*). Therefore what is understood can be form alone. But in opposition to this, although what is understood does not change the understanding, it does perfect it. Therefore what is more understood from its cognition perfects the understanding more. But the understanding is perfected more by understanding the reality than the species. Therefore the reality is the more understood. Indeed, this is clear from opinion of the ancients, for they assume similars to be cognized through similars, as through the earth which is in the soul the earth outside is cognized, according to them. And therefore they assumed the soul is composed from all things, so that it can grasp all things. Therefore, according to them what is understood is outside the understanding. But a species is not outside the soul, but what is outside the soul is the true nature of the reality. Therefore etc. But although the understanding does not cognize the species primarily, still it understands it through a certain reflection, both as a universal and in particular—in particular when it understands itself to have the intelligible species, as a universal when it understands the nature of the species.

As for the arguments: In response to the first, when it is said that everything that acts etc., I reply that it is so insofar as the understanding in actuality and understood in actuality are one in actuality, because the similitude of the reality understood in actuality is the form of the understanding in actuality. As for the minor, I hold that it assumes a falsehood, namely that some part of the reality understood is the understanding.

To the other, when it is said that the understanding in actuality etc., I reply that the understanding in actuality indicates two things, namely the reality understood, and thus it is among external realities, and it also indicates the cognition of that nature, and in this way it is in the understanding.

To the other, I grant the major and deny the minor, because if it were true, every affirmative would be false, for the species of a subject is never the species of the category, but this is conveyed through the affirmative sentence (*propositio*) given that the term signifies a similitude. For the proof, I hold according the Ammonius on the *On Interpretation*, that attribute (*passio*) is so-called in three ways within the same

sentence—in one way a motion produced in an appetite of the senses [a passion], in a second way a grasp by the understanding is called an attribute, but neither of these ways is taken here, <when he says> “words (*voces*) are familiar” etc. In the third way the reality understood is called the attribute, and this is what is called an attribute because it carries an attribute (*passio*, that is an effect) into the understanding.³⁶ Hence words are marks of attributes, that is, of realities understood as they are understood, because nothing is signified unless it is grasped by the understanding.

Question 11 (98)

It is asked whether the understanding grasps itself through its essence.

And it is argued that it does. Just as the separate substances are certain intellectual natures, so also our understanding. But the separate substances cognize themselves through their essences. Therefore etc.

Again, the Philosopher says here that in things without matter understanding something is the same thing as what is understood. But our understanding is a power without matter. Therefore understanding something and what is understood are the same. But understanding something is in the understanding through its essence. Therefore the same is understood through its essence.

On the other hand, it is argued that the Philosopher holds that the understanding understands itself just as it understands other things. But it does not understand other things through their essences, but through species or similitudes. Therefore etc.

It must be understood that each thing is cognizable as it is in actuality, as it I said in *Metaphysics* IX <1051b30>. Hence vision does not cognize the potentially colored but the colored in actuality. And therefore just as each is related to that which is in actuality, thus it is related to what is understood. And therefore because the First is pure actuality, therefore it is intelligible, and understands, without qualification. And therefore, by understanding itself it understands the others. Now the intelligences that fall short of the First also withdraw to a certain extent from its simplicity, because everything which falls short of the First has what it is and <distinct from this> that by which it is. And therefore, because they are actually, they understand themselves through their essences, and because they are not actually first, they do not understand other things through their essences, but rather through their species. Now our understanding, because it holds the lowest degree in the genus of intellectual natures, is not actually pure, but rather potentially pure. Hence, just as it is related to prime matter in the genus of sensible natures, thus our understanding in the genus of intellectual natures. But prime matter is potentiality without qualification in the genus of sensible natures. Therefore our understanding is without qualification potentiality in the genus of intellectual natures. And because it is thus, our understanding is such that it understands, but only understands through another. Through what does it understand, then?

I hold that it is understood through the same actuality as that through which it is a being in actuality, but it comes to be in actuality through species abstracted from images. Hence the Philosopher intends that before learning or discovery it is none of those things which are. And because the understanding comes to be thus in actuality through species abstracted from images, it is understood through these, and not through its essence. But you will reply that our understanding is prevented from understanding itself save through a species

³⁶The range of meanings of the word *passio* in the Latin cannot be captured in a single English term. Most familiar in English would be “passion,” the first meaning, and related is the effect suffered by a thing, the third meaning. The term also has a technical sense in logic, the second sense, and is very frequent in this sense in discussions of the *Posterior Analytics*. In this sense, it is an attribute in the usual English translation, that is, the predicated of the conclusion in a demonstration, which is, as it were, an effect of the nature of the thing (not a part of it) with that attribute.

innate in it, not one abstracted from images. I reply that this does prevent it. The agent understanding abstracts every species which informs the possible understanding, and so the Philosopher says that the agent understanding is nobler than the patient understanding. But if the possible understanding had the species through which it understands itself, the agent understanding would not abstract it. Therefore etc.

Question 12 (99)

Next we ask about the part, “since in every nature etc.” (430a10) in which the Philosopher begins to discuss the agent understanding. And first, **we ask whether it is necessary to assume an agent understanding.**

And it is argued that it is not. Just as sensibles are related to the sensible, so images are related to the understanding. But it is not necessary to assume an agent sense for individual <sensibles> to move the sense. Therefore etc.

Again, everything receptive in something receives in it in accord with the recipient. But our possible understanding is an immaterial power. Therefore images can be received in it immaterially, however they are circumscribed.

On the other hand, it is argued from the Philosopher, who says that in every nature which receives actuality that is sometimes in actuality and sometimes potential one must assume an agent and a possible <nature>. But the understanding is sometimes in actuality, and sometimes only potential. Therefore etc.

Plato did not hold it necessary to assume an agent understanding, for he supposed that the natures of things are per se subsistents, which he called ideas, separated from sensibles. It follows from this that the natures of realities are understood in actuality and universal in actuality, because everything abstracted is actually understood. And if it were so, we would <not>³⁷ need an agent understanding. But these natures could be the substances of particulars, and their principles in being, cognizing, and generating. This opinion is sufficiently disproved by the Philosopher in *Metaphysics* VII and XIV, and therefore I will not disprove it here. Hence I hold that it is necessary to assume an agent understanding, and this is clear primarily from the understanding. Themistius said that each natural thing is presumed to have the capacity to follow perfection truly, and insofar as it is potential it is not in the best disposition. But to be perfect according to nature it must be that it is led into actuality from potentiality. Now the human soul is of the genus of natural things, inasmuch as it is the perfection of a body, and therefore it is in potentiality and does not remain there <in potentiality>. Therefore it is necessary that it be led into actuality and therefore two different things must be assumed, so that through one it is in potentiality an understanding thing, and through the other it is led into actuality. The first is the possible, the second the agent understanding.

Again, this is explained from the intelligible. For our understanding is in potentiality in relation to the intelligible, therefore it must be that intelligibles move the understanding. Now what is not cannot move the understanding, therefore it must be that something be intelligible. Now the intelligible, as such, is not something existing in <the nature> of things, because everything existing in the nature of things is particular and one in number. Now the intelligible is one in many. The intelligible, therefore, as such does not exist. It is necessary, then, that the intelligible be made such through something else. But that cannot be the possible understanding, because it receives action. Therefore it must be that it is through its power of acting.

Now this agent understanding is related to the possible, as light to the diaphanous (*diafanamum* -

³⁷An emendation to the text is needed here.

potentially transparent).³⁸ Now we see what without light we do not see thus, nor without the agent understanding do we understand. Hence as light is proportioned to vision, so the agent to the possible, although there is not an entire similitude according the Commentator, because the agent gives form to the intelligible as it is understood, but light is not that way with color.³⁹

As for the arguments: In response to the first, I reply that it is so in a way, but also in a way is not so, because just as the sense cannot sense without a sensible, so neither can the understanding <understand> without images. And just as the sense does not sense except by abstracting the species from sensibles, so the understanding does not <understand> without abstracting species from images. But in the other there is this dissimilarity, because the sense is a material power and the sensibles can produce the species by themselves in the sense, but the understanding is an immaterial power and images material. And therefore it is necessary for the understanding to understand something that we assume something which abstracts.

As for the other, I grant the major and minor in the same way, and therefore I hold that what is grasped by the understanding is grasped immaterially, and therefore it is necessary to assume some agent abstracting from material conditions. Our understanding understands temporal things atemporally, material things immaterially, as the author of *De Causis* holds.

Question 13 (100)

It is asked whether the agent understanding is of the substance of our soul.

And it is argued that it is not. Active and passive suffice for agency. But the possible understanding, which suffers action, would be of the substance of our soul, and in the same way the agent understanding. Therefore our soul would always understand because the active and passive are always present. <But this is clearly false.>

Again, the possible understanding is in potentiality in respect of the intelligible and the agent understanding in actuality. But the same according to substance in respect of the same cannot at the same time be in actuality and potential. Therefore etc.

Again, the agent understanding is related to the possible understanding as art to material, as is clear through the Philosopher in *On the Soul* III <430a12>. But when an art exists in the mind of the artisan, it is something separated from matter according to actuality and substance. Therefore, in the same way this is so, proportionally, so that the agent understanding is separated in substance from the possible understanding.

On the other hand it is argued, through the Philosopher in *On the Soul* III <430a12>, who says that it is necessary for these two differences to be in the soul, that is, the agent and possible understanding. Therefore etc.

Some have held that the agent and possible understandings are the same substance of the soul, but it is called possible as it is united to the body, agent as it is separated from it. This is nothing, because as the Philosopher proves concerning the agent <understanding> that it is unmixed, impassible and separated, so he proves in the same way of the possible understanding. Therefore, if the substance of the soul as it is agent <understanding> is not united to the body, neither is it united as it is possible <understanding>.

And because of this others have assumed that the agent understanding is not of the substance of our souls, but is a separated substance, and this is the opinion of the Commentator here. And he thinks that we

³⁸Light, according to Aristotle, makes the potentially transparent medium actually transparent.

³⁹It does not give the form of color to the colored thing.

understand separated substances through the agent understanding, just as through the possible understanding <we understand> material <substances>. And still, in some way it is united to us, because the agent understanding is related to the intelligible species as perfection to the perfectible. By whatever the perfectible is united, the perfection also is. Since, then, intelligible species are united to us, therefore the agent understanding is as well, at least through these species. This opinion has no truth. For the agent understanding is related to the intelligible species as the light of the Sun is to colors, and so the Philosopher compares the agent understanding to light. But although we see colors to be illuminated by the Sun, still we do not say that the Sun is united to us. Therefore, in the same way, even though intelligible species are united to us, it is not necessary that the <agent> understanding be united to us, but he assumes this <the understanding> is a sufficient cause <to unite the intelligible species to us>.

Again, I prove that it is not a separated substance, because that which in its functioning depends on something extrinsic, is not in command of that function. But if the agent intellect were a substance separated from us, then our whole function of understanding would depend on something extrinsic, namely on that understanding, and then we would not be in command of our functions. But this is absurd. Hence, it must be held that the agent understanding is of the substance of our soul. And this is proved because nothing functions formally⁴⁰ except through something existing in it, because that by which something functions formally is not separated from it. But we experience in ourselves the functioning of the agent understanding, namely the abstraction of species from images. Therefore it is necessary to assume an agent intellect in our soul because a function occurs there of which it is the principle.⁴¹

But perhaps you will say, as the Commentator does, that it is true that the function of agent understanding is in us, but it is not in us because it is joined to us, but because the intelligible species which cause the agent understanding are in us. This is not enough, because the agent understanding is related to the intelligible species in the possible understanding as an artisan is related to the artificial forms which arise in the material outside him <through his efforts>. But the material, through having received these forms, is not said to do the work of the artisan. Therefore in the same way, even though we receive intelligible forms which the agent understanding makes, we hold we are united to the agent understanding <else we would not be doing the work of the agent understanding>.

Again, Themistius proves this thus: A human being would not be something complete (*perfectum*) unless he had the principles through which it is able to complete its operations. But the principles through which the action of understanding is completed are the agent and possible understanding. Therefore it must be that these are in a human being.

In response to the arguments: To the first, when it is argued that the active and passive are sufficient and so on, I reply that this is true, if the agent is in such a state that it can act and the receiver of action in such a state that it can receive action. Hence, even though the passive and active understanding are in the same way always in us, still, not always is the agent in a state in which it can act, and that which suffers action in a state in which it can suffer action, because the images must be disposed in such a way that the intellect understands, and they are not always in that state. Therefore it does not always understand.

To the other, when it is argued that the same in substance and so on, I reply that it is not the same in potentiality and actuality in respect of the same, nor is it thus in the case at hand, because the agent understanding is in actuality in respect of intelligibles potentially because it abstracts them, but the possible

⁴⁰That is, with a function that pertains to its substantial form, so that it must function so to be what it is.

⁴¹"Principle," that is, the cause.

understanding is potential in respect of intelligibles in actuality. In the first respect potentiality and actuality are the same. But the possible understanding in actuality through this, that they are actually intelligible; therefore it is in potentiality in respect of intelligibles in actuality. Now the agent understanding is in actuality in relation to intelligibles in potentiality, and so they are in respect of different things.

As for the other, when it is claimed that agent understanding and so on, I reply that a similitude ought not to attend to all things, because then it would be, not a similitude, but an identity. Hence in respect of this there is similarity between art and the agent understanding, that, just as an art is an active principle <cause> of the forms in the matter, so the agent understanding the active principle <cause> of the intelligibles in the possible understanding.

Question 14 (101)

It is asked whether every intelligible in us are actually understood through the agent understanding.

And it is argued that they are not, because those of which the cognition is innate do not become understood through the agent understanding, but some are of this sort, such as first principles, according to the Commentator, *Metaphysics* II, therefore etc.

Again, no concepts (understood things) (*intellecta*) arise through the agent understanding except those that have images. But there are many things understood by us which do not have images, matter and form being like this. Therefore etc.

Again, separate substances are intelligible by us, and still they do not become understood through the agent understanding, because they are intelligible of themselves. Therefore etc.

On the other hand, the Philosopher says in *On the Soul* III that as the possible understanding is that by everything comes to be <understood>, so the agent understanding is that by which it makes all things <to be understood>. Therefore nothing arises in the possible understanding except from the agent understanding.

I reply to the question, I hold that everything intelligible by us comes to be actually understood through the agent understanding, because whatever is understood by us is understood in images, because it is necessary for the understanding to be aware of images (*fantasmata speculari*) at the same time. Therefore everything which is understood by us is from the senses. Now no sensible is of itself intelligible, therefore it is necessary that it be abstracted if we are to understand. Nothing, therefore, is understood by us except through the agent understanding.

Again, a human being is called a smaller world because of its soul, through which it is in a certain way all things. But in the larger world each definite passive capacity corresponds to a definite active capacity. And because of this, the Commentator said that however many active capacities there are in the prime mover, there are just as many passive capacities corresponding to these in prime matter. Now the agent understanding is related to the possible understanding as mover and matter. And therefore, however many are the passive capacities in the possible understanding, there will be the same number of active capacities in the agent understanding, and so nothing is in the possible <understanding> without the agent <understanding>.

As for the arguments, as to the first, when it is said the cognition of those things is innate and so on, I reply that this is true, if the cognition is innate in such a way that it is in the substance of our soul. But first principles are not innate in us in this way., and are innate in respect of cognition, because through these we know (*scimus*) cognitions.

As for the other, when it is argued that no concepts arise through the agent understanding and so on, I reply to the minor that matter and form do not have images of themselves, and therefore are not understood of themselves, since then they would have images. The Commentator says that just as actuality makes the form

known, thus change makes matter known.

As for the other, when it is argued that separated and so on, I reply that just as the intelligences are understood by us, thus they are abstracted through the agent understanding by us. They are understood by us through their functions, and so in this way they become actually understood by us through the agent understanding.

Question 15 (102)

It is asked whether the agent understanding is identically the same in all human beings.

And it is argued that it is. What is separated from matter is not multiplied as regards the multiplication of matter. But the agent understanding is separated from matter Therefore etc., and so there will be one in all.

Again, the agent understanding makes actual the universal. But the universal is one in many. Therefore the agent understanding is one in many. And this is confirmed by argument, because whatever is the cause of unity is more truly one than what is caused to be one.

Again, every human being shares in common the principles of demonstration, because no one can deny them with the mind, even if they can deny them with the mouth. But First principles are in us through the agent understanding. Therefore all human beings have in common the agent understanding. Since, then, there are the same principles for all, there is the same identical agent understanding for all.

On the other hand, it is argued that the Philosopher says that the agent understanding is a habit like light. But identically the same light is not found in different illuminated things. Therefore etc.

It must be replied briefly here that if the agent understanding were not something belonging to our soul, but were a separate substance, as the Commentator assumes, then there would be one understanding in number in all human beings, and it would not be different in number in different human beings. The reason for this is that every numeration is through matter. But if the agent understanding were separate, neither would it be matter, nor anything having matter, nor the actuality of these, and so it would not be numbered. And so the Commentator assumed because of this that it would be a separate substance and would be one in number in all.

But if you reply <it is numbered> according to the power which is different in different things, we will hold that in this way it is not found in different substances by the same power in number. But the agent understanding is a power of our soul. Therefore the same identically will not be found in different souls. And since there are different souls, as was proved, there will be different agent understandings. And this is clear from the intention of Plato because, as Themistius recites, Plato assumed a dual agent understanding, one separated, and he compared this to the Sun, which he called divine, and the other joined to us, and this he compared to light. Now the Sun is identically the same according to its substance, but light is multiplied in many different bodies, and so it is that the agent understanding is multiplied, and so it is not one in different human beings.

As for the arguments, as for the first, when it is said that it is separated and so on, I reply that what is separated in such a way that it neither is in body, nor is the actuality of a body, nor is a power of a soul perfecting a body, is not multiplied by the multiplication of bodies. Hence I hold that the agent understanding is, considered thus, separated, because it is not in a body, nor the actuality of a body, but it is a power of a soul perfecting a body.

As for the second, when it is said that the agent understanding acts universally etc., I grant this, although it could be denied, because the possible understanding in a certain way acts universally. And when it is said that a universal is one in many, I reply that it is true that it is one because it is abstracted from material

conditions, and in the same way the agent understanding is one, inasmuch as it is something immaterial, but it does not follow from this that it is one thing common to all.

As for the third, when it is argued that all human beings have in common the principles of demonstration and so on, I grant this. And I grant next that every human being shares in the agent understanding. But they do not share in the agent understanding in such a way that there is one understanding in all human beings.

Question 16 (103)

It is asked whether the agent understanding understands anything.

And it seems that it does. Function is proportional to power. So, as the sensitive power is to sensing, so the intellective power is to understanding. But the agent understanding is an intellective power. Therefore the agent understanding understands, just as every sensitive power senses.

Again, when moving things are ordered, all intrinsically moving things are those that move and those that are moved. But a sensible is the first that moves, and the possible understanding is the last thing moved. The agent understanding is in the middle. Therefore it has the formula of mover, and of moved. But it does not have the formula of moved unless it is because it understands. Therefore the agent understanding understands.

Again, the understanding abstracts. Therefore it abstracts from something. Then I ask: It either cognizes that from which it abstracts or not. If not, then it not more abstracts the intention of human being from an image of Socrates than from an image of a stone. Therefore it is necessary to say that it cognizes that from which it abstracts. Now to cognize that is to understand it. Therefore etc.

On the other hand it is argued, understanding consists in receiving action from something. The agent understanding does not receive action. Therefore the agent understanding does not understand.

It must be understood here that the agent understanding and the possible understanding name the substance of the soul, or a power of the soul. As it names the substance of the soul, I hold that understanding is its proper function. This is obvious, because every substance has a proper function. And because of this the Commentator says that whoever denies the proper function of a being denies its substantial form itself. The Philosopher also, *Meteorology* IV <390a10>, says that everything definitely determined among natural things is determined by a certain proper function in which, when it is capable, is called a singular, and when it cannot, it is only called a singular equivocally. The agent understanding, therefore, and the possible, as they name the substance of the soul, will have a proper function, which is nothing other than to understand. Therefore etc.

Now if they name a power of the soul, in this way I hold that to abstract or make actual is the proper function of the agent understanding, and to receive is the proper function of the possible understanding, but understanding is not proper to either. That the proper function of the agent understanding is to make actual, and the proper function of the possible understanding is to receive, is clear from the Philosopher, who says that the agent understanding is that by which it makes all things, and the possible that by which it becomes all things. But understanding is the proper function of neither, as I prove thus, because the proper function of the agent understanding is to make actual, but to understand is not to make actual. Therefore etc. Nor is the possible understanding, as such, because this has the possible understanding for this reason, that it is in potentiality to something. To be in potentiality to something is not to understand, and this is by the power of speech. Therefore to understand is not the proper function of the possible understanding as it is possible.

Of what, then, is understanding the proper function? I hold that it is the proper function of the understanding as it is understanding, which joins in itself these two different things, the agent and the possible understanding.

Next it must be noted that as the agent understanding and the possible are the same identical thing according to substance, so the abstracting which is proper to the agent understanding and reception which is the proper function of the possible understanding are one thing, understanding, according to substance. Now action and suffering action are one change, but action is so called in respect of that from which the change is, and suffering action in respect of that in which it is.

When, therefore, it is asked whether the agent understanding understands something, I reply that the understanding, which makes actual, understands. Proof: because the understanding which makes actual is the same identical thing in substance as the understanding. But the understanding understands. Therefore etc. But still, what makes actual does not understand because, as it makes actual, it only makes actual. But understanding is not making actual alone. Therefore etc. But you will ask, the understanding in abstracting, doesn't it understand something? I reply that it does, in this way—in the images of Socrates is the intention of human being in potentiality, and similarly, in the images of Plato, and similarly for other human beings. Attending to this, that such an intention is not found in different things unless it is through something common, the agent understanding then abstracts that common thing and places it in the possible understanding, and then using this intention, it understands Socrates and Plato and the other individuals similar in species, in accord with a certain reflection. And therefore it is necessary to assume that the agent understanding cognizes something in abstracting, otherwise it would no more abstract the intention of human being from Socrates than from a stone. Hence I hold that the agent understanding at the same time abstracts and understands, but abstracts as agent, and understands as it is understanding. Hence, just as these two, agent and possible understanding, are inseparable in substance, in the same way these two are inseparable, abstracting and understanding. There the same identical substance abstracts and understands. Similarly, I hold concerning the possible understanding that it receives and understands—it receives as it is possible, and understands as it is understanding.

As for the arguments, as for the first, when it is argued that a function is proportional etc., I grant the minor, when it is said that just as the sensitive power etc. Someone will say that here a falsehood is assumed, for a function must not belong to a power, but to a substance using the power, and therefore the intellective power does not understand, but the substance of the intellective soul using this power understands. And although this is granted, it can be answered next, and granted that the agent understanding, as it is understanding, understands.

As for the other, when it is argued that when things moving other things etc., it is granted, and when is held that the agent understanding is a mean between sense and possible understanding, I reply that it is not a mean strictly speaking, because then the possible understanding would be nobler than the agent understanding, if the agent were the mean in a direct sense. Now the Philosopher proves that the agent understanding is nobler.

As for the other, when it is argued that the understanding abstracts, therefore it abstracts from something, I grant it. And when it is asked whether it cognizes or not, I reply that in abstracting the agent understanding cognizes, but not inasmuch as it abstracts, but inasmuch as is the understanding which understands.

Question 17 (104)

It is asked concerning the part, “Now we don't remember . . .” The Philosopher says there that we do not remember after death what we did in life because the passive understanding is destructible, and without this we understand nothing. Therefore we ask certain things after this. The first is, **whether the human soul is destroyed with the destruction of the body.**

And it is argued that it is. For the Philosopher says here that the passive understanding is

destructible, but the passive understanding is nothing other than the human being (*humanus*), who is passive regarding what is intelligible to him. Therefore etc.

Again, no substance remains without its proper function, because whoever denies beings their proper functions removes their substantial forms. But when the body is destroyed, the understanding does not have its proper function. Therefore etc. The major is clear. The minor is explained because if the understanding, when the body is destroyed, should have its proper function, this would be understanding. But this cannot be, because the philosopher says that the understanding is destroyed a certain interior <part> is destroyed; therefore etc.

Again, it is argued thus, if the understanding of Socrates is not destroyed with the destruction of the body, it follows that the understanding of Plato is not, either. Let it be assumed that they are separated <from matter>. Then I ask whether these understandings are identically the same or not. If you reply that they are identically the same, the opinion of the Commentator will return.⁴² If they differ, it is either through matter or through form. It is not through matter, because they do not have matter, nor through form, because difference through the form causes a difference in species, but the understanding of Socrates and Plato are identically the same in species. Therefore they do not differ through form. Therefore these understandings cannot be separated from bodies. They are destroyed, then, with the destruction of the body.

On the other hand, it is argued that just as prime matter is related to sensible realities, so the understanding is related to intelligibles. But matter in the genus of sensible realities is incorruptible according to its substance, as the Philosopher proves at the end of *Physics* I <192a25>. Therefore etc.⁴³ And it is confirmed by reason that every intelligible is more permanent than a sensible.

It must be held that the human understanding is indestructible through its substance, which is clear from two considerations. The substance is proportioned to power and perfectible perfection, and as the substance is proportioned to its power, so also is its function. Now understanding, which is the function of the understanding, is of intelligibles and eternal things. For those which are understood are abstracted from here and now, and so are abstracted from the conditions of matter and from time. Insofar as they are abstracted from time, they are eternal, and insofar as they are abstracted from conditions of matter they are incorporeal. Therefore etc. In the same way perfection is proportional to the perfectible. But the intelligible forms perfecting the understanding are incorporeal. Therefore etc.

In the second place, it is explained in this way: Every form which is destroyed is destroyed either by the action of something contrary to it, as heat is destroyed by the action of the cold, or by destruction of what it is in (*corruptione sibi*), as vision through the eye, or lack of its cause, as light because of the absence of the Sun or some luminous body. But the understanding is not destroyed by the action of a contrary, because it has no contrary. Nor by destruction of what it is in, because it does not depend on a subject as an accident does. Nor through the lack of a cause, because it has an eternal cause. Therefore it is clear that the understanding is not destroyed by the destruction of the body. Now even though the understanding is not destroyed by the destruction of the body, still it begins to be at the same time as the body, as is clear. For the understanding is the form of the body, and the form is naturally united to matter, therefore the understanding is naturally united to the body. But whatever is naturally united to something is primarily united to it. Therefore the understanding is united to it primarily, even though it is separated from it according to being. Therefore, just as the form cannot be before matter, so neither can the understanding be before matter. From this it is clear

⁴²The view that there is only one understanding for all human beings, which is separated from the bodies of those human beings, **rejected** above.

⁴³The punctuation in the edition is wrong here.

that the understanding of Socrates is eternal into the future, but not into the past.

But someone will say the Philosopher says in *On Coming-to-be and Passing-away* I <283b8> that nothing is eternal in the future which is not eternal in the past, or vice versa. Therefore, since the understanding is not eternal in the past, neither will it be eternal in the future. Again, if the understanding of Socrates is eternal in the future and not in the past, then it was in the whole past a possible being. But the possible is that from which, when it is assumed, nothing impossible occurs.⁴⁴ Let it be assumed that it was, and nothing impossible will happen, and you say it was not, therefore it was and was not, which is impossible. And it follows from this that you say the understanding will be eternally in the future and this not in such a way that it was in the past. Therefore that is impossible.

In response to the first of these, it must be said that the Philosopher, accepting this statement that everything which is etc., assumed that every thing indestructible also cannot come-to-be, and therefore what is eternal in the future was eternal in the past, inasmuch as it could not ever accept being through a natural coming-to-be (*per generationem*). And so I grant that the understanding of Socrates was eternal in the whole past because he was never able to receive being through natural coming-to-be. Still it can occur through simple emanation (*simplicem emanationem*). And if you insist on the power in the signification of this word “eternal,” the major can be granted. For the eternal is what has neither beginning nor end. But the perpetual is what has a beginning, but no end. Hence the understanding is perpetual, not eternal, and therefore even though it will in the whole future, it is not necessary that it was in the whole past.

To the other, I hold that the understanding of Socrates in the whole past had the capacity to be. But a distinction must be made according to composition and division. The sense as regards division is that the understanding of Socrates <at every time> in the whole past had the capacity to be, otherwise it would be impossible for it to be. The sense as regards composition is that the understanding of Socrates had the capacity to be in the whole past. But this understanding is false, for no form is before its matter, and because of this the Philosopher said well in *Metaphysics* XII that no form is before matter. But some <forms> remain when their matter is destroyed, from which the third is clear. Because the understanding does not have any other cause than an eternal one, because that which is made new and not from anything pre-existing, is produced by an agent of infinite power. But if the understanding begins to be, it does not arise from anything. Therefore it must be that it is made by an agent of infinite power. But such is the First, and therefore the First is the cause of the understanding.

As for the arguments, as to the first, I reply that the Philosopher calls the images the passive understanding, and this is destroyed when the body is, and it is called understanding through its participation, because it is said by nature to obey the understanding, and because it has something similar to what is understood.

To the other, I grant the major. And you will say that the understanding, when the body is destroyed, etc. I reply that the understanding has a proper function, namely, understanding. And then, going on, I grant that it does not understand through conversion to images, but understands in another way.

As for the other, I grant the whole argument up to where “either through the form or through matter.” I reply that it is through the form insofar as it is other than the understanding of Socrates and other than the understanding of Plato. But this difference does not proceed from the essential principles of the understanding because identically the same <principles> are in Socrates and Plato. Hence they differ through their relation to distinct bodies, as we said that the form is different which in one, and then another matter.

⁴⁴There is a mistake in punctuation in the edition here. It should read “*possibile est quo posito in esse nichil accidit impossibile. Ponatur tunc quod fuit et non accidet impossibile . . .*”

Question 18 (105)

It is asked whether the separated understanding understands anything.

And it is argued that it does not. For understanding does not arise except through attention to images. But the understanding after separation does not attend to images. Therefore etc.

Again, if the separated understanding understands something, it either understands through innate or acquired species. Not through innate species, because our understanding is like a blank tablet etc. Not through acquired species because then it would abstract from images, which cannot be because then there are no images presented to it. Nor does it receive them through intelligences, because in that way understanding through attention to images would not be natural to the soul, which, since it is absurd, it seems that the understanding does not understand something after separation, at least not naturally.

On the other hand, it is argued, no substance is without its function. But the understanding separated from the body is a substance. Therefore it is not without its function. But its function is only to understand. Therefore etc.

As Proclus proves, all are in all things, the higher in the lower, the lower in the higher, but <in such a way as to be> proper in each. The lower are in the higher in accord with a more excellent manner than they are in themselves. Hence natural beings are more truly in the First than in themselves. Now the understanding is the highest in the genus of natural things, and therefore all natural things are in the separated understanding in a more excellent way than they are in themselves. And this way is the way of understanding because of which it is said that the separate understanding understands natural beings. And therefore scientific knowledge acquired here remains in the soul after death, because scientific knowledge acquired here, if it did not remain in the understanding after death, would then be destroyed, either by the action of contraries or through the destruction of the subject. It is not destroyed through the destruction of the subject, since what is in the understanding is indestructible, nor through the action of contraries, since nothing is contrary to it. But it is true that the separated understanding understands in a certain way. And conjoined to the body, because it is conjoined, it understands through attention to images, but separated <from the body>, through an influx from higher substances, and so it understands the same things, but in different ways.

Question 19 (106)

It is asked whether the sensitive capacity remains in a soul separated from the body.

And it is argued that it is. Those capacities that are not destroyed by the destruction of their organs, remain in the separated soul. But the sensitive capacities are not destroyed by the destruction of their organs. Therefore etc. The major is clear. The minor is explained: The Philosophers says in the first book of this work that if an old man were to receive the eye of a young man, he would see just as well as the young man does. Therefore sensitive capacities are not weakened by the weakness of the organ. Therefore neither are the destroyed by the destruction of their organs.

Again, of those that are identically the same in substance, one cannot be separated from the other. But the intellective capacity and sensitive <capacities> are the same in substance, at least according to those denying a multiplicity of <substantial> forms <in a human being> (*gradus in formis*). Therefore one can be separated from another. But the rational soul remains in the separated soul. Therefore also the sensitive.

Again, as the author of *De Causis* proves, in every soul there are sensible realities. Therefore, also in the separated soul. But sensible realities are not in the separated soul except through sensitive capacities. Therefore sensitive capacities are in the separated soul.

On the other hand, it is argued, those capacities which are destructible do not remain in the separated soul. But sensitive capacities are destructible. Therefore etc. The minor is proved through the Philosopher in the second book of this work <413a4>, who says that the understanding is separated from other capacities of the soul as the perpetual from the corporeal. Therefore the sensitive capacity from which it is separated is corporeal.

It must be understood that sensitive capacities are not of the substance of the soul, but are accidents. And this is clear because the sensitive capacities are restricted to different parts of the body, as, for instance, the visible power to the eye, the auditory to the ear, and so on. But the substance of the soul is not restricted to some part of the body, but is the perfection of the body and of every one of its parts Therefore etc. And as the Philosopher says in *On Longevity and Shortness of Life* <ch. 2> that an accidental form is destroyed through the action of its contrary, and thus sensitive capacities are not destroyed, or else through destruction of its subject. Therefore, to see if such capacities are destroyed, one must see what the subject of those capacities is. To make this evident it must be considered that that is called the subject of a capacity which is suited by nature to act or suffer action according to that capacity, and consequently that which acts or suffers action according to some capacity is the subject because of which it is a capacity of which that is the actuality. But a form does not act, rather <the subject> is composed through form. And therefore form cannot be subject of a capacity. And therefore the soul is not a subject of sensitive capacities—rather, the whole composite is. And therefore, when that is destroyed, the sensitive capacities are destroyed. Hence such a formula can be formed. Those capacities that are only in the soul because it is a form of the body do not remain in the separated soul. But the sensitive capacities are in the soul as it is a form of the body. Therefore etc.

As for the arguments, as for the first, when it is argued that capacities that are not destroyed etc., I grant the major, but I deny the minor. As for its proof, since it is claimed that if an old person receives an eye etc., I grant this. And when it is said therefore sensitive capacities etc., I grant that, because the sensitive powers are not weakened by the weakness of the organ except accidentally, and this the Philosopher intends in the third book <427b6>, assuming a difference between sense and understanding. He says that sense is weakened accidentally, from the weakness of the organ, but understanding is weakened neither per se nor accidentally. And so I reply, when the organs are destroyed in death, the sensitive powers are destroyed. But this is accidental, and for that reason they do not remain, just as we see in the destruction of an individual, the whole is destroyed per se, but the form only accidentally, and therefore the form remains.

As for the other, when it is said “of those that are identically the same in substance etc.,” I grant that the whole substance of the soul, which is sensible, vegetable and intelligible. Still, after separation there is a difference between capacities, because the sensitive power is a power joined to an organ, but the understanding is not, and there the sense can be destroyed upon the destruction of the organ, but the understanding cannot.

As for the other, when it is argued from the author of *De Causis*, “In every soul there are realities etc.,” I reply that in the separated soul there are sensibles, but not after the manner of sensibles, but of the intelligible.

Question 20 (107)

It is asked about the part, “Now of indivisibles etc.,” where the Philosopher discusses the functions of the understanding, namely the grasp of simple things, and their composition and division. And here **it is asked whether our understanding understands by composing and dividing.**

And it is argued that it does not, because every power that composes or divides things in respect to one another, grasps many things at the same time. But the understanding does not grasp many things at the same time. Therefore etc.

Again, it is argued that words are signs of things understood (*concepts, intellectum*). But there are

certain simple words and others are composite. Therefore there are some understood are simple, others composite.

According to what Themistius says on this text, “Now since in every nature,” each natural thing has a capacity leading to its perfection, and therefore all natural things are at first have a capacity, but are perfected afterward in so far as there is perfection for a natural reality. Now our understanding is about the genus of natural realities in so far as there is perfection of a natural reality. Therefore our understanding has a capacity, for it is like a blank tablet etc.; but afterwards, when it has acquired the species of intelligibles it is perfected. Now our understanding receives intelligible forms according to a certain order, as the prime matter receives sensible forms. The commentator on *Metaphysics* II says that prime matter first receives the forms of simple bodies, and with those forms mediating it receives the forms of other things, up to the last natural form. Thus our understanding receives intelligibles in a certain order. Hence what the understanding cognizes first about a reality is its quiddity, and in the second place it grasps its properties, and then it composes and divides these with one another. But what is the necessity that the understanding understands by composing and dividing? It should be understood that concerning nature the understanding not only grasps intelligibles, but once these are grasped it compares them with one another according to agreement and difference. Now such a comparison according to agreement is composition, according to difference is division, and therefore we have the two functions of the understanding.

As for the arguments, as for the first, I grant the major, and reply to the minor that the understanding does not grasp several things at once, considered as they are several, but it grasps several things at once as they one. For example, the understanding understands a whole at the same time as it grasps all the parts of the whole, and they are one in the whole, but it does not grasp them through their proper formulae at the same time. The understanding does not understand the subject as it is subject, and the predicate, as it is predicate, but it can at the same understand the subject and the predicate as they agree or differ. But it does not understand the formulae by which they agree and differ, because then it would understand several things at the same time.

As for the other argument, I grant the major, and reply to the minor that the understanding does not understand the present, past and future primarily, but through a certain reflection. When the understanding understands this proposition, a man is white, first it understands what is conveyed by the proposition, and second it understands time through a certain reflection.

Question 21 (108)

It is asked whether truth is only in the compounding and dividing understanding.

And it is argued that it is not. For the Philosopher says in the text that (430b26) just as the sensation of proper sensibles is always true, so the understanding is of whatever is of itself. From this I argue, as sensation is always true of its sensibles, so the understanding of whatever is. But the understanding grasping what is is not compounding, nor dividing. Therefore truth is not only in the compounding and dividing understanding.

Again, truth is conformity of the understanding to a reality. But just as the compounding and dividing understanding is conformity with reality, so also is the grasping intellect. Therefore there is truth there, just as it is here.

On the other hand, it is argued, the Philosopher says in *Metaphysics* VI (1027b25) that there is no truth or falsehood about simple things. But the grasping understanding is about simple things. Therefore in grasping understanding there is no truth or falsehood.

I reply that truth according to its primary formula is in the understanding, because just as good is that

in to which the appetite tends, so truth is that to which the understanding tends, except that there is a difference between appetite and understanding inasmuch as what is understood is in the understanding, but the object of appetite is not in the appetite, but in the world outside it (*re extra*).

From this, I argue that just as the good has the formula 'object of appetite,' so the true has the formula, 'object of understanding (intelligible).' But the good, because it has this formula, is in the reality outside; therefore the true, because it the object of understanding, is in the understanding. Truth there according to its primary formula is in the understanding. Therefore the Philosopher says in *Metaphysics* VI (1072b25) that true and false are in the soul, but good and bad in the world outside it.

In the second place, this is explained, the proper function of the understanding is in the understanding. But the true is the proper perfection of understanding, since it is the deed of the special sciences. Therefore etc. And then to the proposition, when it is asked whether truth is in the compounding and dividing understanding, or in the grasping understanding, I reply it is in both, since truth is conformity of the reality to what is understood. But this conformity is in both understandings. Therefore etc. Still, truth is principally in the compounding and dividing understanding, because the function of the grasping understanding is subordinate to the function to the compounding and dividing, and because of this truth in the grasping understanding is subordinate to the truth of the compounding and dividing understanding. And because of this, the Philosopher did well to say that truth and falsehood stand on composition and division, because it is principally about these. And since truth is conformity and the understanding to reality, truth is not only in compounding and dividing understanding as in something that cognizes the truth, but also in the grasping understanding.

The arguments proceed on their own ways.

Question 22 (109)

It is asked whether separated intelligences understand by compounding and dividing.

And it is argued that they do. A more perfect understanding is one that understands more. But our intellect understands both composite and simple things. There an intelligence understand composite and simple things all the more. But it does not understand composite things unless it understands compounding and dividing. Therefore etc.

On the other hand, it is argued every compounding and dividing understanding understands the measure of composition and division, namely time. But separated intelligences do not understand time, for just as their substance is withdrawn from time, so their understanding is as well. Therefore etc.

It must be noted that the way of understanding differs in our intellect and in separated substances. Although our understanding in the beginning is like a tablet on which nothing has been written, it is obvious that in understanding it proceeds from the potential to the actual, and so it is like realities that come to be and are destroyed, which do not receive their perfection immediately, but acquire it over time (*successive*). But the separated intelligences have their perfection immediately, and therefore they grasp through a simple grasp, or cognize concerning a reality whatever our understanding grasps by compounding and dividing. And this necessity is because in separated intelligences an intelligence is the more superior the more it understands through fewer and more universal forms, and another intelligence is inferior insofar as it understands through more forms that are less universal. And because our understanding holds a lower degree in the genus of intellectual nature, as it were the lowest, it understands through, as it were, an unlimited number of species. From this it is argued, all those which the understanding understands through a single species it understands at a single time. But the separated intelligences understand through one species everything concerning reality which our understanding understands by compounding and dividing, and this is because in them there are more universal forms than are in us. Therefore a separated intelligence cognizes by a simple grasp of reality whatever

our understanding understands by compounding and dividing, and so an intelligence does not understand by compounding and dividing.

As for the argument, when it is argued that an understanding is more perfect etc., I grant the major. I reply to the minor that an intelligence also understands compound and simple (*incomposita*) things, as it understands the temporal atemporally and the material immaterially.

Question 23 (110)

It is asked about that part, “but the indivisible, since it is so-called in two ways,” where the Philosopher distinguishes the indivisible into three kinds, namely, the indivisible according to quantity, the indivisible according to species, and what is in no way divisible, such as a point. **And it is asked whether the indivisible is understood before the divisible.**

And it is argued that the indivisible is understood before the divisible. For the Philosopher says in *Physics* I (194b18) that we do not know anything scientifically unless it be from a cognition of causes and principles. But indivisibles are causes and principles of the divisible. Therefore etc.

Again, what is assumed in the definition of something is understood before it (*per prius*). But the indivisible is assumed in the definition of the divisible, as for instance point is assumed in the definition of line. Therefore etc.

Again, That which is more assimilated to the understanding is understood before it. But the indivisible is more assimilated to the understanding than the divisible, because the understanding is indivisible. Therefore etc.

On the other hand, it is argued from the Philosopher in *On the Soul* III (430b20), who says that a point and, indeed, every other privation (*privatio*), is understood through the character of which it is deprived (*per suum habitum*). Since, therefore, indivisible is a privation of divisible, the indivisible will be understood through the divisible, and so the divisible is understood before the indivisible.

It must be understood that indivisible is said in three ways. In one way, indeed, what is indivisible in actuality, but divisible potentially, for instance, a continuum is said to be indivisible. In another way it is called indivisible in species, for instance, human being, or other most specific species (*species specialissima*). In the third way, it is indivisible because it is divisible neither actually nor potentially, as with a point. Now the indivisible said in the first way is better known in itself better known that it is as it is divided into parts. The proof is this, that the Philosopher in *Physics* I (184a20) says that a confused cognition precedes a determinate one. And because of this children at first call every man father and every woman mother, but after a while they divide, and call this man father, and this woman mother. Now a continuum as it is actually undivided has an indistinct and confused cognition, but as it is divided into parts it has a distinct cognition. Therefore etc.

In another way the indivisible is called what is indivisible in species, for instance, human being and everything that has one definition, and what is undivided in this way is better known as it is divided into parts, since as it is undivided it has a defined formula, for instance the divides formula has definition, and the defined is understood prior to definition, as is held in *Physics* I (184b10). Therefore etc.

In the third way, what is indivisible in actuality and potentiality, a point is indivisible, which is not a continuum nor part of a continuum, but a limit, and such an indivisible is understood posterior to the divisible. The reason is, as the Philosopher says in *On Memory and Reminiscence* (450a8), our every understanding is with continuum and time, and therefore that which is continuous and a quantity is understood by us beforehand. But a point is not a continuum, nor any part of a continuum, therefore a point is not understood by us *per se* and primarily.

But you will reply, the Philosopher says in the text that time and length are not understood except

through something what makes it be one. Now this is the point in length, and the instant in time. Therefore it seems that point is the principle of understanding a line, and instant that of understanding time, and so the indivisible is in this way understood beforehand. It must be replied that 'point' is taken in two ways, in one way under the formula by which it is indivisible, in the second way as it is the beginning and end of a continuum. As it is indivisible it is understood afterward, because under that formula it has the formula of a privation, and every such thing is understood afterward since it is understood through what has the characteristic of which it is deprived (*per habitum*). But if a point is considered as it is the beginning or end of a continuum, thus it is said that the point is the principle for understanding the continuum, for it is absurd to consider a nature if it has no beginning or end. So the Philosopher says in *Metaphysics* II (994b24) that it is impossible to understand a line that is not established somewhere. For everyone who understands a line understand it as established on two points. Since, therefore, the point is the principle and limit of a line, it a principle for understanding it.

As for the arguments, as for the first, when it is argued that we do not know anything scientifically except from a cognition etc., I reply that principles are twofold, namely the principle of a reality and the principal of teaching, and what the Philosopher says is to be understood concerning the principles of teaching, and not the principles of a reality. And when it is said in the minor that indivisibles are principles etc., I reply that it is true that indivisibles are principles of contingent realities, not of teaching, because the principles of teaching are better known to us. Now divisibles and composites are better known to us than indivisibles, and therefore indivisibles as such cannot be principles of teaching of divisibles.

As for the other, when it is said that what is assumed etc., I grant the major. I reply to the minor that point is assumed in the definition of line, just as the limits is assumed in the formula of something limited, and unity in the definition of number, as measure in the definition of the measured, but not as indivisible in the definition of divisible, and therefore it is not concluded that the indivisible so considered is better known than the divisible.

As for the other, when it is argued that it more assimilated to the understanding etc., I reply that one can consider the assimilation of a reality to the understanding in two ways, either as it is a certain nature or as it is understanding. Hence it is not necessary that what is more assimilated to our understanding because of its nature is what is understood beforehand, for separate substances are more assimilated to the nature of understanding than magnitude, but magnitude is understood beforehand, as, also, it is not necessary that vision see beforehand what is assimilated to it in nature, because thus it would see beforehand sound rather than color. Now what is more assimilated to the understanding as it is understanding is understood beforehand by the understanding. Continuum is like this because it is more proportional to the understanding under the formula of object. Our understanding understands whatever it understands in images. But an image is understood by the understanding as a continuous quantity, and therefore what is understood beforehand by the understanding is a quantity, even though it is not understood as a quantity, generally. To the minor, I reply that an indivisible in the third way is not more assimilated to the understanding as it understands, because it is not a quantity or a continuum, and therefore it is not understood beforehand.

Question 24 (111)

It is asked about the part, "now by abstraction it is called etc.," (431b12) where the Philosopher leaves it doubtful whether our intellect can understand separate substances, and he says afterwards that this remains to be settled. But it is not clear to us later from anything we have from Aristotle. **Therefore it is asked whether our understanding joined to the body can understand separated substances.** And it is argued that it can. In whatever what it is and if it is are identically the same, cognizing if it is cognizing what it is. But in separated substances if it is and what it is are identically the same, and

especially in the First Principle. Therefore when cognizing if it is concerning separate substances it is necessary to cognize what. But our understanding when joined to the body certainly understands if it is concerning separated substances. Therefore etc.

Again, this is argued by the argument of Commentator in *Metaphysics* II (II s. 1, c. 1, f. 14va). Nature does nothing in vain. But separated intelligences are intelligible by their nature. Therefore by anyone, ourselves not excepted (*ab aliquo non nisi a nobis*).

Again, if our understanding cannot understand separated substances, this impossibility proceeds either from separated substances or from our understanding. Not from separated substances, because these are maximally intelligible, nor from our understanding, because according to the Philosopher our understanding is potentially of every intelligible. Therefore it can understand everything, and if everything, then separated substances.

On the other hand, it is argued that our understanding understands nothing except what has images. But separated substances do not have images, for they fall under none of the senses. Therefore etc.

Without doubt, this question is not found to be resolved by the Philosopher, and therefore, since he said nothing definite about it, there was occasion for many to go astray. Averroes assumed concerning this question that we, using the agent understanding, can understand separated substances in this life. This is because he assumed the agent understanding to be a separated substance, and therefore he thought it understood separated substances naturally. But because some replied to the Commentator, since our understanding is separated from us, how could we understand separated substances through the agent understanding? Because of this, the Commentator said that the agent understanding is united to us through intelligible species, which are compared to the agent understanding as matter to form, and because these species are united to us, there the agent understanding is united to us. Thus it can be the principle of understanding in us.

This opinion is lacking in three ways. First, because it assumes that the agent understanding can be a separated substance. This was disproved earlier. Second, because he assumed we understand through the agent understanding. This is disproved because everything which has a distinct being has a distinct function, because action follows being, and the manner of action the manner of being. But the agent understanding, according to the Commentator, is separated from us in being, there its operation is separated from us as well, and consequently we do not understand through it.

Now the Commentator added to his opinion this, that we cannot understand separated substances in this life unless we are in possession of the cognition of all material things, but, once this is gained, we understand separated substances. But to the contrary, if this is so, as the Commentator said, since very few people arrive at the cognition of all material realities, very few would arrive at happiness. But this is contrary to the Philosopher at *Ethics* X (c. 7) who says that happiness which consists in the cognition of separated substances is a certain common good which can be obtained by everyone not bereft of virtue.

Avenpace thought that a human being through study and contemplation of the speculative sciences can cognize the quiddity of separated substances, and he wished to show thus that quiddity is the object of the understanding. If, then, the understanding understands some quiddity, since if something has an impure quiddity he can abstract the quiddity from what has this <impure> quiddity, and if that quiddity thus abstracted is aggregated from quiddity and what has the quiddity, he will be able to abstract quiddity from what has the quiddity, and so on. And since the understanding does not proceed indefinitely in abstracting, it will be able to abstract the next quiddity from what has the quiddity until it arrives at some quiddity which is pure quiddity and not aggregated from quiddity and something having the quiddity. But this pure quiddity does not seem to be anything other than the quiddity of separated substances. It seems, then, that we can arrive at the cognition of separated substances.

This opinion is lacking, for it assumes that our understanding necessary arrives at cognition of separated substances through the cognition of material realities, and it is obvious that the quiddity of material things and the quiddity of separated substances are different natures. From this, I argue that whenever any things are of entirely different formulae, one does not necessarily lead to the cognition of the other. But the quiddity of separated substances and material things are of entirely different formulae. Therefore etc.

Again, the understanding does not necessarily understand the quiddity of a non-material reality just because it understands the quiddity of a material reality. Therefore, even less will it necessarily cognize an immaterial reality in cognizing a material reality. And the argument does not follow, because it is not absurd then that one might arrive at the quiddity of some material reality which is a pure quiddity, at least inasmuch as the quiddity of a material reality is pure in its genus, since the quiddity of a material reality includes nothing extraneous to the reality of which it is a quiddity, just as the quiddity of an immaterial reality does not, and so it is not necessary that a pure quiddity which is understood should be a quiddity of a separated substance, but that is what he wants to prove.

Alexander assumed our possible understanding to be united as form <to what it understands>, and because he believed nothing perpetual to be a corporeal form, he assumed the possible understanding is material, and consequently that we cannot understand separated substances through the possible understanding. And therefore he assumed the agent understanding was separated, and because of that, he said that we understand separated substances. But the union of agent intellect with us he assumed to be of the same kind as Averroes had assumed.

This opinion is lacking in two ways. First, because he assumed that possible understanding is corporeal, for we proved this wrong earlier. Second, because he assumed we understand separated substances through the agent understanding, because it is itself separate. And in this matter the same argument can be brought against him as was brought against Averroes.

Theophrastus, as Albert tells us, assumed that the agent and possible understandings are separated substances, and therefore assumed that we can understand separated substances through our agent and possible understandings, and he argued from the less to the more that it seems that separated understanding can understand what is separated more than that which is joined to matter, because there ought to be an assimilation of the cognizer and what it cognizes. But the understanding which is something separated understands what is joined to matter. Therefore all the more will it understand what is separated. This position is lacking in this, that he assumes the agent understanding and possible understanding to be separated substances, the contrary of which we have proved already.

I reply that our understanding, when joined to the body, cannot understand separated substances as far as the what it is of separated substances is concerned. And this is clear in two ways. First, because our understanding understands whatever it does understand from images, and therefore it can understand nothing except what was grasped beforehand by the senses. But through no sensible can we arrive completely at the cognition of separated substances, the reason being that the effect does not lead us to the quidditative cognition of its cause, except in one of two ways, either because the effect is assimilated to the cause in its essence, as a human being is that is produced by another human being producing it, or because the effect leads us to the cognition of a power, and the power to the cognition of the substance <that has the power>. In neither of these ways do material beings lead us to the cognition of separated substances. For nothing material is in its essence assimilated to separated substances. Moreover, nothing is perfectly cognized through the power of any separated substance. And therefore our understanding cannot lead to the cognition of separated substances from material beings.

In the second place, this is explained thus: whenever some active capacity corresponds to an active capacity because the passive is intrinsically related to the active (*passivum ad activum refertur*), any multiplication

in one of the two related capacities produces a multiplication in the other. Therefore an active capacity is in potentiality to something only if it is capable through a corresponding active capacity. But the possible understanding is like a passive capacity, and the agent understanding like an active capacity. Therefore to nothing is the possible understanding in potentiality which the agent understanding cannot make it understand in actuality. But the agent understanding cannot make separated substances understood in actuality, because they are intelligible in actuality of themselves. Therefore etc.⁴⁵ And, noting this, the Philosopher in *Metaphysics* II (993b10) said that our understanding is related those which are maximally intelligible like the eye of a bat to the light of the Sun.

But it is to be noted that even if our understanding cannot arrive at the cognition of separated substances from what is prior to them, it can certainly arrive at their cognition from what is posterior to them, for instance, from the nature of motion. Motion in every case reveals a mover, because there is no motion without a mover, and so different motions reveal different movers. Now in higher things different motions appear, for instance in the Sun and Moon, and these motions according to the Philosopher are eternal because he says that it is not to be held that the heavens were lacking at any time at all. Therefore in higher things there are different movers moving things for an infinite time. But no power in a magnitude can move for an infinite time. Therefore it is necessary that it be a power separated from magnitude. But such powers are only found in separated substances. And because of this the Philosopher says, *Metaphysics* XII (1073a35), from the number of motions one can conclude the number of movers. Therefore, from the eternity of the motion one proves the eternity of the first mover. Next, because we cognize separated substances only from nature of motion, and the separated substances themselves are far removed from motion by nature, because of this whatever we understand about them is privative. And because of this we cognize more what they are not than what they are, for we cognize that they are incorporeal, immaterial, and things of this sort.

But what do you say about the understanding separated from the body? Can it understand separated substances? I reply that it cannot understand separated substances fully, because our understanding understands whatever it understands according to the manner of its substance, because nothing is understood which is not in the on understanding. Now our understanding holds the lowest degree in the genus of natural understandings. Therefore separated substances are in a way more imperfect in us <as concepts> than in themselves, and because of this, the imperfection <in the concepts> comes from us.

As for the arguments, as for the first, when it is said that in whatever if it is and what it is are the same etc., I reply that we can consider if it is in two ways, either from accidental or from essential principles. Hence, understanding if it is from essential principles it is necessary to cognize what it is, but cognizing if it is from accidental principles, we do not need to cognize what it is. And noting this, the Philosopher said in *Posterior Analytics* II (93a24) that cognizing if it is agrees with being ignorant what it is. Hence I reply to the minor that we cognize if it is from accidental principles, and therefore we do not know scientifically what it is of separated substances.

As for the second, when it is said that nature does nothing in vain, I grant this. And you say if separated substances are intelligible, therefore they are understood by someone, I reply that this is true. And when you say, therefore they are understood by us, I reply that this is not true, but is a false consequent. For it does not follow thus, “the brightness of the sun can be perceived by something, perhaps an eagle, therefore it can be perceived by a bat.” In the same way this is not true, “Intelligences are understood by someone, therefore by us.” Nor is it true that they are intelligible by means of the senses. And so it does not make nature do something in vain, when it makes these intelligible.

⁴⁵I don't think this argument works.

As for the other, when it is said that if our intellect cannot understand etc., I reply that this impossibility proceeds from our understanding. Hence it is to be noted that in the cognition of some realities the difficulty arises from the realities because they have very little actuality and a great deal of potentiality, and such are material things, motion, and time. Some realities have a great deal of actuality and little potentiality, and such are most intelligible in themselves, but they are not understood by us, because we are involved in space (*continuo*) and time, and our every understanding is involved with space and time.

Question 25 (112)

It is asked about the part, “Now sayings about the soul etc.,” where the Philosopher proves that the soul is in a certain way all things, because through sense it is all sensibles, and through the understanding all intelligibles. Therefore, **it is asked whether the quiddities of realities are in the understanding that understands them according to power**, and this is asking whether the quiddity of a stone is in the understanding that understands stone.

And it is argued that it is. What moves and what is moved are similar, and there is no middle between them. But the quiddity of realities is related to the understanding as what moves and what is moved. Therefore the quiddity of a reality and the understanding are similar and there is no middle between them. But it is not similar unless it is with it or in it, therefore etc.

Again, the intelligible and the intellective is one actuality. The quiddity of an intelligible reality is its actuality. Therefore the quiddity of an intelligible reality is the intellective actuality. But the actuality is in that of which it is the actuality. Therefore the quiddity of a reality is in the understanding.

On the other hand it is argued, if the quiddity of realities are in the understanding, whence then the nature of the understanding is separated, the quiddities of the realities will be separated from the realities. But this is absurd, therefore etc.

And it must be replied to this the quiddities of realities are not in the understanding that understands them according to power, because as sensibles are related to the senses, so the intelligible to the understanding. Now what is sensed is in the senses, but not according to power. For if something visible is in the vision, it might happen then that its vision is more in quantity than the whole body of the animal. And then it could happen that the same color in number cannot be seen by different people, just the same color <in number> cannot be at the same time in several people.⁴⁶ And it would happen that the same would be seen under the same quantity, in proportion and length. And all these things are absurd. The visible, therefore, is not in vision according to its power. Therefore neither is the intelligible in the understanding according to its power. And therefore they do not prove anything according to reason who prove the soul is composed from all things as it cognizes all things.

Again, the Philosopher says in *Meteorology* IV (390a10) that because every natural thing is defined by a certain function of which it is capable, they are called individuals when they are capable, and when they are not they are only called individuals equivocally. Therefore we cannot remove their proper functions from the quiddities of realities. If then, the quiddities of realities and the functions of the quiddities are in the understanding, as a consequence the understanding, in understanding heat, heats things, and in understanding donkey, it performs the functions of a donkey. But this is impossible. Therefore etc.

⁴⁶Whiteness can be in both Socrates and Plato, of course, but Plato's whiteness cannot be in Socrates. (Perhaps that last phrase is ambiguous—do we mean to speak of the exact shade of whiteness in Plato, and expect to find that in Socrates? But the idea is that the individual instance of a whiteness in Plato, which is a reality distinct from Plato himself, even if its being depends on its being in Plato, cannot be in Socrates as well.)

This again the Philosopher seems to argue against Plato in *On the Soul* I (407a2 ff.), if the understanding understood a magnitude through contact with the magnitude it could not understand magnitude, which is not the case. But it can understand a magnitude which is not, for instance the magnitude twice the magnitude of the heavens.⁴⁷ Therefore the magnitude is not in the understanding according to its power, but according to proportional motions which are in it, it understands greater and lesser magnitudes. And with this in mind the Philosopher said that the soul is in a certain way all things, because the realities are not in the soul according to power, but through a species.

As for the arguments, as for the first, when it is said that what moves and what is moved etc., I reply that what moves proximately and what is moved are similar. But the quiddity of reality is not a proximal mover of the understanding. Its species is. And therefore I grant that the species is in the intellect.

As for the other, when it is said that intelligible and intellective etc., I reply that the intelligible and intellective are the same in actuality in so far as the intelligible species in actuality is the intellective form. Now such a form is not the quiddity or reality, but a similitude or species of it.

Question 26 (113)

It is asked whether the understanding is in need of images in understanding.

And it is argued that it is not. Thus the understanding occurs in actuality through intelligible species that inform it. But for the understanding to be in actuality for it to understand in actuality. Therefore intelligible species suffice for the understanding to understand in actuality. Therefore images are not required.

Again, imagination seem to depend more on sense than the understanding on images, because sense and imagination are powers of the same formula. But understanding and imagination are not powers of the same formula. But imagination does not need sense, for we can imagine in the absence of sensibles and <imagine> that which never was in the senses, for instance, a golden mountain. Therefore etc.

On the other hand, the Philosopher says that our understanding understands whatever it understands in images. Again, the understanding understands species in images. And again, whatever it understands, it is necessary that it view (*speculari*) images at the same time.

Concerning this question there are diverse opinions. Some posit that the understanding does not need images. For Plato postied that our understanding is naturally full of all intelligible species, but through its union with the body it is prevented from being able to freely understand. And Boethius agrees, saying this, “when attention is turned to higher things, singulars are ignored; now the founded on the cloud of members it is not wholly forgotten, but the whole is held as one loses the singulars.” (*On the Consolation of Philosophy* V)⁴⁸ Tully, in the his *Rhetoric* III . . .

The rest of the text is lost in Cod. 292 Collegii Merton, Oxoniae, 364rb – 370vb.

Question 27 (114)

⁴⁷Nothing, for an Aristotelian, would have such a magnitude, since this is the greatest magnitude possible in nature.

⁴⁸V Poetry 3, 20 ff. “an cum mentem (the ms. Apparently has “mentio”) cerneret altam / pariter summam et singula norat, / nunc membrorum condita nube / non in totum est oblita sui / summamque tenet singula perdens?” = “And when it perceived the highest mind, did it know the whole and singulars equally? Now hidden by the cloud of the body’s members, not wholly does it forget itself, and it keeps to the whole losing the singulars.”

Whether every lack of order in the will is caused by an error of reason.