

## Sophisma: A Universal is an Intention

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A universal is an intention.

Regarding this sophisma, three things were asked about the universal itself. The first is: What is the active cause of universality itself, that is, whether the active intellect brings about universality in realities. The second is about its material cause: Whether what is actually universal is in the intellect or in the external reality. The third concerns the its formal cause, that is, whether the universal, considered in respect of what it is, is substance or accident.

**Concerning the first question, it is argued that** the active intellect does not bring about universality in realities.<sup>1</sup>

**<First argument>** Whatever is actually universal is actually understood; but realities are not actually understood through the functioning of the active intellect, but rather through their reception by the possible intellect. Therefore, realities are not actually universal by the power of the active intellect.

**<Second argument>** Again, a universal is one in many. But a reality is not one in many because of the active intellect, but is rather abstracted from many. Therefore, neither is it universal because of the active intellect.

**On the other hand,** the opposite is clear from Aristotle in *On the Soul II*, and the Commentator on the same, who says that the active intellect brings about universality in realities.

**<First response to the question>** It has been said regarding this problem that the active intellect brings about universality in realities, since the active intellect is related to intelligibles as light is to colors. Light makes colors, which are potentially visible, to be visible in actuality, and similarly the active intellect makes those realities which are potentially intelligible to be understood in actuality. It causes it to be understood in actuality inasmuch as it causes the cognition to be in the possible intellect; and since the universal in actuality is none other than a cognition of the reality understood in the universal, therefore it must be said that the active intellect brings about the universal.

**<First argument against the first response>** Against this, it has been argued first that material realities are in themselves actually intelligible. For the intellect is not of greater power in understanding than is the First Agent in bringing things about; but the First Agent cannot bring about any material substance without a determinate quantity, for that would imply a contradiction; therefore the intellect cannot understand material substance without determinate accidents. Things under determinate accidents, therefore, are intelligible of themselves, and consequently it is not necessary to posit an active intellect so that the potentially intelligible can

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<sup>1</sup>As it works out, the three questions are not dealt with *seriatim*, though all three receive answers in the determination of the Master. This is the only question of the three explicitly stated, and associated with objections which are replied to at the end.

be made understood.

<**Second argument against the first response**> Again, it is argued that the active intellect does not bring about the cognition of a thing in the possible intellect, since if it were to do so, this could only be by abstracting. But it can be shown that the active intellect does not abstract, since everything actually abstracted is actually understood, therefore actually abstracting is actually understanding; but the active intellect does not understand, and therefore it does not abstract either.

<**Third argument against the first response**> Again, it is argued that the active intellect is not correctly compared to light, since light does not give colors themselves the form and whatness through which they can affect vision. But they are actually visible of themselves, since color is of itself visible, as the Commentator shows in *On the Soul II*. But the active intellect gives the form and species to images through which they can affect the possible intellect, since they do not affect it *per se*, for what is material does not bring about anything in what is immaterial. Therefore the active intellect is not correctly compared to light.

<**Fourth argument against the first response**> Again, it is argued the actually universal is not the very cognition of the reality itself, since what is actually universal is what is actually cognized; but what is actually cognized is not cognition itself, just as what is caused is not causality itself; therefore, in the same way, the actually universal is not the actual cognition of a reality.

<**Fifth argument against the first response**> Again, if a universal is predicable of many, then whatever is universal in actuality is actually predicable of many. But the cognition of a reality is not actually predicable of many (since Socrates is not the cognition of himself, nor is Plato, and so on for the rest), therefore the cognition of a reality is not that reality.

<**Sixth argument against the first response**> Again, it is argued that a whatness, considered in itself, is actually universal, since the object of each power is actually grasped by that power, but the whatness of a reality is in itself the object of the intellect; therefore the whatness of a reality is what is grasped by the intellect. But since what is actually grasped by the intellect is actually universal, since just as something is actually a singular when it is sensed, so something is actually a universal when it is understood; therefore the whatness of a reality considered in itself is actually universal.

<**Seventh argument against the first response**> Again, it is argued thus—whatever you ascribe a capacity to, to that the actuality must also be ascribed. If, therefore, the whatness of a thing, before it is understood, is universal in capacity, then when it is understood it is actually universal. Therefore what is actually universal is not the cognition of a reality, existing in the soul.

<**Eighth argument against the first response**> Again, it is argued that the active intellect does not bring about the universal, since, if it does, then, since the universal does not exist *per se*, it is necessary that it subsist in something else. Therefore it is in the possible intellect, the active intellect, or in images. But when the active intellect brings the universal about, the universal is not immediately in the possible intellect, since the action of the active intellect precedes the reception by the possible intellect. Again, neither is the universal in the active intellect, since the active intellect would then receive it, which is not true. Nor is in images *per se*. Therefore, it is not possible that the active intellect bring about a universal.

Many other arguments occur concerning this part, but they all come down to those already presented.

**<Second response to the question>** Then the question was responded to in another way. It was claimed that something is not actually universal because of the active intellect, but because of the possible intellect, since the proper function of the active intellect is only to abstract the whatness of a reality from its individuating principles. But this nature thus abstracted is an object of the possible intellect, which first understands this nature absolutely, and then compares the nature itself to the instances (*supposita*) from which it is abstracted, and in comparing the nature and its instances in this way, it brings about the concept of universality in the nature. And so what actually is is not universal before it is actually understood.

**<First argument against the second response>** Against these views the following arguments are made: If the intellect compares the understood nature to its instances all at the same time, then it either compares it to its instances as they are one, or as they are many. If you say that it compares to its instances as they are one, and taken all together at the same time, then it does not compare it to its instances at all, since instances, in the respect in which they are all one, not have the form of an instance. If it is said that the nature is compared to the instances as they are many, all taken together at the same time, then, since the intellect understands those to which it compares this nature all taken together at one time, it follows that the intellect understands many all together at one time, which is absurd. Therefore the intellect itself does not bring about the concept of universality by comparing this nature to its instances.

**<Second argument against the second response>** Again, if the intellect, at the time when it understands a nature, brings about the concept of universality in that nature, then it either understands that nature and brings about the concept of universality in it at the same instant, or at different instants. If at the same instant, then at the same instant it understands several things at once, namely the nature of the reality and the concept of universality which it brings about in that nature. If at different instants, this is absurd, since then the intellect, when it does not understand something, nonetheless brings about the concept of universality in that thing. This cannot be since if it were to be then the concept of genus will not any more be attributed to animal than to man. Therefore the intellect in no way brings about the concept of universality in this nature when it understands.

**<Third argument against the second response>** Again, according to the Commentator, on *Metaphysics* VII, universals of realities are collected from particular images by the intellect's considering them and making them one concept. Whatever it is, therefore, that collects one concept from many particulars brings about the actually universal. But the active intellect collects one concept from many particulars. This is not possible, however, unless it abstracts from many by abstraction, and this is only done by the active intellect. Therefore it brings about the actually universal.

**<Debate on the first objection to the second response>** In response to the first argument, when it was said that the intellect compares that nature in which it brings about the concept of universality to its instances all at the same time, it does this both as they are one and as they are many. This is because insofar as the intellect compares the nature to its instances it is as they are one, it attributes universality to them, and insofar as it compares it to its instances as they are many, it attributes community with one another to them. But when universality is attributed to a thing community is also, for this very community is universality in actuality.

Against this it is argued: if the intellect compares some nature to its instances all at the same time, both as they are one and as they are many, then the intellect understands something at one and the same time as both one and not one.

In response to this it was replied that it is not absurd for it to understand some things as both and many, so long as this is in different respects. So the intellect cannot understand instances as one and many otherwise than in different respects. It understands instances as one with respect to their nature which is understood, and as many insofar as they have being matter outside the soul.

Against this reply it is argued that if the intellect grasps these instances all at the same time as one and many in different respects, then it is necessary that the intellect understand those different respects at the same time. Therefore the intellect understands those different respects at the same time either as different or as one. It is not to be said that it understands those different respects at the same time as one, since then the intellect cannot grasp the instances both as one and as many in those different respects. Nor is it to be said that the intellect grasps those different respects as different, since if it does, this will be through different intelligible species; but the intellect cannot be formed by different intelligible species at one and the same time, just as the same body cannot, so that the same body cannot be colored by various colors; therefore the intellect cannot understand different things at the same time as different. So it cannot grasp something as one and many at the same time in different respects.

In the second place, it is argued that since the intellect is simple and indivisible, it is wholly turned to whatever it gives itself over to. Since it cannot be wholly turned to different things, it is necessary that whatever is grasped at the same time be something that is one. But one and many are not something that is one, but opposite differences dividing being itself. Therefore the intellect does not grasp any thing as one and many at the same time, either in the same respect or in different respects.

In response to the first of these two objections, it was answered that the intellect can understand different things at the same time as different, since every power which puts differences between some two things grasps both of them at the same time. This is clear of the sensitive power, and it is similar with the intellectual power.

Against this it is argued that even if the intellect can understand the difference between two things at the same time, yet it still cannot understand the unity which is between these same things at the same time as it understands this difference between them. But if the intellect grasps instances as one and many in different respects, then what was said is possible. It is necessary that the intellect compare the instances to the understood nature in which the instances are received as the same, and that it compare the instances to one another according to the being they have in matter outside the soul, for thus they are compared as many. Therefore, the intellect cannot grasp these instances as one and many at the same time in different respects.

And the same point is also argued thus: As the Philosopher says in *On the Soul* III, the intellect does not understand a length in an indivisible time unless it does this by making the length to be one. Therefore the intellect does not understand anything at the same time unless it is as that thing is indivisibly one. It does not even understand things as they are different at the same time, all the more so will it not understand something as both one and many.

These were the arguments.

<**Determination of the Master**> There is very little about the being and the nature of the universal transmitted to us from Aristotle, but he does take it on himself to disprove the opinions of those philosophers who claim that universal are certain natures subsisting *per se* apart from singular things. If the universal were of this sort, then it would not depend on the soul for its

being. It appears, then, that excellent men in philosophy are opposed to one another in the way in which they understand universals. It is better for us, therefore, to leave the question open at first, proceeding by way of questions, rather than to assert something with certitude.

First, then, we ought to take into account that the nature of a reality is in itself neither universal nor particular. For if it were universal in itself, then it could be neither one nor multiplied, and thus not all of human nature would be in Socrates, nor all of equine nature in Brownie. Similarly, if it were particular in itself, then it could not be many. Since, therefore, the nature of a reality is one in one thing and many in many, it follows that the nature of a reality is in itself neither universal nor particular—but it is particular according to the being it has in matter outside the soul, to which, as it were, individuating principles are conjoined, and it is universal according to the being it has in the soul.

That the form of the universal only agrees with the nature of a thing according to the being it has in the soul is clear from the Commentator on *On the Soul* III, where he says that no universal, such as human being, has being outside the soul, since if it did have such being, we would not need to posit the active intellect. And elsewhere, on the same third book, he says this: If universals are only understood, they are not entities in that way, but understood in that way. It is as if he were to say that a reality is understood universally, but does not exist universally. Therefore the nature of a thing, although it be that which is outside the soul, insofar as its being universal is concerned, is only in the soul. And this is explained as follows: unity and commonness are of the form of universal, and because of this the Philosopher says the universal is one in many and over many, for from its being one in many commonness belongs to it, and since it is one over many, unity is in it. Now commonness is not in the nature of a reality in itself, since if it were then that nature could not be found in a singular. For whatever is singular, nor is any commonness found in it. Therefore commonness is in it from something else. However, it can only be from the intellect. And therefore that the nature of a thing should be universal comes from the intellect.

But then the principle doubt remains, that is, whether the intellect which brings about the universal is the active or the possible intellect. To resolve this, it must be known that according to Avicenna “something that brings about” is said in four ways: something that perfects, something that disposes, something that advises, and something that cooperates. I call “something that perfects” whatever brings the form into completion in a reality. Something that disposes does not bring the form into completion, but prepares and disposes a thing for the introduction of a form. So I hold that the active intellect brings about the universal by disposing, but the possible intellect brings about the universal by perfecting, so that the form of universality is dispositionally from the active intellect, but it is perfectly from the possible intellect. And since the form of universality is from the active intellect, therefore the Commentator says on *On the Soul* III that the forms grasped in the imagination cannot in themselves move the possible intellect, and draw it from potentiality to actuality, since if they could, then there would be no difference between the universal and the individual. And he goes on to say: It is necessary, therefore, that there be some mover, which causes them to move the possible intellect actually, and this is none other than the active intellect.

It appears from what has been said about the intellect that if there is no active intellect, there is no difference between the individual and the universal, and so the active intellect immediately causes universality to be in realities dispositionally. But in this way it appears that images have the same relation to the intellect as colors have to vision, as is said in *On the Soul*

III. And therefore, as the vision does not see unless it be in the presence of a color, neither does the intellect understand unless it be in the presence of an image. But the presence of an image is not sufficient. For just as the act of seeing requires external light, which makes colors, which are visible potentially, visible in actuality, or, as we say more accurately, which makes the medium actually transparent so that vision can be affected by the colors; thus a certain external light is required for the act of illuminating, through which the potentially intelligible can be intelligible in actuality. But this is the active intellect, and therefore the Philosopher clearly says in *On the Soul* III that the active intellect is a habit like light, since just as the light brings about the grasp of colors, so does the active intellect bring about the grasp of intelligibles. And just as vision, by means of exterior light, sees the colored body only as it is colored, so our soul in the presence of an image and the active intellect grasps the nature of a reality without any accident, so that the active intellect is nothing but a certain particular power in our soul through which the soul can distinctly grasp a reality aside from all that which is not of its form. But the whatness, thus abstracted from everything accidental to it, and especially from the individuating principles making the whatness to be here and now, this whatness is in virtue of the active intellect in close disposition to that which is universal in actuality.

But in that way the active intellect bring about universality in realities immediately and dispositionally. But the universal considered as a completed form is from the possible intellect, not from the active intellect. And this is clear from two considerations.

The first is that when the active intellect acts, by abstracting, it is obvious that the outcome of the action is some nature which is abstract as such. The nature of a reality, however, considered merely as it is abstract, is not universal in actuality, since in itself, considered as it is abstracted, it bears no relation to its instances. This will be seen more clearly later. And therefore the nature of a reality, insofar as it is this same nature that is absolutely the outcome of the action of the active intellect, is not actually and completely universal.

This can be explained similarly in another way. The universal in actuality is considered in two ways, namely as the intention of universality and as the nature subject to that intention. But the intention of universality, since it is not a pure fiction, is caused by some real property; and therefore it is possible that the soul attributes different logical intentions to different realities according to the different properties of realities. From this one argues thus: To that to which it does not belong to consider the properties of realities, it does not belong to bring about the completed form of the universal. But it does not belong to the active intellect to consider realities or the properties of realities, since the active intellect does not cognize. Because of this the Commentator says that the active intellect is not the intellect that cognizes but the intellect that brings it about that one can understand. And therefore it does not belong to the active intellect to bring about the completed form the universal.

It appears, therefore, from what has been said, that the nature of a thing, considered as it is abstracted without qualification, is not universal in actuality, but the very act that gives power to imaged forms through which they can affect the possible intellect, also gives to this same possible intellect the power through which it can receive; and “to receive” here is nothing other than “to transfer.” And respecting this the Commentator on *De Anima* III says that to abstract is nothing other than to cause imaged intentions, which before were in potentiality, to be in actuality, and to understand is nothing other than to receive these intentions. If, therefore, to abstract is a proper function of the active intellect, it is obvious that through the functioning of the active intellect a thing becomes intelligible in actuality, but not yet universal in actuality. And

all this is clear from the foregoing.

It remains to be said, then, that the universal, considered as it is a completed form, is caused by the possible intellect. This is made clear thus: There are two aspects of the completed form of the universal, namely unity and commonness. But now, the nature of a reality is neither one nor common, unless this be through the function of the intellect and its consideration alone. For the same reality is one insofar as it is considered as abstracted, and is common insofar as it is considered as sayable of many, nor as it is made different in those as it is in itself. So the same nature which by being abstractly understood is according the being in particulars. And therefore the intellect receives that nature as it is predicable of many by a predication saying “this is this.” Therefore the nature of a thing is not universal in actuality except when it is abstracted in actuality and considered by the intellect in actuality.

And this is clear from Themistius on *De Anima* III, where he says that universals are certain concepts which the soul stores pulls together (*colligit*) within itself. Therefore the form of the universal is not attributed to a reality except when it is actually understood. But it must be added that that it be actually understood is not in itself sufficient for the nature of a reality to be made actually universal. Rather, when the nature of a reality is grasped by the intellect through comparison to its instances, and the intellect considers that the instances agree in the nature of that reality, so that as regards that nature one instance does not differ from another, then the active intellect brings about in them the intention of universality and it receives this same nature as predicable of many. If the intellect grasps this same nature as predicable of many differing in species alone, it attributes to them the intention of a genus; but if it grasps it as predicable of many differing in number alone, it attributes to it the intention of a species, and so on for the rest.

It is clear from Boethius *On the Categories* that such a comparison of the nature to its instances as they are similar and in agreement in that nature is required for the completed form of that nature, where he says that genus and species not from what is understood through one singular, but conceived from all the singulars by the reasoning power of the mind. Grosseteste, on *Posterior Analytics* I, says the same thing, where he says that there are three things in a body, namely magnitude, figure, and color, and that reason divides magnitude from color, and color from figure, and all of these from body, until it arrives at the cognition of body absolutely conceived. But for this to be so he cannot mean here that the universal was already abstracted from many beforehand, and considered by the intellect as one and the same found in many.

Moreover, this is what the Commentator intends, on *Metaphysics* XII, where he says that “universals for Aristotle are pulled together from particulars by the intellect, which takes in the similitude among them and makes it a single intention.”

And Themistius, in the *Praoemium* of his *De Anima*, says that genus is a certain concept without substantial existence (*hypostasis*) drawn together from them the similitude that holds among singulars.

This, then, is as it were the common intention of all the expositors of Aristotle, that it is through comparison of the understood nature to its instances that the nature is actually universal. Thus it is clear, from what has been said, what is required for the completed form of the universal, namely that it be abstracted in actuality and that it be actually understood, and that it be compared to another.

**<First difficulty and its resolution>** But then a doubt occurs: Since the nature of a reality is temporally indivisible, can it be abstracted in actuality and actually understood in the

same instant?

And it must be said that it can. For we see in natural things that in the very same instant in which matter is disposed in the highest degree to the introduction of some form, the form is brought into it. This is so, or otherwise matter without form is assumed. For it is obvious that when matter is disposed in the highest degree to receiving some form, then a contrary form does not remain in the matter. Now when the nature of a reality is abstracted in actuality, it is disposed in the highest degree to being understood, and therefore, in that same indivisible time, it is both abstracted in actuality and actually understood.

Again, we see in natural things that the agent does not bring about the form *per se*, nor matter *per se*, but brings about form in matter or a whole made up from both. Now an abstracted nature is related to the possible intellect as form to matter. And therefore the active intellect brings about at one and the same time a certain thing made up of that nature and the possible intellect, so that that nature is abstracted by the power of the active intellect and understood by the active intellect at one and the same time. And the active intellect brings about a nature in the possible intellect at the same time as it abstracts that nature from matter. Thus it is clear that the nature of a reality is actually abstracted and actually understood at the same time.

**<Second difficulty and its resolution>** And then it is doubted whether the nature of a reality is understood in actuality before it is compared to its instances.

I maintain that it is. The explanation is this: The intellect cannot understand realities at one and the same time of which there is not some one form by which they are thus to be understood; but there is not one form by which it is understood of that which is absolutely and that which is compared to instances, for “absolute” and “compared to instances” are primary differences distinguishing substance from accident, and of such there is not one form, as is explained elsewhere. Therefore it is necessary that the intellect understand the whatness of a reality absolutely before it understands it as compared to something else, and so absolute is in fact prior to compared. We plainly experience this in ourselves. For we do not, when we understand the nature of human being, immediately grasp it as it is predicable of many. Nor is this to be wondered at, since when we grasp the nature of human being absolutely considered, we do not grasp any accident of it, but to be predicable of many is an accident of human nature;<sup>2</sup> therefore etc.

**<Third difficulty and its resolution>** But then, since the nature of a reality is understood in actuality before it is compared to another, someone might doubt whether it is a universal in actuality at the same time as it is actually compared to its instances.

And I maintain that when the intellect compares the nature of a reality to its instances, in such a way that it grasps it as common to many, it attributes the intention of universality to it at the same time. But before this comparison another comparison is necessary, a comparison of the instances to one another. For the intellect first considers how the instances agree among

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<sup>2</sup>To be actually predicable of many is an accident of human nature, that is, it is accidental that there actually is more than one thing in the world that is human. To be potentially predicable of many, i.e. potentially universal, so that it can be predicated of many human beings *if* many human beings happen actually to exist, is an accident of humanity of another sort, which it gains when it comes to be actually considered absolutely.

themselves, and how they differ among themselves. And then the intellect, comparing some nature to the instances insofar as they agree, brings about the intention of the universal in it, so that this same nature is actually universal at the same as it is compared to its instances insofar as they are one something, and the form of being predicated of many is attributed to this same nature.

**<Fourth difficulty and its resolution>** But then perhaps someone might have a doubt, for if the universal as such is in the intellect, and the singular is outside the intellect, and nothing that is separated from another is predicated as relates to its substance and essentially of it; then it does not seem that universals can be predicated of singulars.

In response to this it must be said that “the universal” takes in two things, namely, the intention of universality, and the nature subject to that intention. The intention of universality is a certain concept in the soul, attributed to things themselves. This sort of concept, however, is said to be genus or species and that sort of thing, which has no being except through the soul. So they are in the soul as in the efficient cause, but it is in the understood thing insofar as it is understood, as in a subject.<sup>3</sup> These intentions, however, are not predicated of singulars themselves, since we do not say that Socrates is a species, or universal, but are predicated of the nature of the reality, considered as it is understood. So we say that human being is a species, and animal is a genus.

Next, since the same thing is the nature according to its substance, in the intellect through its species, and in singular things through its substance, therefore the intellect receives that nature which it understands as predicable of singular things in respect of its substance, but in such a way that that nature is not predicated essentially in respect of its substance of singular things by reason of that form by which it is understood. For this predication is accidental, “Socrates is an understood human being.” But under that form under which it is considered absolutely apart from any accident. And thus the nature which is predicated is in singular things as something is in a subject, but in the intellect as something is in its terminus, and when it is predicated of singular things it has an ordering to the intellect itself; and insofar as they are said to be realities, which are predicated of many, they are in the intellect. But they are in the reality outside the mind as something is in its subject. So it is true to say that the nature of a reality would never be predicated of many unless it were actually understood, since to be predicated is an actualization

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<sup>3</sup>This is a central point for Faversham. To see it more clearly, one must see that *conceptum* is a past participle form, meaning “the conceived.” Now it is plausible that the conceived is the reality we conceive, and the conceived can be held to be in the intellect only as something is in its efficient cause. The intellect causes the external real nature to be conceived, of course. So a species comes to be species because the absolute nature, which is not yet a species before the intellect enters the picture, is made into a species by being conceived by the intellect. Human nature is a reality which is suited to be conceived, and, when conceived, is suited to be conceived as conceived, and so as a species, and as universal. Now someone who objects to Realism might here raise the point that the individual is of such a nature as this, that is, the particular human being can be conceived absolutely, abstracting from all her accidents, so that she becomes a concept of human being (i.e. is conceived as human being), and can then be conceived as a universal or species insofar as she is human. This may in fact be Faversham’s view, for he seems to want to say that what exists really, as a reality, is always a particular,

of a form; but nonetheless it is not predicated of many under that form which is understood, but rather under that by which it is a particular nature and substance.

Thus it appears in brief what the difference is, for the universal, as regards universal intention, is in the soul as something is in a subject, and is not in singular things that way, nor predicated of them thus. But the universal, as regards the thing subject to the intention of universality, is in the reality as in the subject, and predicated of singular thing in respect of their substance. It is true that when the universal itself is predicated of singular things it is understood, but it is not predicated in virtue of that form by which it is understood. Therefore the nature of a reality, as it is in itself, is neither determined to being in the soul, nor to being outside the soul in that of which it is predicated.

**<Summary of the Master's determination of the question>** From what has been said, five things are apparent in general. The first is that the universal is dispositionally because of the active intellect. The second is that it is brought to completion because of the possible intellect. The third is that even though a reality may be actually understood, yet it is not actually universal before it is compared to its instances. The fourth is that the nature of a reality is understood before it is compared to its instances. The fifth is that the nature itself is universal at the same time as it is compared to its instances. In order to have, then, a nature that is a completed universal, it is required that the nature of a reality be actually abstracted, actually understood, and actually compared to its instances, in such a way that it is in itself one in these; and in the judgment of the soul it is made many, but in it being outside the soul it is not. And thus it is clear what is to be said in reply to the problem.

**<Responses to the arguments concerning the question>**

**<Response to the first argument>** Now, as to the arguments in opposition, when it is said that what is universal in actuality is actually understood, I hold that this is true. And when it is said, "things are not actually understood through the functioning of the active intellect," I grant that they are not understood in actuality through the functioning of the active intellect alone, and they are not actually universal in this way, either.

**<Response to the second argument>** As regards the other, I grant the major premise. To the minor, when it is said that a reality is not in many through the active intellect, but abstracted from many, I hold that as soon as the reality is abstracted the reality itself is one in many as it is in itself. Therefore I grant that the reality is abstracted from many by the active intellect, and is one in many; but it is still not common to many before it is understood actually and actually compared to its instances, and this occurs through the possible intellect. And therefore I grant the conclusion, namely that the reality is actually and completely universal through the active intellect.

**<Responses to the arguments against the first response to the question>**

**<Response to the first argument>** In response to the third argument, when it is said that the intellect does not have greater power in understanding than the First Agent has in bringing about, for the dissolution of the argument it must be noted that the power of the First Agent does not extend to something that implies contradictories, for being that implies contradictories is prohibited from being and it is non-being in its form. The power of an agent, however, extends to nothing that is by its nature prohibited from being, and because of this the capacity of the First

Agent does not extend to making a man be man and non-man simultaneously. But this incapacity is not to be ascribed to the First Agent because the First Agent cannot bring it about, but it is because it cannot be brought about. In reply to the major premise, then, the intellect is not of greater power in understanding than is the First Agent in bringing about, if we consider the absolute capacity of the first Agent. But if we consider that there are many impossible things which can be understood and yet these things are themselves prevented from being by their form, in this way we say that the intellect can understand many things that the First Agent cannot bring about. But this incapacity necessarily is not ascribed to the First Agent, but to that which cannot be brought about. It suffices therefore to reply to the major premise that the intellect is not of greater power in understanding something than is the First Agent in bringing it about, unless this thing is itself such as to imply a contradiction. And when it is said that in the minor premise that the First Agent cannot bring about material substance without determinate quantity, since this implies a contradiction, therefore I grant that the intellect cannot bring it about by understanding that a material substance exists in reality without determinate quantity, nevertheless intellect can within itself consider material substance without considering the quantity under which it exists.

**<Response to the second argument>** In response to the other argument, in which it is argued that the active intellect does not abstract, this must be said: When it is said that to be abstracted in actuality is to be actually understood, I grant this. And when it is concluded that therefore to be actually abstracting is to be actually understanding, I hold that it is necessary to assume in that case that what abstracts what understands are the same in substance, but it abstracts and understand using different powers. So the active intellect abstracts insofar as it is active, but it understands insofar as it is intellect. For as the active intellect and the intellect are inseparable in substance, so also in function, so that these two functions, namely understanding and abstracting, belong at the same time to this aggregate whole which is the active intellect, abstracting insofar as it is active and understanding insofar as it is intellect, and in such a way the soul receives through its being possible, and understands through its being intellect.

And this is what the Commentator says on *On the Soul* III. These are his words: It is necessary that these three different things be in the soul, for it is necessary that the intellect be in it, which is the intellect through which everything is received in it,” and this same is the possible intellect; and an intellect which is “the intellect according to which it makes itself understand everything,” and this is the active intellect; and an intellect which is the intellect “according to which it understands everything.”

Let us reply to the argument in this way: Everything that abstracts in actuality actually understands. I hold that this is true, but not in virtue of and the same thing. And when it is said in the minor premise that the active intellect does not understand, I hold that it does indeed understand, as was said. So the intended conclusion, that the active intellect does not abstract, does not follow, but it follows that the active intellect abstracts and understands, but not insofar as it is one and the same thing, for it abstracts inasmuch as it is active, but understands inasmuch as it is intellect.

**<Response to the third argument>** In response to the fifth argument, when it is argued that the intellect is not correctly compared to light, since light does not give bodies the power etc., it must be replied that the active intellect is compared to light in this respect, that just as vision does not see unless there is an illuminated medium, so our intellect does not understand unless some nature is actually abstracted by the light of the active intellect. As regards what is touched on in the above argument, the active intellect is not correctly compared to light.

**<Response to the fourth and fifth arguments>** In response to the sixth and seventh argument, which show that the universal in actuality is not the same as the cognition of the reality, I agree. For properly speaking that is universal in actuality which is in the intellect and compared in actuality to an instance as predicable of it. Therefore this very cognition of the reality is not actually universal, unless the name universal be used in an extended sense.

**<Response to the sixth argument>** In reply to the eighth argument, which shows that the whatness of a thing as it is considered in itself is universal in actuality, one must reply as follows: When it is argued “What is actually understood is actually universal,” I reply that this is not true unless more be added, since what is actually understood and actually compared to its instances is actually universal. And you say: Something is actually singular when it is sensed, therefore in the same way something is universal when understood. I reply that this case is not similar. For sense, although it receives the species of a singular thing and this is separated from matter, yet it does not receive it separated from the conditions of matter. For the species of a singular thing is perceived by the senses under being here and now, and since the thing is caused to be singular by individuating principles which are here and now, therefore what is received in senses is singular. And what is received in the intellect is the whatness of the reality taken absolutely. For this is *per se* the object of the intellect, as is said in *On the Soul III*, where the Philosopher says that sense discerns flesh, but intellect the being and whatness of flesh. The whatness of a reality, considered in itself, is therefore the object of the intellect. But whatness, when it is thus considered, is not actually universal, but potentially so.

**<Response to the seventh argument>** I grant the ninth argument, since it shows that the nature of a reality is actually universal because of the operation of the intellect.

**<Response to the eighth argument>** I hold that the solution of the tenth argument is obvious from what has already been said, since the argument proves that the active intellect does not bring about the universal completely, but rather dispositionally, and this was granted in what we have said already.

These things having been said concerning the doubts, it is enough.