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The Debate over Spiritual Matter in the Late Thirteenth Century:
Gonsalvus Hispanus and the Franciscan Tradition from Bonaventure to Scotus

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The Debate over Spiritual Matter in the Late Thirteenth Century:
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The doctrine of spiritual matter, or universal hylomorphism, which holds that there is a material as well as a formal component in spiritual creatures, was a subject of considerable debate in the late thirteenth century. It was commonly held by Franciscans and others whose thought has been described as “Augustinian,” while rejected by Thomas Aquinas, his followers and others considered more “Aristotelian.” Modern scholarship has almost universally accepted the assumption that the doctrine had its origins in the influence of the *Fons vitae* of Avicbron, accepted by some scholastics in lieu of a robust Aristotelianism, and that it met its demise in the unanswerable refutations of Thomas Aquinas, after which the position was no longer tenable. This dissertation shows that both assumptions are false. Avicbron was a negligible influence on scholastics defending spiritual matter, and only important to its detractors, while the defenders were, especially at the end of the thirteenth century, no less steeped in Aristotelianism than their opponents. Thomas Aquinas, while important to the debate, did not end it, and those defending his position later did not necessarily embrace all his reasons. Beginning with alternative accounts of the nature of matter in Plato and Aristotle, I trace the origins of the spiritual matter controversy to its sources in the thought of Plotinus and Augustine, consider the position and influence of Avicbron, and

discuss the development of the controversy in the early scholastics before the classical alternative positions were given in the metaphysics of Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas, who are each considered in depth. I then trace in some detail the course of the debate in the works of a number of Franciscans defending a broadly Bonaventurean account of spiritual composition, and a number of non-Franciscans rejecting it on a variety of grounds, both Thomistic and otherwise. In many ways the Bonaventurean metaphysics reaches its apogee in the thought of Gonsalvus Hispanus, who both recapitulates and advances the debate up to his time. Gonsalvus' writings on spiritual composition are studied comprehensively before I conclude by looking at responses made to him by Godfrey of Fontaines and John Duns Scotus.

This dissertation by Michael Sullivan fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in Philosophy, approved by Timothy Noone, Ph.D., as Director, and by John Wippel, Ph.D., and Michael Gorman, Ph.D., as Readers.

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Preface

The seed of this study was planted some time ago when I was reading through St. Bonaventure's Commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. When I reached the third distinction of the second book, in which Bonaventure discusses spiritual matter—a subject I had often given thought to before—my interest was piqued. I suggested to Dr. Timothy Noone that this might make a good dissertation topic, but he directed my attention to the treatment found in the disputed questions of Gonsalvus Hispanus. Upon reading this it was immediately plain to me that here was substantially the same doctrine expressed by St. Bonaventure fifty years earlier, but in a significantly more complex and sophisticated form. Thus sprang up the notion of the present work, which traces the doctrine of spiritual matter from Bonaventure to Gonsalvus through a number of Franciscan intermediaries.

Most of the limited scholarly literature on spiritual matter is not centered on St. Bonaventure and the Franciscans, but on St. Thomas Aquinas. In the course of my research I found that the vast majority of modern scholars whose works mention spiritual matter share certain unquestioned assumptions deriving from this focus. First, that the doctrine of spiritual matter is more or less wholly the invention of the Jewish Arab Ibn Gabirol, known to the medieval scholastics as Avicbron, and that Avicbron's doctrine was taken over by the naïve scholastic defenders of spiritual matter in lieu of a purer and more advanced Aristotelianism. Second, that spiritual matter was only a viable philosophical position until the devastating refutations of St. Thomas made it untenable, at which point it gradually withered away. Neither of these assumptions matched what I was reading in the Franciscans of the late thirteenth century, most of whom considered themselves thorough-going

Aristotelians, nearly all of whom ignored Avicbron entirely and attributed the doctrine to Augustine, and whose best and most interesting versions of the theory came after St. Thomas, frequently taking his criticisms into account. Consequently, in order to evaluate the aforementioned assumptions, the subject of my study had to expand to accommodate the sources of the doctrine, St. Thomas' alternative to it, and opposition to the doctrine during the period in question.

This study falls into three parts of roughly equal length. The first part, consisting of Chapters 1 and 2, provides the background of the debate over spiritual composition at the end of the thirteenth century. Chapter 1 briefly skims over the deep sources of the problem, beginning with its roots in the accounts of matter and of spiritual substances given by Plato and Aristotle. I note that something closely akin to the spiritual matter of the middle ages can be found, though it has been hitherto overlooked, in Plotinus. I then provide a survey of texts in St. Augustine and in Avicbron, each positing matter in spiritual creatures, and argue that St. Augustine's version was both more like what the "hylomorphist" scholastics taught, as well as being their own avowed authority for the doctrine. In Chapter 2 I offer a rapid survey of scholarship on spiritual matter in the early scholastics before giving detailed examinations of St. Bonaventure's and St. Thomas Aquinas' positions on composition in spiritual creatures. This chapter also examines the deep philosophical roots of the problem in scholastic thought and compares the first principles of Bonaventurean and Thomistic metaphysics insofar as they bear on the subject.

The second part of the study consists of Chapter 3, which closely studies the positions of six Franciscans who defend spiritual matter and four non-Franciscans who oppose it. I show that, even though they all affirm a material composition of spiritual creatures, there is a

variety of approaches and positions among the Franciscans, several of whom closely consider and reject St. Thomas' claim that spiritual creatures are composed of essence and existence and that this renders spiritual matter unnecessary. Among the non-Franciscans I also find a variety of ways to oppose spiritual matter, including some who accept St. Thomas' composition of essence and existence and some who do not. None of those presented here, however, makes an essence-existence composition a key part of their refutation of spiritual matter, as St. Thomas does.

Chapters 4 and 5 make up the third and final part, which studies spiritual matter in Gonsalvus Hispanus and reactions to him. Chapter 4 gives an overview of Gonsalvus' life and works before considering spiritual matter as it appears throughout his surviving *corpus*. I then present an exhaustively detailed examination of Gonsalvus' Q.XI, one of the most sophisticated and thorough defenses of the doctrine, both in itself and in its relation to Gonsalvus' predecessors. In Chapter 5 I examine spiritual matter in Godfrey of Fontaines and Bl. John Duns Scotus. Godfrey opposes spiritual matter once in a generic fashion and once in direct reply to Gonsalvus' Q.XI; I consider both texts and Godfrey's relation to Gonsalvus. In his *Quaestiones super secundum et tertium De anima* Scotus defends spiritual matter in a manner strikingly similar to Gonsalvus' Q.XI; I argue that Scotus is in some way dependent on Gonsalvus, rather than vice versa. I conclude by briefly surveying texts in the rest of his writings in which Scotus rejects spiritual matter and suggest that the demise of the doctrine after Gonsalvus is not due to its demolition by St. Thomas so much as to Bl. Scotus' transformation of the face of Franciscan thought.

Finally, I must acknowledge my debt and gratitude to Timothy Noone, not only for pointing me in the direction of Gonsalvus of Spain, for providing me with transcriptions and

other valuable materials, and for his direction, but also and especially for inspiring my interest in Franciscan thought at the beginning of my graduate career. The impression made on me by his immense knowledge of and enthusiasm for the great Franciscan scholastics have largely determined the course of my studies for the past eight years. I also owe thanks to Michael Gorman and John Wippel for their careful reading of the manuscript and many helpful suggestions and corrections. Particular mention must be made of my friend Garrett Smith, who obtained for me a number of research materials and provided conversation and interested comprehension throughout the writing process. I am especially grateful for his and his wife's hospitality while I put the finishing touches on the manuscript in the Medieval Institute at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana. Last of all, my greatest thanks must go to my wife Rachel, without whose unfailing support this dissertation could never have been written.

Chapter 1

Sources and Background

In this chapter I examine some of the most important sources and background for the thirteenth-century debate over spiritual matter. In this debate the most important philosophical authority is Aristotle, while the most important and most often cited patristic authority is Augustine; accordingly, the present chapter presents important texts relating to spiritual creatures and matter in each author. In addition I present selected passages from Plato and Plotinus who, although they were not directly used by our medieval scholastic thinkers, nevertheless provide crucial background. Finally I give an overview of Avicenna's philosophy of spiritual matter and conclude with remarks discussing his influence and importance for the scholastic debate.

Given the context and scope of the present chapter I intend to treat these authors only as they and their texts bear on the matter of ensuing chapters, without delving too deeply into matters of their own background or interpretation. With regard to the final section, for example, I do not concern myself with Solomon Ibn Gabirol, the eleventh-century Spanish-Jewish author of the Arabic *Mekor Hayyim*, in his own historical context, but only insofar as he was known to the medieval scholastics: namely as Avicenna, the otherwise anonymous author of the Latin *Fons vitae*.

I.1. Plato and Aristotle

Perhaps Plato's most distinctive doctrine is his concept of the Forms or Ideas, the eternal and immutable world of exemplars in which the sensible world participates in order to exist. In the *Timaeus*,¹ however, he recognizes that a metaphysics consisting of two principles, an exemplar and its *exemplatum*, is too simplistic to explain the mutability we observe in the world. A new principle must be introduced: "The new starting point in my account of the universe needs to be more complex than the earlier one. Then we distinguished two kinds, but now we must specify a third, one of a different sort . . . it is a *receptacle* of becoming."²

This notion of matter as a "receptacle" is among Plato's most famous formulations, and rightly so, for it encapsulates elements which were to reoccur in thinking about matter in philosophers with "Platonic" leanings even in the middle ages: that matter is a vessel into which form is poured, defined as a correlative of form and yet in some way prior to it, a yielding and receptive principle which takes its determination from the form which fills it and yet retains some properties in its own right. All of these elements are in contrast to the

¹ The *Timaeus* was one of the few Platonic texts available to medieval scholastics in Latin. See *Timaeus a Calcidio translatus commentarioque instructus*, ed. J.H. Waszink, vol. 4 of *Plato Latinus*, ed. Raymond Klibansky, 2nd ed. (London, 1975). Besides the translation and commentary by Calcidius, commentaries or glosses were also available by Proclus, Bernard of Chartres, and William of Conches, among others. One must note that (as will be argued for Avicenna as well) the *Timaeus* and its glosses play only an indirect and "ancestral" role in the thirteenth-century debate over spiritual matter, being relegated to the role of more or less deep background. See *The Glossae super Platonem of Bernard of Chartres*, ed. and intro. Paul Edward Dutton (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1991), 3: "After the twelfth century another period of relative neglect would set in. Thirteenth-century thinkers, preoccupied with a massive influx of Aristotelian texts and a few newly translated Platonic and Neo-Platonic books, had little time for the familiar *Timaeus*."

² Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. Donald J. Zeyl, 48e-49a. In *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997).

thinking of medieval philosophers of a more “Aristotelian” bent, for whom matter is pure potency without being or properties in its own right.

Plato emphasizes that his receptacle has some kind of unity of its own, is wholly non-formal in character, and does not absorb the properties of the form which it receives. “We must always refer to it by the same term, for it does not depart from its own character in any way. Not only does it always receive all things, it has never in any way whatever taken on any characteristic similar to any of the things that enter it.” That which is poured into the receptacle is the cause of variation in the subject, “[t]hese are the things that make it appear different at different times,” and does not account for the underlying identity of the substratum. In order to explain becoming, the notions of matter, the exemplary form, and the composite subject resulting from their interaction, “we need to keep in mind three types of things: that which comes to be, that in which it comes to be, and that after which the thing coming to be is modeled, and which is the source of its coming to be.”³

Aristotle’s thinking about matter also has its roots in the phenomenon of becoming. Change is always from the absence or privation of some form, the *terminus a quo*, to that form, the *terminus ad quem*; but in order to be change and not merely the creation and annihilation of forms, it must take place in a subject which remains identical across both forms. Aristotle says, “When a simple thing is said to become something, in one case it survives through the process, in another it does not. For the man remains a man and is such even when he becomes musical, whereas what is not musical or unmusical does not survive,

³ Plato, *Timaeus*, 50b-d.

either simply or combined with the subject.”⁴ Change across accidental forms, such as musical and unmusical, takes place in an underlying composite subject with both matter and substantial form which remain the same. But in change across substantial forms (for instance, in corruption from man to non-man or generation of man from non-man) there is still something which remains the same, the underlying substratum which *becomes* a new thing and ceases to be something else, just as in accidental change the composite subject becomes something new in a certain respect, i.e. musicality. This ultimate substratum is matter, the potential principle which gives identity and continuity to a subject across change from one form to another. “The underlying nature can be known by analogy. For as the bronze is to the statue, the wood to the bed, or the matter and the formless before receiving form to anything which has form, so is the underlying nature to substance, i.e. the ‘this’ or existent.”⁵

For both Plato and Aristotle, then, matter is an underlying subject, distinguished from form and providing a substratum in which form’s becoming can take place. Aristotle, however, rejects Plato’s separated Forms or Ideas; form comes to be in matter not by participation in a heavenly exemplar but by being introduced through an efficient cause. Form is not a principle existing prior to and superior to every composite, but merely as an element of a composite. Aristotle does not therefore conceive of form as a pre-existing heavenly something poured into an earthly receptacle, but as an actualization through an efficient cause of a potentiality latent in the subject or substratum. One does not pour the form of “bed” into the wood which receives it; rather one brings the bed into actuality out of the wood which had contained it only potentially. Consequently Aristotle conceives of

⁴ Aristotle, *Physics*, trans. R.P. Hardie and R.K. Gaye, I.7, 190a9-12. Quotations from Aristotle in this chapter are taken from *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 2 vols (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).

⁵ Aristotle, *Physics* I.7, 191a9-12.

matter, less as a receptacle which receives form in order to allow it to come to be in the sensible world, than as a subject in potentiality which becomes one in actuality. These differences in emphasis, between matter as a receptive vessel and matter as a potentiality waiting for actualization, will inform much of the medieval thinking about matter and play a key role in the debate over whether matter should be posited in spiritual substances.

Plato's thinking about matter is motivated by the phenomenon of becoming in the sensible world, and he seems not to have explicitly considered the question of whether non-sensible substances, whether the human soul or other spiritual beings, have a material component. An unequivocal answer to the question is not to be found in Aristotle either (nor, for that matter, is an unequivocal statement of the question itself), but his writings contain several important hints which were to inform much of the medieval debate on it.

Aristotle's comments on the nature of the human intellective soul are famously ambiguous. On the one hand, the soul is the form of the body, comprising together with it the composite living thing, and the actions of the soul are really the actions of the composite man:

We speak of the soul as being pained or pleased, being bold or fearful, being angry, perceiving, thinking. All these are regarded as modes of movement, and hence it might be inferred that the soul is moved. This, however, does not necessarily follow . . . to say that it is the soul which is angry is as if we were to say that it is the soul that weaves or builds houses. It is doubtless better to avoid saying that the soul pities or learns or thinks, and rather to say that it is the man who does this with his soul . . .⁶

Matter as a principle is posited in order to account for motion and change, and so where motion and change exist one infers a material substratum in which they take place, and where

⁶ Aristotle, *De anima*, trans. J.A. Smith, I.4, 408b1-14.

there is no change there is no matter.⁷ If and only if there is change and motion in the soul, then, is there also matter. But the above text implies that it is not the soul which changes but the composite man, who has matter in having a body. If this is the case there is no need to posit matter in the soul.

On the other hand, however, Aristotle does speak of the soul as having its own operation, and (at least implicitly) its own kind of change, apart from the body, as well as having both active and passive elements. “Since in every class of things, as in nature as a whole, we find two factors involved, a matter which is potentially all the particulars included in the class, and a cause which is productive in the sense that it makes them all . . . these distinct elements must likewise be found within the soul.” This passage is of course the origin of the distinction between the agent and passive or possible intellect which was to become so important in medieval epistemology; but it also has important implications for the metaphysics of spiritual substances, for it presents thought as a becoming. “And in fact thought [intellect], as we have described it, is what it is by virtue of becoming all things, while there is another which is what it is by virtue of making all things: this is a sort of positive state like light; for in a sense light makes potential colors into actual colors.” Earlier Aristotle indicated that thought should be understood as the activity of the whole man, the composite of soul and body, but here he presents thought as something taking place within the soul itself and unmixed with the body: “Thought [intellect] in this sense of it is separable, impassable, unmixed, since it is in essential nature activity (for always the active is superior to the passive factor, the originating force to the matter).” Then again, he speaks in the same

⁷ “Nor has everything matter, but only those things which come to be and change into one another. Those things which, without ever being in the course of changing, are or are not, have no matter.” Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. W.D. Ross, VII.5, 1044b25-28.

passage as though only the active power of thought is independent of the body, but that this part is precisely what does not undergo change, while neither inseparability nor immutability belongs to the passive part: “Actual knowledge . . . does not sometimes think and sometimes not think. When separated it is alone just what it is, and this alone is immortal and eternal (we do not remember because, while this is impassable, passive thought [intellect] is perishable); and without this nothing thinks.”⁸

These rather obscure remarks have exercised commentators since they were written, and I have no intention of determining Aristotle’s own meaning here. Instead I note that when Christian medieval philosophers read Aristotle’s psychology, they attempted to understand it in light of their belief that the human soul was separable from the body, that in its separated state it somehow retained its individuality, and that in this state it performed both intellective and volitional acts. Given these beliefs, Aristotle’s texts could be and were read, depending on the reader, either as implying that, since the soul (even in its separated state) performed activities and underwent changes, it must have some material substratum in which these changes could occur, or that, since the soul was the form informing the body’s matter, it had to be the form *of* a matter rather than having matter in its own right. The next two chapters of this study are in large part an examination of how this reconciliation of Aristotelian concepts and Christian teachings was attempted by a wide variety of scholastic thinkers.

Just as Aristotle’s theories about the soul were not composed with the need to take Christian notions into account, so Aristotelian texts on the separated substances were both useful and frustrating for Christian thinkers attempting to determine the status of angels in

⁸ Aristotle, *De anima* III.5, 430a10-26.

their metaphysics. For Aristotle “there is a substance which is eternal and unmovable and separate from sensible things. It has been shown also that this substance cannot have any magnitude, but is without parts and indivisible . . . it is also clear that it is impassive and unalterable; for all the other changes are posterior to changes of place. It is clear, then, why the first mover has these attributes.”⁹ For Christians angels certainly had some of the properties which Aristotle attributes to the first mover and the other separated substances, for they too were substances separated from sensible things, without (at least) corporeal parts or magnitude and indivisible. These attributes required that the Divine Thought be conceived of as simple and immaterial;¹⁰ what about the angels? If angels were simple and immaterial as God is, what would distinguish them from him? Furthermore, angels had some properties in common with the human soul as well as with God, for they were subject to change in some way and performed different mental and volitional acts. But in the case of the angels these acts could certainly not be explained with reference to a corporeal body. Did the possibility of change in angels imply a potential principle to be identified with matter, or did their separation from the sensible world, lack of parts, and lack of potentiality for substantial change preclude the presence of matter? Aristotle’s texts could be and were used by medieval philosophers to defend both views.

While for Aristotle himself separate substances certainly lack matter, one must keep in mind that he did not conceive of them as angels and souls in the Christian sense and did not recognize many of the properties that Christians were later to attribute to spiritual creatures. Indeed, it is unclear whether he would have recognized separate substances either

⁹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XII.7, 1073a2-13.

¹⁰ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XII.9, 1075a5-6.

as “spiritual” or as “creatures” in the senses these terms had for Christians. Both the “Aristotelian” and the “Platonic” or “Augustinian” positions on spiritual matter in the late thirteenth century constructed their arguments using Aristotelian principles and arguments which in their original contexts had no bearing on the question as later formulated.

One final text should be noted. Aristotle comments, in speaking of the heavenly bodies, that substances subject to different kinds of change have different kinds of matter. In doing so he affirms that wherever change is found there is also matter. “Now all things that change have matter, but different matter; and of eternal things those which are not generable but are movable in space have matter—not matter for generation, however, but for motion from one place to another.”¹¹ This will suggest to some medieval thinkers that potency to substantial change is not necessary to posit matter in a substance, and will lead to the notion of a threefold prime matter: one for generable and corruptible things, the matter of the sublunary world; one for things subject to quantity and local motion but not generation and corruption, the matter of the heavenly bodies; and one for things subject to accidental change but neither generation and corruption nor local motion, the matter of spiritual substances.

I.2. Plotinus

Although philosopher-theologians in the thirteenth century had no opportunity to read Plotinus, it will nevertheless be worthwhile to look briefly at a few of his texts. Plotinus, as the father of Neoplatonism, looms behind both Augustine and Avicbron, two of the most important sources of the medieval idea of spiritual matter, but scholarly discussions of

¹¹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XII.2, 1069b25-27.

Avicbron and especially of Augustine almost never remark on the fact that Plotinus may hold the largest claim to be the ultimate originator of the idea.¹² Many scholars¹³ seem to believe that Avicbron invented it out of whole cloth and that scholastic thinkers must have projected it back onto Augustine to give it credibility, without ever recognizing how many of the elements of medieval conceptions of spiritual matter are already explicitly found in Plotinus.¹⁴

Like nearly every philosopher, Plotinus agrees that there is no matter to be found in the highest being. But the reasons he gives for this are not quite the same as the reasons Aristotle gives:

Now if Matter must characteristically be undetermined, void of shape, while in that sphere of the Highest there can be nothing that lacks determination, nothing shapeless, there can be no Matter there. Further, if all that order is simplex, there can be no need of Matter, whose function is to join with some other element to form a compound: it will be found of necessity in things of derived existence and shifting nature—the signs which lead us to the notion of Matter—but it is unnecessary to the primal.¹⁵

¹² Its presence is familiar, of course, to scholars of Plotinus himself. See Werner Beierwaltes, *Identität und Differenz* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1980), 29-33; John Rist, “The Indefinite Dyad and Intelligible Matter in Plotinus,” in *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, 12, no.1 (1962), 99-107; Hilary Armstrong, “Spiritual or Intelligible Matter in Plotinus and St. Augustine,” in *Augustinus Magister: Congrès International Augustinien, Paris, 21-24 Septembre 1954, Communications* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1954), v.1, 277-283.

¹³ See for instance James Weisheipl, “Albertus Magnus and Universal Hylomorphism: Avicbron,” in *Albert the Great Commemorative Essays*, ed. F.J. Kovach and R.W. Shahan (Norman, OK.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 239-60. 244: “universal hylomorphism . . . stems solely from Avicbron’s *Fons vitae* through Gundisalvi’s *De anima* and *De processione mundi* and is the ultimate foundation for the so-called Augustinian thesis of plurality of substantial forms in all creatures.”

¹⁴ Very interestingly, Denys the Carthusian recognizes that St. Thomas Aquinas bears the responsibility for the almost universal notion that spiritual matter originated with Avicbron, while acknowledging that the doctrine is actually much older. Denys does not know Plotinus, but he attributes the doctrine to Plato and Proclus. See his *In Librum II Sententiarum* Dist. III Q.1: “Denique, quamvis Thomas in Scripto et in tractatu suo de Esse et essentia dicat ipsum Avicbron fuisse auctorem hujus opinionis, quod in intelligentiis existat materia; nihilo minus diu ante Avicbron fuit illa opinio, imo potius Plato fuit auctor ipsius, quem in hoc secutus est eius discipulus Proclus.” In *Dionysii Cartusiani Opera Omnia*, v. 21 (Tornaci: 1903).

¹⁵ Plotinus, *Ennead* II.iv.2. Quoted throughout in *The Enneads: a New, Definitive Edition with Comparisons to Other Translations on Hundreds of Key Passages*, trans. Stephen Mackenna (Burdett, New York: Larson Publications, 1992).

While not completely ignoring the role that change plays in recognizing matter (since he speaks of “shifting nature”), still this passage implies that for Plotinus other and perhaps more fundamental considerations are involved. Matter belongs to what is undetermined and to the composite of whatever variety; not only change but also “derived existence” leads us to the notion of matter. This implies that, if one were to accept this passage together with the Christian doctrine of creation, one would conclude that every creature without exception must have matter in its composition.

Later on Plotinus is explicit about the presence of a kind of matter in the spiritual realm:

This peculiar characteristic, this distinguishing difference, is the individual shape. But if shape, then there is the shaped, that in which the difference is lodged.

There is, therefore, a Matter accepting the shape, a permanent substratum.

Further, admitting that there is an Intelligible Realm beyond, of which this world is an image, then, since this world-compound is based on Matter, there must be Matter there also.

And how can you predicate an ordered system without thinking of form, and how think of form apart from the notion of something in which the form is lodged?

No doubt that Realm is, in the strict fact, utterly without parts, but in some sense there is part there too. And in so far as these parts are really separate from each other, any such division and difference can be no other than a condition of Matter, of a something divided and differentiated: in so far as that realm, though without parts, yet consists of a variety of entities, these diverse entities, residing in a unity of which they are variations, reside in a Matter; for this unity since it is also a diversity, must be conceived of as varied and multiform; it must have been shapeless before it took the form in which variation occurs.¹⁶

This passage contains several points of great importance, anticipating key elements of later positions. First and foremost, we find here very clearly stated the principle that matter and form are necessarily correlative items. If there is a shape, there must be a shaped; if there is form, there must be a formed, that is, “something in which the form is lodged”—in other

¹⁶ Plotinus, *Ennead* II.iv.4.

words, in order to exist form requires a receptacle in which to be deposited. Matter is not necessary to provide a substratum only for certain kinds of forms, such as those subject to quantitative dimensions, but is a necessary complement to form without qualification. As we shall see, this notion of the relation between matter and form stands behind much of the thinking of those scholastics who accept spiritual matter as well as corporeal.

Second, we must note that for Plotinus the spiritual world must contain matter precisely because the sensible world contains matter, and the sensible world is wholly dependent on the spiritual world. Since this world is an image of the world beyond, whatever it contains must derive from that world, including the matter entering into its composition. Avicenna will use this argument as a key element of his position, whereas the scholastics, with a strong doctrine of creation and a greatly diminished notion of hierarchical causality in the angelic realm, will abandon it.

Finally, there are anticipations of the genus-species argument which many of the scholastics will make. Spiritual substances have generic attributes in common, such as being a substance, being an intellect, and so on, but also attributes which distinguish them from each other specifically and individually. Plotinus takes this to imply that there is in spiritual substances something undifferentiated, corresponding to matter, and something differentiating and diversifying, which is form.

In speaking directly of the separated substances Plotinus recognizes a grade of being lower than the divine but higher than man, a kind of being which, unlike divine beings, have passion, experience, and emotion, "Celestials which, though eternal Beings and next to the

Gods, are already a step towards ourselves and stand between the divine and the human.”¹⁷

These beings are of course in Plotinus a far cry from the angels of the Christian middle ages, but they are closer to them than anything in Aristotle. In discussing the capacity of these beings to appear in the sensible world by investing themselves with “bodies of air or of fire,” Plotinus asks what participation these Celestials can have in matter, and in what kind of matter, and replies “Certainly none in bodily Matter; that would make them simply living things of the order of sense . . . We are forced to assume that there is a Matter of the Intellectual Order, and that Beings partaking of it are thereby enabled to enter into the lower Matter, the corporeal.”¹⁸ We have here, then, a kind of matter which is incorporeal, the presence of which nevertheless allows for the interaction of separated substances with the world of corporeal matter.

In another passage in the same *Ennead* Plotinus severs the connection between change and matter in the spiritual world completely. First he recognizes that matter is necessary for change, and points out that if there were no matter in the Intellectual Realm there would be no potentiality and that there would be neither generation nor accidental change. But then he adds that if we posit matter in the spiritual world—“every Being there will have its Matter, its form and the union of the two”—this does not reciprocally imply that there is change there. The Soul is not a potentiality to something either substantially or accidentally different from itself.¹⁹ The notion of matter as primarily a substrate underlying and supporting a static form has replaced the notion of matter as the underlying subject of change from one form to another.

¹⁷ Plotinus, *Ennead* III.v.6.

¹⁸ Plotinus, *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Plotinus, *Ennead* II.v.3.

Finally, in speaking of the human mind, Plotinus compares its potentiality to that of corporeal things using an Aristotelian example. Just as a lump of bronze can actually have the substantial form of bronze and the accidental form of a lump, while being in potentiality to the accidental form of a statue, so Socrates can be an actual ignorant man while being a potentially wise one. When he becomes actually wise, “the potentiality is taken up into the actual; or, if we prefer to put it so, there is on the one side the potentiality while, on the other, there is the power in actual possession of the form.”²⁰ The individual human mind is, much more clearly than in Aristotle, seen as something having both potentiality and actuality and motion between the two. Just as importantly, for Plotinus potentiality in the human mind, even when actualized, is seen as a principle subsisting along with and making possible the actuality of its accidental forms. All of these elements will be taken up by later thinkers who will embrace spiritual matter.

While it seems undeniable in light of the statements quoted above that there are in Plotinus many elements which will call to mind later thinking about matter in the spiritual world, it must also be admitted that such statements are scattered almost at random and quite infrequently throughout his writings. Plotinus’ anticipation of Avicenna in a few incidental remarks, for instance, in no way removes the originality of the latter, for whom the complementarity of matter and form and their appearance both in the sensible and the spiritual world become the centerpoint of his philosophy.²¹

²⁰ Plotinus, *Ennead* II.v.2.

²¹ See Erich Kleineidam, *Das Problem der hylomorphen Zusammensetzung der geistigen Substanzen im 13. Jahrhundert, behandelt bis Thomas von Aquin* (Breslau, 1930), 8: “Ibn Gebirol macht diese Lehre mit aller Entschiedenheit zum Mittelpunkt seines Systems und sucht es auf der Grundlage dieses Begriffspaares: Materie und Form aufzubauen.”

As has been noted, the scholastics of the thirteenth century had no access to Plotinus' writings. Nevertheless, in speaking of spiritual matter many contemporary scholars hastily assume that the doctrine originated entirely with Avicbron, from whom it was adopted by Latin-speaking thinkers through his translators and commentators. The claim of so many Franciscans to derive the doctrine primarily from Augustine was rejected out of hand both by many of their contemporaries and by most scholars of the last century, as the ensuing chapters shall show. Having seen many of the elements of later universal hylomorphism appear so explicitly in Plotinus, who stands behind both Augustine and Avicbron, we may be more willing to admit that the Franciscan scholastics could have been accurate in claiming to follow the former rather than the latter, if evidence that Augustine actually held a similar view is forthcoming. This is what we must examine in the following section.

1.3. Augustine

It hardly needs repeating that when Augustine attempted to give a rational account of his Christian faith, he frequently looked to Neoplatonic and especially Plotinian philosophy for guidance, seeing in it many correspondences with revelation. In discussing the creation of the world—which is the context in which he discusses the composition of spiritual creatures from matter and form—he explicitly cites the *Timaeus* as proof that Plato had some concept of the creation of the world by God, and that Plato thought things “very congruent to the truth of our religion.”²² It should be no great surprise, then, to find Augustine using notions of

²² Augustine, *De civitate dei*. 2 vols., ed. B. Dombart and A. Kalb. Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1981), VIII.11, v.1, 336-337: “Mirantur autem quidam nobis in Christi gratia sociati, cum audiunt vel legunt Platonem de Deo ista sensisse, quae multum congruere veritati

matter consonant with those of Plato and Plotinus in thinking through the constitution of angels and human souls, even if there are important differences between the two, especially in the created character of matter for Augustine. “It is possible to say that the Platonic notion of the ‘receptacle’ is similar to Augustine’s unformed matter, but, unlike the Platonic concept, unformed matter is itself created from absolute nothingness.”²³ Matter for Augustine is not self-existent or coeternal with God, but is rather the first of His creatures.

In both his *Confessions* and in his literal commentary on *Genesis* Augustine attempts to explain the meaning of the opening words of scripture, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” He suggests that by “the heavens and the earth” the revealed text refers to the heavenly and the earthly realms of creation, that is, to the realm of spiritual things and that of corporeal things, and that in creating these two realms God created the matter, spiritual and corporeal, out of which the two kinds of things were formed.²⁴

Matter for Augustine, before God gave it form and distinction, was not anything in particular, “neither color nor figure nor body nor spirit; and yet not altogether nothing,” an

nostrae religionis agnoscunt. . . . in Timaeo autem Plato, quem librum de mundi constitutione conscripsit, Deum dicit in illo opere terram primo ignemque iunxisse. Manifestum est autem, quod igni tribuat caeli locum: habet ergo haec sententia quandam illius similitudinem, qua dictum est: *In principio fecit Deus caelum et terram.*”

²³ John Goheen, *The Problem of Matter and Form in the De Ente Et Essentia of Thomas Aquinas* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1940), 43. On the immediate creation of both corporeal and spiritual matter in *Confessions*, *De Genesi ad litteram* and elsewhere, see also György Heidl, “*Ordinatissimum Dei Munus*. The Trinity in Augustine’s *De Fide et Symbolo* 2.2.,” *Studia Patristica* XXXVIII: Papers presented at the Thirteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 1999: St. Augustine and his Opponents; *Other Latin Writers*, ed. M.F. Wiles and E.J. Yarnold (Peeters: Leuven 2001, 174-180), 175-78. For more on the same subject, along with comments on Augustine’s dependence on Plotinus rather than Aristotle for his views on matter, see Christopher O’Toole, *The Philosophy of Creation in the Writings of St. Augustine* (Washington, D.C: The Catholic University of America Press, 1944), 17-34; Hilary Armstrong, “Spiritual or Intelligible Matter in Plotinus and St. Augustine,” in *Augustinus Magister: Congrès International Augustinien, Paris, 21-24 Septembre 1954, Communications* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1954), v.1, 277-283.

²⁴ On this, Augustine’s reliance on Plotinus, and on some differences in Augustine’s account between the two works mentioned here, see Van Winden, C.M. “‘Idea’ and ‘Matter’ in the Early Christian Exegesis of the First Words of Genesis: a Chapter in the Encounter between Greek Philosophy and Christian Thought,” in *Arche: A Collection of Patristic Studies*, ed. J. Den Boeft and D.T. Runia (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 141-145.

unshapeliness without any beauty or a formlessness not belonging to any kind.²⁵ Thinking (apparently) of the matter belonging to corporeal things, Augustine realizes the difficulty in properly thinking of matter in its own right, denuded of all form, but conceives of it as “something in between form and nothing, neither something formed nor nothing, formless and next to nothing.” He regards it as “the mutability of mutable things and capable of all forms into which mutable things can be changed,” in itself neither body nor soul nor the species of body or soul. If it could be coherently said he would call it a “nothing something” and would say “it is an is-not;” and yet, it has to exist in some degree in order to be capable of receiving the visible and composite forms that we observe.²⁶ It is worthy of note that, in contrast to St. Thomas and others of the later “Aristotelian” school, Augustine thinks it necessary to ascribe some degree of being to matter understood as separate from all form whatsoever, rather than assuming that all being is through the form.

Mutability is the indication by which we recognize that matter is present: every mutable thing leads us to the knowledge of some formlessness by which the subject is changed, receives a new form, or is turned from one form to another. Just as with Aristotle, matter is the substrate remaining identical across a motion from a *terminus a quo* to a *terminus ad quem*. Because matter remains identical across motion, it allows for change

²⁵ Augustine, *Confessiones*, ed. Lucas Verheijen, Corpus Christianorum, Series latina 27 (Turnholti: Brepols, 1981), XII.3, 218: “Nonne tu, domine, docuisti me, quod, priusquam istam informem materiam formares atque distingueres, non erat aliquid, non color, non figura, non corpus, non spiritus? non tamen omnino nihil: erat quaedam informitas sine ulla specie.” Here and throughout the present dissertation all translations are my own unless noted otherwise.

²⁶ Augustine, *Confessiones* XII.6, 218-219: “verum autem illud quod cogitabam non privatione omnis formae, sed comparatione formosiorum erat informe, et suadebat vero ratio, ut omnis formae qualiescumque reliquias omnino detraherem, si vellem prorsus informe cogitare, et non poteram; citius enim non esse censebam, quod omni forma privaretur, quam cogitabam quiddam inter formam et nihil, nec formatum nec nihil, informe prope nihil . . . mutabilitas enim rerum mutabilium ipsa capax est formarum omnium, in quas mutantur res mutabiles. Et haec quid est? numquid animus? numquid corpus? numquid species animi vel corporis? Si dici posset ‘nihil aliquid’ et ‘est non est’ hoc eam dicerem; et tamen iam utcumque erat, ut species caperet istas visibiles et compositas.”

without itself being subject to change or motion; rather change is the coming and going of forms in a stable substrate. Applying this notion of matter to the act of creation, then, Augustine suggests that we can think of the “heaven and earth” created by God in the beginning as a formlessness from which the heaven and the earth were made in the course of the work of the six days.²⁷ The earth which was at first without form and void was the matter of corporeal things before receiving the “quality of form,” and the darkness upon the face of the deep was spiritual matter before the restriction of its “immoderate stream”—that is, the conversion of the angelic life to its creator, by which it is “formed and perfected”²⁸—and before the illumination of wisdom. (It should be noted that elsewhere Augustine is careful to refrain from saying that either corporeal or spiritual matter ever actually existed in an unformed state; matter is prior to the composite in a causal but not in a temporal order.²⁹) This matter, whether spiritual or corporeal, is recognized by the mutability inherent in all creatures, whether they actually change, as bodies and human souls do, or whether they are fixed and stable in the eternal house of God but still by nature capable of change: all contain the common matter of all things whether visible or invisible, formless but capable of receiving form, of which was made the heaven and the earth, that is, the invisible and the

²⁷ Augustine, *Confessiones* XII.19, 230: “Et verum est, quod omne mutabile insinuat notitiae nostrae quandam informitatem, qua formam capit vel qua mutatur vel vertitur . . . verum est informitatem, quae prope nihil est, vices temporum habere non posse. Verum est, quod, unde fit aliquid, potest quodam genere locutionis habere iam nomen eius rei, quae inde fit: unde potuit vocare caelum et terra quaelibet informitas, unde factum est caelum et terra.” See also *De Genesi ad litteram*, ed. I. Zycha. Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum, v. 28-1 (Prague: Tempsky, 1894), I.1, 4: “Et quid significetur nomine caeli et terrae? Utrum spiritalis et corporalisque creatura caeli et terrae vocabulum acceperit, an tantummodo corporalis, ut in hoc libro de spiritali tacuisse intellegatur . . . ?”

²⁸ Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, I.1, 4: “An utriusque informis materia dicta est caelum et terra, spiritalis videlicet vita, sicut esse potest in se, non conversa ad creatorem—tali enim conversione formatur atque perficitur; si autem non convertatur, informis est . . . ?” See also *De Gen. ad lit.* I.9, 13: “Si autem lux, quae primum dicta est, ut fiat, et facta est, etiam primatum creaturae tenere intellegenda est, ipsa est intellectualis vita, quae nisi ad creatorem inluminanda converteretur, fluitaret informiter.”

²⁹ See Augustine, *De Gen. ad lit.* V.5, 146: “Non itaque temporali, sed causali ordine prius facta est informis formabilisque materies, et spiritalis et corporalis, . . .”

visible portions of creation.³⁰ On the subject of the angels being mutable without actually changing, Gilson writes:

The “heaven” spoken of in the first verse of Genesis signifies a spiritual matter completely and definitively formed from the very moment of its creation: it is in the angels. The angels, being creatures and so not coeternal with God, probably have a material and changeable substratum like every other creature, but the bliss of beatific contemplation fixes, as it were, their natural mutability and binds them inseparably to God. . . . In contrast to this fully informed spiritual matter, God created earth, i.e. an absolutely unformed matter.³¹

The angels are *naturally* subject to change, but their propensity to change can be quieted by adhering to God.³²

In *De Genesi ad litteram* Augustine emphasizes several more times the interrelationship between matter and mutability. “It is manifest that every mutable thing is formed from some formlessness,”³³ he says, having, again, already suggested in I.3 that there is one kind of “formlessness” for corporeal things and another for spiritual things. Later he says explicitly that if the soul were incapable of change there would be no need to look for its matter, but the soul is capable of change: just as the flesh is subject both to beauty and to ugliness in turn, to wounds and to health, so the soul can be deformed by vices and errors or shaped by virtues and education in the truth. Just as flesh—the body—comes to be out of some matter, namely the earth, which supports its corporeal properties, so perhaps then the

³⁰ Augustine, *Confessiones*, XII.17, 228-229: “. . . verum tamen quia non de ipsa substantia dei, sed ex nihilo cuncta facta sunt, quia non sunt id ipsum, quod deus, et inest quaedam mutabilitas omnibus, sive maneant, sicut aeterna domus dei, sive mutantur, sicut anima hominis et corpus, *communem omnium rerum invisibilium visibiliumque materiem adhuc informem, sed certe formabilem, unde fieret caelum et terra (id est invisibilis atque visibilis iam utraque formata creatura)* his nominibus enuntiatam, quibus appellaretur terra invisibilis et incomposita et tenebrae super abyssum; ea distinctione, ut terra invisibilis et incomposita intellegatur materies corporalis ante qualitatem formae, tenebrae autem super abyssum *spiritalis materies* ante cohibitionem quasi fluentis immoderationis et ante inluminacionem sapientiae?” (emphasis mine.)

³¹ Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine*, trans. L.E.M. Lynch (New York: Octagon Books, 1988), 197-98; see also 209 and corresponding notes.

³² See also *De civitate Dei*, XII.1, 511-514.

³³ Augustine, *De Gen. ad lit.* I.14, 20: “[M]anifestum est omne mutabile ex aliqua informitate formari . . .”

soul could have some matter “according to its spiritual kind” to support its spiritual properties, a matter which, unformed, is not yet a soul, just as unformed earth is something, although not yet flesh.³⁴ Again, note that both spiritual and corporeal matter precede the formation of the composites to which they belong not necessarily in time but in origin, as the voice precedes its song.³⁵

These are the chief texts in which Augustine speaks of a matter existing for spiritual substances as well as corporeal ones. Some scholars³⁶ have questioned whether Augustine genuinely held to a doctrine of spiritual matter. Kleineidam, for instance, suggests that many of Augustine’s individual statements seem to point unmistakably to its acceptance, but when taken in the context of the entire work at hand, the matter is not so clear.³⁷ R.J. Long, to take another example, insists that the notion originates with Avicenna to the extent of apparently denying that it has any presence in Augustine at all.³⁸ This is not the place to undertake a survey of Augustine’s metaphysics in order to determine how his reflections and suggestions on the creation fit into his philosophy as a whole; there has only been room here to survey the texts which many thirteenth-century thinkers used to determine Augustine’s opinion and to

³⁴ Augustine, *De Gen. ad lit.* VII.6, 205-206: “Si enim quiddam incommutabile esset anima, nullo modo eius quasi materiem quaerere deberemus; nunc autem mutabilitas eius satis indicat eam interim vitiis atque fallaciis deformem reddi, formari autem virtutibus veritatisque doctrina, sed in sua iam natura, qua iam caro est, et salute decoratur et morbis vulneribusque foedatur. Sed sicut haec excepto, quod iam caro est, in qua natura vel proficit, ut pulchra, vel deficit, ut deformis sit, habuit etiam materiam, id est terram, de qua fieret, ut omnino caro esset: sic fortasse potuit et anima, antequam ea ipsa natura fieret, qua anima dicitur, cuius vel pulchritudo virtus vel deformitas vitium est, habere aliquam materiem pro suo genere spiritalem, quae nondum esset anima, sicut terra, de qua caro facta est, iam erat aliquid, quamvis non erat caro.”

³⁵ Augustine, *De Gen. ad lit.* VII. 27, 225: “Frustra ergo iam quaeritur, ex qua veluti materie facta sit anima, si recte intellegi potest in primis illis operibus facta, cum factus est dies; sicut enim illa, quae non erant, facta sunt, sic et haec inter illa. Quodsi et materies aliqua formabilis fuit, et corporalis et spiritalis—non tamen et ipsa instituta nisi a Deo, ex quo sunt omnia—quae quidem formationem suam non tempore, sed origine praecederet, sicut vox cantum, *quid nisi de materia spiritali facta anima congruentius creditur?*” (emphasis mine.)

³⁶ Several besides those I mention here are listed in Theodore Crowley, *Roger Bacon. The Problem of the Soul in his Philosophical Commentaries* (Louvain-Dublin, 1950), 82.

³⁷ See Kleineidam, *Ibid.*, 29.

³⁸ R. James Long, “Of Angels and Pinheads: the Contributions of the Early Oxford Masters to the Doctrine of Spiritual Matter,” *Franciscan Studies* 56 (1998), 241n.8.

buttress their own. However, aside from an occasional hedge or qualification (such as the “*fortasse*” in the text quoted in note 30), I know of no reason to suspect that Augustine’s quite clear formulations on the subject are not meant to be taken seriously. Rather it seems that, as with Plotinus, the subject of an incorporeal matter in the spiritual realm was of only periphery importance to Augustine³⁹, who did not have the same metaphysical concerns as his thirteenth-century readers who scoured his comments on the first verses of *Genesis* to find any hint bearing on central metaphysical issues, even while attempting to reconcile him both with their own thought and with Aristotle. Augustine, unlike Avicbron later on, is little concerned with what effect his remarks on spiritual matter might have on a metaphysical system as a whole, and yet his later medieval readers will look at his remarks precisely in the light of carefully-constructed metaphysical edifices, and from this perspective Goheen’s remarks may have some merit:

In so far as it is correct to say that Augustine maintained a doctrine of unformed matter common to all creatures, it is possible to view this doctrine as the basis of a tradition which would dispose the later systematizers of his thought to see Avicbron’s developed theory of the materiality of souls and intelligences as an ally In so far as Augustine uses the Platonic distinction between matter and form in any degree whatsoever his thought runs the risk of the accentuation which such a work as the *Fons Vitae* could give it.⁴⁰

If anything, these remarks may give Avicbron too much credit. As we shall see in later chapters (however Augustine himself may have understood spiritual matter to fit into a more systematic metaphysics of creation, had he turned his efforts in that direction) later medieval thinkers espousing spiritual matter considered themselves to be following Augustine’s

³⁹ Accordingly, it has only peripheral importance in studies of Augustine’s thought, where it is frequently mentioned but rarely dwelt on. A typical example is found in Simo Knuuttila, “Time and creation in Augustine,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, eds. Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 104.

⁴⁰ Goheen, *The Problem of Matter and Form*, 73-74.

opinion rather than Avicbron's, frequently citing the former and practically never the latter. Nevertheless, Avicbron does play a pivotal role in the development of our subject, and it is to him that we should now turn our attention.

1.4. Avicbron

As noted before, Avicbron gives to the theory of spiritual matter an unprecedented prominence and importance; where both Plotinus and Augustine posit or at least suggest the existence of matter in the spiritual realm, Avicbron for the first time (and probably more than anyone since) makes this doctrine a central cornerstone of his philosophy.

The presentation of Avicbron's teachings presents unique difficulties for this study. On the one hand, in the currently available critical edition⁴¹ the *Fons vitae* runs to just short of three hundred and forty pages, and the discussion of spiritual matter is woven throughout and elaborated in nearly every part of it: a fairly extensive treatment seems called for in order to do it justice. On the other hand, I shall argue later that Avicbron's influence on thirteenth-century Franciscans espousing spiritual matter has been significantly exaggerated and that his views should not be given disproportionate weight in evaluating them. I shall try therefore to delineate the main threads of Avicbron's thought on spiritual matter from texts taken throughout his work, but as briefly as an adequate picture will allow.

A proper understanding of matter and form is fundamental to Avicbron's conception of philosophy. For him the science of the entire universe can be reduced to knowledge of

⁴¹ Avicbron. *Fons Vitae*, trans. Johannes Hispanus and Dominicus Gundissalinus, ed. Clemens Baeumker. *Beitrage zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters* Band 1, Heft 2-4 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1895), reprinted 1995. Citations are by Tractate, chapter and page (i.e., Tr.IV.7, 226.).

only three subjects, namely matter and form, the first essence (or God), and the will, which is an intermediary between the two.⁴² While God and the will are mentioned here and there throughout the *Fons vitae* and are occasionally the subject of sustained argument, still, matter and form occupy an overwhelming portion of the text; it is necessary to understand them before moving on to the latter two principles: the discussion of the will is reserved for a later work which we do not possess⁴³, and nothing is said about giving a full treatment on the subject of God.

Matter and form are the first and primary divisions of “universal being,” in which all created things whether spiritual or corporeal share. Many and diverse things partake of universal being, but they all agree in two things by which they are sustained and exist, namely universal matter and universal form, which are the root of whatever comes to be.⁴⁴ Everything is reduced to these two, which are coextensive and correlative. The fundamental characteristic of matter is that it sustains form, and the fundamental characteristic of form is that it is sustained by matter.⁴⁵ “Matter differs from form insofar as one is sustaining and the other sustained.” This difference is real and primary, a difference “of true contrariety”; neither matter nor form can be reduced to the other, nor is there anything they share in

⁴² Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr.1.7, 9-10.

⁴³ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr.V.40, 330: “et iam disposui uerba de his omnibus in libro qui tractat de scientia uoluntatis; et his liber uocatur origo largitatis et causa essendi, et debet legi post hunc”.

⁴⁴ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. I.5, 7: “D. Essentia esse uniuersalis, est unum aut multiplex?

M. Multiplex quidem est. sed etsi sit multiplex et diuersum, tamen conuenit in duobus quibus sustinetur et habet esse.

D.Quae sunt illa duo?

M. Materia uniuersalis et forma uniuersalis.

D. Quomodo autem totum quod est conuenit in his duobus?

M. Quia haec duo sunt radix omnium et ex his generatum est quicquid est.”

⁴⁵ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. I.6, 9: “Cum concesseris duas radices esse ad quas omnia redeunt, deinceps necesse erit ut concedas quod earum altera sustentat, altera sustentatur.”

common or any more fundamental principle. Matter is something really other than the forms it supports.⁴⁶

The unity and cohesion of the universe is guaranteed by the fact that everything whatsoever is rooted in universal matter. Matter is something existing per se, an undifferentiated and all-encompassing substratum providing a foundation for every form. It gives to everything “its essence and its name.”⁴⁷ Diversity in the world is accounted for by the diverse forms appearing in various substances, but the existence of such forms is only made possible by their existence in a common substrate which is itself one and *not* diversified or differentiated in any way.⁴⁸ Whatever is diverse is diverse through the diversity of form, and wherever things agree they agree through the homogeneity of their undifferentiated matter.⁴⁹ Matter is the sustainer and form the sustained; matter is hidden and form manifest; matter is perfected by form, and form perfects the essence of matter; matter is designated and form designating; matter is separated and form separating.⁵⁰

It is clear that matter for Avicbron is not a pure potency completely effaced by the presence of form, but rather a principle on equal metaphysical footing. Nevertheless he admits that, while matter can be said to exist, it does not have actual being in its own right,

⁴⁶ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. V.1-2, 257-261: “Materia differt a forma in eo quod altera est sustinens et altera sustentatum. . . . Vnaquaeque illarum differt ab alia per se ipsam. et non intelligo his differentiam conuenientium, sed intelligo differentiam oppositionis et uerae contrarietatis, scilicet quia non est aliquid super illas in quo conueniunt. . . . materia uniuersalis est praeter suam formam.”

⁴⁷ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. I.10, 13: “Si una est materia uniuersalis omnium rerum, hae proprietates adhaerent ei: scilicet quod sit per se existens, unius essentiae, sustinens diuersitatem, dans omnibus essentiam suam et nomen.”

⁴⁸ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. I.12, 15: “. . . diuersitas non contingit nisi per formas eorum quae sunt; sed essentia occulta quae suscipit formas, haec est materia prima uniuersalis una non habens diuersitatem.”

⁴⁹ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. IV.10, 233: “Postquam omnia quae sunt diversa sunt formâ, et quaecumque sunt diversa per formam, debet ut conueniant in materia: ergo sequitur ex hoc quod materia eorum quae sunt sit una.” See also Tr. V.22, 298-299.

⁵⁰ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. V.23, 299: “Materia est sustentatrix, et forma sustentata; et etiam materia est occulta, et forma manifesta; et etiam materia perficitur ex forma, et forma est perficiens essentiam materiae; et etiam materia est designata, et forma designans; et etiam materia est discreta, et forma discernens.”

but only through the form which it sustains; in itself it has only being in potency.⁵¹ This does not imply, however, that form is an intrinsically superior kind of principle which may exist with matter or without it; “universal form” is correlative with matter and cannot exist without it. While it is form which gives being to matter, neither does form have being of its own without matter: in a frequently repeated phrase, Avicbron stresses that the two cannot exist apart from one another “for one blink of an eye.”⁵² Form is in fact being in potency just as much as matter; actual being is only said of the union and composition of matter and form.⁵³ It is the nature of form in itself to subsist in something else, to perfect the essence of that in which it subsists, and to give it being. If form were *not* sustained by matter, it would itself be matter.⁵⁴ There is no room for the notion of a subsisting form; although one can call a form substantial, no form can be called a substance.⁵⁵

As we have seen, matter in itself is one and only diversified through form.⁵⁶ (Whether this unity is understood to be numerical, or merely specific, generic, or analogical, or the extent to which Avicbron is precise enough to admit of such distinctions, is not clear.) The

⁵¹ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. I.13, 16: “Non dicimus materiam habere esse nisi cum conferimus per formam spiritualem. In se autem non habet esse, quod habet cum adiungitur ei forma; et hoc est esse in effectu. Alioquin cum dicimus eam esse, non habet esse nisi in potentia;” Tr. V.8, 271: “Debes scire non esse possibile ut materia habeat esse absque forma, quia non habet esse, nisi cum uestitur forma, quia esse rei non est nisi ex forma.”

⁵² Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. IV.4, 219: “neutra illarum potest esse sine altera uno ictu oculi”; Tr. IV.5, 221: “Scias modo materiam non posse esse sine forma, quia esse rei non est nisi ex forma.”

⁵³ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. V.9, 273: “Scire debes quod esse duobus modis est: esse in potentia, quod est proprium essentiae uniuscuiusque, scilicet materiae et formae per se . . . et esse in actu quod est proprium materiae et formae, cum uniuntur et componuntur.” Tr. V.10, 274: “. . . esse est existentia formae in materia.”

⁵⁴ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. I.13, 16: “Attende similiter proprietates formae uniuersalis, quae sunt scilicet subsistere in alio et perficere essentiam illius in quo est et dare ei esse. . . . Sustineri necesse est formae, quia si non sustinetur, sustinebit; et sic forma erit materia et habebit intellectum materiae.

⁵⁵ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. III.37, 162: “D. Quare uocauerunt primam formam substantialem et non substantiam, cum ipsa perficiat essentiam materiae quae est substantia?”

“M. Ideo quia impossibile est ut habeat esse nisi in materia qua subsistit.”

⁵⁶ See also Tr. V.30, 311: “non uideo materiam in se esse nisi unam, et non uenit diuersitas nisi a forma.”

first diversification of things is through corporeal and spiritual forms.⁵⁷ Both corporeal and spiritual forms are sustained by prime matter, but the word “substance” is frequently reserved for corporeal ones, or rather, “substance” is usually, though not always, used to denominate matter understood as prepared to receive, or as actually sustaining, corporeal forms. “Matter” is used to denominate matter as abstracted from all form whatsoever, and “substance” to denominate matter already formed to a certain degree which disposes it to receive further formation by the objects of the nine predicaments. “Substance” then does not primarily mean the form of a thing, nor the composite of matter and form, but matter imbued with a minimal degree of form and thereby disposed to further determination and perfection from further grades of corporeal form. Avicbron also sometimes calls this kind of partially-formed matter at the base of corporeal things “hyle”, which is never used for universal matter or for spiritual matter.⁵⁸ It is important to recognize from the outset that this initial distinction of matter into corporeal and spiritual immediately excludes the notion that spiritual matter imposes on spiritual creatures any kind of corporeality.⁵⁹ “Universal matter” does not yet have any of the properties that corporeality implies, and the division of spiritual from

⁵⁷ See Weisheipl, 251: “The first division of universal substance (composed of universal matter and universal form) is into *corporeal*, i.e., three-dimensional bodies, by receiving a *forma corporeitatis*, and *incorporeal*, i.e., intelligent spirits or angels, by receiving a *forma spiritualis*.” This is not exactly inaccurate, but it is misleading, as it does not conform to Avicbron’s own usage. Avicbron rarely or never speaks of a *forma corporeitatis*, as later scholastics will (although he occasionally speaks of *corporeitas*); for him the primary division of forms after the initial production of universal form and universal matter is into the fundamental spiritual form, the *forma intelligentiae*, and the fundamental corporeal form which produces undifferentiated bodily substance, called either the *forma sensibilis*, or the *forma quantitatis*. Weisheipl’s article is a good example of much Thomistic or Thomist-inspired scholarship which, mentioning Avicbron only to explicate Thomas or other scholastics, reads him anachronistically.

⁵⁸ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. II.11, 42-43: “Distinctio nominum, substantiae scilicet et materiae, haec est quod materiae illi soli congruit quod paratum est recipere formam quam nondum recepit, nomen uero substantiae illi materiae congruit quae iam aliquam formam recepit et per ipsam formam facta est substantia propria . . . nos uocabimus hanc rem subiectam quae sustinet formam mundi aliquando substantiam, aliquando materiam, aliquando hyle.”

⁵⁹ See Brunner, F. “La doctrine de la matière chez Avicébron,” repr. in Stephen T. Katz, ed., *Jewish Neoplatonism* (New York: Arno Press, 1980), 28: “Il faut bien comprendre que cette généralisation de la notion de matière n’introduit pas la corporéité dans le monde spirituel.”

corporeal matter immediately precludes the mistake of thinking their materiality implies that spiritual things have quantity, extension, etc. Accordingly, properties which we may be tempted to attribute to matter in itself should be understood as belonging, instead, to primitive forms sustained in matter and themselves sustaining other forms.⁶⁰

Understanding how corporeal forms (the “nine predicaments”) of sensible things are rooted in this matter is the key to understanding spiritual things removed from the senses.⁶¹ Of primary importance here is the recognition that for Avicbron a given corporeal object does not possess a single substantial form which actualizes the potentiality of its matter to the exclusion of other forms. Rather a single corporeal thing is composed of a nested hierarchy of progressively diversifying and determining forms, each inhering in and being sustained by a more generic and less determinate one, and the entire formal complex being sustained first by the generic *forma quantitatis* in which all other corporeal properties⁶² are rooted, and ultimately by universal matter.⁶³ Each successive determining form is “other” than the last: the form of rationality is other than the form of sensibility, which is other than animation,

⁶⁰ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. IV.8, 228-229: “corporeitas forma est egens materia quae sustinet eam . . . Ponamus quod materiae tres sint. earum alia est materia simplex spiritualis, qua nulla est simplicior, scilicet quae non induit formam; et earum alia est materia composita corporalis, qua non est alia magis corporea; et earum est media . . . Quia materia quae induit formam simplex est etiam et spiritualis, sed est alia ab ea quae non induit formam . . .”

⁶¹ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. II.6, 34-35: “intellige etiam quod haec materia uniuersalis ipsa est substantia quae sustinet nouem praedicamenta, et quod nouem praedicamenta sunt forma uniuersalis subsistens in illa . . . haec substantia quae sustinet nouem praedicamenta est clauis speculandi ea quae sunt remota a sensibus . . .”

⁶² Worth noting here is that for the sublunar world the first form after the *forma quantitatis* is the *forma elementorum*, which sustains all other forms in the objects of our experience. The heavens share with the sublunar world the *forma quantitatis* and therefore have the same sort of matter; but the heavenly bodies are not subject to generation and corruption, i.e. the dissolution of their elements, and so do not share in the *forma elementorum*; their specific forms are sustained by the generic *forma caeli*. See Tr. I.17, 20-21: “Certe uerum est caelum et elementa unum corpus esse, quia utraque in quantitate conueniunt; excepto hoc quod differentia caeli et elementorum non ex hac parte accidit, sed ex ea uidelicet quod corpus caeli non recipit qualitates elementorum nec recipit generationem et corruptionem, et quod forma caeli diuersa est a formis elementorum.”

⁶³ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. II.5, 34: “. . . uidebis postea etiam quod omnes formae sustinentur in prima materia, sicut color et figura et similia accidentia sustinentur in quantitate et quantitas in substantia . . .”

which is other than substantiality, and so forth.⁶⁴ Consequently the composition of corporeal things is highly complex and unstable, in contrast to the simplicity of spiritual forms; but just as the entire extent of the “lower” or corporeal matter is interpenetrated by the *forma quantitatis* before being further differentiated by more specific forms, so the fundamental *forma intelligentiae* diffuses the entire extent of the “higher” or spiritual matter and thereby sustains every more specific form in the spiritual realm.⁶⁵

The existence and nature of spiritual beings is known through the corporeal world because the former are necessary to explain the existence and properties of the latter. Properly speaking nothing in the corporeal realm is *per se* subsistent; although rooted in corporeal matter every corporeal form is derived from and dependent on spiritual forms residing in spiritual agents which are themselves subsistent in spiritual matter. Spiritual substances “contain” the substance sustaining the nine predicaments, that is, the undifferentiated matter of the corporeal world, and in general spiritual substances are related to the corporeal substance of the world as soul is to body.⁶⁶

Most of the third Tractate, by far the longest of the five in the *Fons vitae*, is concerned with demonstrating (“*probationibus necessariis*”) the existence of intermediate

⁶⁴ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. IV.3, 217: “. . . quod forma naturae est aliud a forma animae uegetabilis, et quod forma animae uegetabilis alia est a forma animae sensibilis, et quod forma animae sensibilis alia est a forma animae rationalis, et quod forma animae rationalis alia est a forma intelligentiae.”

⁶⁵ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. II.8, 38: “. . . forma intelligentiae est una simplex, forma uero quantitatis est multae unae compositae. Et sicut forma intelligentiae est propinquior materiae altiori inter omnes formas, similiter forma quantitatis est propinquior materiae inferiori inter omnes formas . . . et sicut forma intelligentiae penetrat totam essentiam materiae altioris, similiter forma quantitatis diffusa est per totam essentiam materiae inferioris. . . . et sicut forma intelligentiae sustinet omnes formas et omnes formae sustinentur in illa, similiter forma quantitatis sustinet omnes formas corporis et eius accidentia et habent esse in illa. . . .”

⁶⁶ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. II.22, 64: “forma inferior quae subsistit in materia inferiori est suscepta ex forma altiori subsistente in materia altiori.” See also Tr II.24, 69-70: “Haec sunt substantiae spirituales, continentes substantiam sustentem nouem praedicamenta . . . Debes comparare existentiam substantiae corporalis uniuersalis in substantia spirituali uniuersali cum existentia corporis in anima; quia sicut anima continet corpus et sustinet illud, sic substantia spiritualis uniuersalis continet et sustinet corpus uniuersale mundi . . .”

spiritual creatures between God and the corporeal world, as well as the cognitive and causal relations between spiritual and corporeal things.⁶⁷ For Avicbron the non-divine spiritual world is necessary to explain the existence of the corporeal world. Although he believes in a kind of creation, he does not believe that God immediately created either the corporeal world or even corporeal matter out of nothing. God does not produce motion in the realm of substances at all without a mediating force.⁶⁸ Rather corporeal things are produced through the intermediation of spiritual creatures.⁶⁹ Without dwelling on the lengthy arguments Avicbron gives for this, which is after all a standard Neoplatonic teaching, we must notice that it is precisely because the corporeal world—which of course has matter in its composition—is produced through the spiritual world that we must recognize the presence of matter in both realms.

First of all we must recognize that both corporeal things and spiritual things belong to the same genus of substance, because corporeal substance must be of the same genus as that from which it proceeds.⁷⁰ In order to proceed from spiritual substances, then, everything found in corporeal substances must first be found in a higher way in spiritual substances. All sensible forms, then, are in corporeal substances through the action of spiritual substances, and these forms exist in spiritual intelligible substances more simply and purely than they do

⁶⁷ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. III.1, 73: “inter primum factorem altum et sanctum et inter substantiam quae sustinet nouem praedicamenta est substantia media.”

⁶⁸ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. III.7, 93: “Substantia quae mouet substantiam nullo mediante, mobilis est. et factor primus non est mobilis. ergo factor primus non est motor substantiae sine medio.”

⁶⁹ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. III.3, 79: “Facere factoris primi est creare aliquid ex nihilo. et substantia quae sustinet praedicamenta composita est ex suis simplicibus. ergo non est creata ex nihilo.”

⁷⁰ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. III.9, 98: “Substantia quae sustinet praedicamenta eiusdem generis est cum illo a quo procedit. et substantia quae sustinet praedicamenta substantia est. ergo et illud a quo procedit substantia est.” See also Tr. III.5, 88: “. . . substantia simplex et substantia composita conuenientes sunt. et quaecumque conueniunt, unius generis sunt. ergo substantia simplex et substantia composita sub eodem genere sunt.”

in corporeal ones.⁷¹ Even forms which we would usually think of as corporeal, such as figure and color, are derived from spiritual archetypes, so that along with corporeal color and corporeal figure we must posit a spiritual color and spiritual figure as their exemplar, and a spiritual substance in which they subsist. All corporeal forms flow down from spiritual forms, but forms which are separated from each other and dispersed throughout corporeal matter are collected together in the spiritual forms they have as their origin.⁷²

However, as we have seen, matter and form are defined correlatively and are coextensive with one another; if this is the case, then if forms are to be found in spiritual substances, matter must necessarily be there as well. Indeed, as soon as we have confirmed the existence of spiritual forms, we have simultaneously affirmed their hylomorphic composition. If the lower beings emanated from the higher, whatever is in the lower must be in the higher.⁷³ Forms in the spiritual world therefore must be sustained, and have a substrate to unify their diversity from each other and from corporeal substances, just as in the corporeal world.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. III.16, 112: “. . . omnes formae sensibiles [sunt] in substantia corporali ex actione substantiae intelligibilis spiritualis. et non sunt hae formae sensibiles, nisi quia materia quae recipit illas est proxima corporeitati in natura sua; et hae formae sensibiles sunt in substantia spirituali intelligibili simplicius quam in materia.” Also see III.17, 114: “ecce probationes demonstrantes quod formae quae sustentur in substantia corporali patientes sunt a substantiis simplicibus et spiritualibus et adueniunt ex eis.”

⁷² Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. III.24, 135-136: “Si omni est materia spiritualis et forma spiritualis, debet ut haec inueniantur in omni; et si fuerint inuenta in omni, debet ut sit in unaquaque substantia corporali materia spiritualis, et in unaquaque forma corporali forma spiritualis. ergo debet ut in colore corporali et figura corporali sit color spiritualis et figura spiritualis; et debet ut color spiritualis et figura spiritualis subsistant in substantia spirituali.

“Formae corporales defluxae sunt a spiritualibus formis. et quicquid est defluxum ab aliquo, exemplum est eius a quo effluit. ergo formae corporales exemplum sunt spiritualium. . . .

“Formae dispersae in substantiis corporalibus collectae sunt in spiritualibus. et quicquid dispersum est in aliquo, collectum est circa suam originem. ergo substantiae spirituales origo sunt formarum quae sunt dispersae in substantiis corporalibus.”

⁷³ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. IV.1, 211: “Si inferius defluxum est ab altiori, tunc totum quod est in inferiori debet ut sit in altiori.”

⁷⁴ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. III.5: “Quomodo est possibile ut formae sustineantur sine sustinente?” See also IV.2: “Quando grauauerit te imaginari substantias spirituales compositas esse ex duabus, considera earum

What distinguishes spiritual from corporeal things, then, is not immateriality but the fact that spiritual substances contain forms in a more simple, comprehending, and “collective” way than corporeal ones. Whereas in bodies forms are disparate, scattered, and complex due to the grossness (*spissitudine*) of corporeality, in spirits the same forms are collected together in a higher and purer unity. However, the same thing can be said of universal matter as of spiritual substances, for universal matter (as the matter sustaining both spiritual and corporeal things) is more receptive and collective of forms than either corporeal forms or corporeal substances.⁷⁵

A spiritual substance understands both its own nature and that of matter when it recognizes the distinction of its own form from its matter. “When the form of intelligence understands its essence, this is when it knows that it is the form of the matter which sustains it, and [when it understands] that it is something other than than the matter which sustains it, then it knows matter.”⁷⁶ Spiritual forms unite in themselves knowledge of their own forms, knowledge of their distinction from matter, and knowledge of the separated and multiple corporeal things of which they are the sources and exemplars. If, then, corporeal forms descend from and are contained in spiritual forms, and corporeal matter descends from and is contained in universal matter, Avicbron concludes that universal form is the *forma intelligentiae*. Because the form of intelligence understands and encompasses all forms,

diuersitatem a substantiis compositis et diuersitatem earum inter se; et tunc necesse erit tibi concedere differentias quibus differunt ab illis et inter se, et hae sunt formae constituentes ipsas.”

⁷⁵ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. III.23: “Omnis substantia quanto magis fuerit simplex et subtilis, tanto magis erit colligens formas, sicut anima, intelligentia, materia prima. et substantia animae subtilior est et simplicior substantia composita. ergo substantia animae magis est colligens formas quam substantia composita.” See also Tr. IV.15, 245-247.

⁷⁶ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. V.5, 266: “Cum forma intelligentiae scierit suam essentiam, hoc est cum scierit quod ipsa est forma materiae quae eam sustinet, et quod ipsa est praeter materiam quae eam sustinet, iam nouit tunc materiam.”

including corporeal forms, it interpenetrates all of creation, including the corporeal realm.⁷⁷ It is “the form of forms and the universe of reality.”⁷⁸

This may be clarified to some extent by glancing at some of what Avicembron says about the individual human soul. Just as with “separate” spiritual substances, the soul is a receptacle of the forms of corporeal things (although it does not seem to actually produce them in being, Avicembron sometimes speaks otherwise, as though the soul itself is responsible for the existence of forms in corporeal matter and is their “inventress”⁷⁹). As with the Aristotelian abstraction model, the soul receives these forms without their own proper matter. Corporeal forms exist therefore in the soul incorporeally, in a simpler and more “common” way than they do as the forms of bodies. Forms which in corporeal matter are separated and dispersed are collected together and unified in the soul, a higher and more universal form, and in general lower forms exist in higher ones, and all forms exist collected together in the universal form. The forms of sensible things then belong to the essence of the soul, in the sense that the soul’s essence has a “similarity” to them while being higher and more simple; but the matter of sensible things does not belong to the soul’s essence.⁸⁰

Besides being receptive of the forms of sensible things, the soul has its own proper form as well. Although not composed of elements, and therefore “simple”, the soul in its own right is still subject to matter-form composition. If it had no form of its own, it wouldn’t

⁷⁷ See Avicembron, *Fons vitae*, Tr.V.14.

⁷⁸ Avicembron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. V.18, 290: “. . . forma intelligentiae est forma formarum, et quod omnes formae subsistunt in eius forma, et quod intelligentia est uniuersitas rerum.”

⁷⁹ Avicembron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. III.24, 138: “Omnis forma quae fit ab anima in aliqua hyle, non fit nisi prius sit in anima spiritualiter, et per ipsas formas spirituales sunt formae corporales. anima autem adiuuentrix formarum corporalium quae sustentur in hyle. ergo hae formae et figurae sunt in anima spiritualiter.”

⁸⁰ Avicembron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. III.23, 133: “Res sensibiles sunt in anima simpliciter, hoc est, quia formae earum sunt in illa sine suis materiis. similiter formae rerum sunt in intelligentia simpliciter et communiori esse. ergo formae inferiores debent esse ut omnes sint in formis superioribus, gradu post gradum, donec perueniatur ad formam uniuersalem in qua est collectio omnium formarum . . .” See also III.24, 134.

exist, since existence is given to substance through form.⁸¹ Furthermore, the soul must have its own form whereby it is properly distinguished from the forms it receives in cognition, and by which it cognizes them. Although it is a receptacle of corporeal forms, it cannot be understood as a kind of spiritual “prime matter,” a blank slate without form prior to cognition, or even as mere spiritual matter analogous to corporeal matter. The soul can exist aside from its thinking, but any kind of prime matter or blank slate is only an abstraction. The soul is like a mirror: it can contain the forms of sensible things in a simpler way than their own proper matter can, just as a mirror can contain the sensible images of many things without containing their matter. But just as a mirror does, in order to reflect back forms divested of their proper matter, it must have its own proper matter and form.⁸² Now we noted above that the spiritual world is to the corporeal as soul is to body. Just as the individual human soul contains the forms of corporeal things, then, and actually produces and sustains some of them—i.e., the forms making up our own body—so the “universal soul” sustains as well as contains the entire corporeal world within its own substance.⁸³ Just as the human soul is responsible for all the body’s motion and change, so the entire corporeal world is interpenetrated by the influence of spiritual agencies, which are responsible for all motion within it.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. III.39, 168: “Substantia simplex aut habet propriam sibi formam, aut non habet propriam sibi formam. Non est autem possibile ut non habeat propriam sibi formam, quia non haberet esse. omne enim esse rei ex forma est.”

⁸² Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. III.40, 169: “D. Cur non est substantiae animae sicut substantia quae sustinet praedicamenta, quam existimo exspoliata omnibus formis?

“M. Esse huius substantiae exspoliatae a forma non est nisi in opinione, non in esse,” etc.

⁸³ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. III.57, 207: “et anima uniuersalis sustinet totum mundum corporalem et imaginatur quicquid est in eo et uidet, sicut nostrae animae particulares sustinent nostra corpora et imaginantur et uident quicquid est in eis . . .”

⁸⁴ Avicbron, *Fons vitae*, Tr. II.10, 42: “Nisi esset uis spiritualis agens, penetrabilis per haec corpora, nec mouerentur nec agerent.”

Avicbron is a curious figure for the study of our central question, the debate over spiritual matter in the thirteenth century. On the one hand, an initial glance at his most distinctive doctrines, especially the plurality of forms, a strong conception of the will, and spiritual matter, seem to make his enormous influence over medieval scholastics, and especially over the Franciscans of the so-called “Augustinian school”, an obvious fact. In the thirteenth century itself the origin of the notion of spiritual matter was explicitly attributed to him by St. Albert and St. Thomas, who assumed that anyone else holding this view must have derived it from him. Modern scholars, wherever they give the subject a passing glance, almost uniformly fail to question the certainty of this assumption.⁸⁵ I believe, however, that a careful reading of the whole of the *Fons vitae* dissipates to an extraordinary degree any confidence in this certainty. It is certainly true that Avicbron’s notion that form always needs some grounding matter in which to inhere agrees more with the idea, held by many thirteenth-century Franciscans, of matter as having some entity of its own, than it does with that of such “Aristotelians” as Thomas Aquinas, of matter as pure potency.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, as will become clear in the course of ensuing chapters, few of Avicbron’s motivations for positing spiritual matter, and very few or none of the actual arguments he employs, are repeated by its scholastic adherents, who did not, by and large, conceive the spiritual world along the lines of his modified Neoplatonic scheme of emanation. As we shall see, Aquinas attacks spiritual matter as an Avicbronian interpolation, but Bonaventure, who is

⁸⁵ Examples could be multiplied almost indefinitely. To take a single recent one, see Marenbon, J. *Medieval Philosophy: an historical and philosophical introduction* (London: Routledge, 2007), 231, 239.

⁸⁶ See Kleineidam, 20.

responsible for its wide adoption among Franciscans, sees it as authentically Augustinian and neglects Avicbron entirely, if he even read him at all.⁸⁷

In his book on the thirteenth-century controversy on the plurality of forms, another position frequently associated with and assumed to derive from Avicbron, Richard Zavalloni asks how we ought to appreciate the latter's influence on thirteenth-century thinkers, and especially on Franciscan thinkers. Thomists since Thomas himself—Zavalloni quotes and singles out Gilson, who is however by no means unique—have thought it “profound and durable.” To Zavalloni, on the contrary, it seems secondary instead. “Where the hylomorphic composition of all created beings is concerned, the influence of Avicbron is incontestable, but it is neither exclusive, nor even preponderant; that of Saint Augustine . . . seems more direct and more decisive than that of Avicbron.”⁸⁸ He goes on to claim that no one in the thirteenth century until Vital du Four, in 1290-1295, alludes to Avicbron directly in *defense* of any position, as opposed to those such as Thomas and Albert who *attack* contemporary positions with being unhappily influenced by Avicbron. I believe that this evaluation is more realistic than that which gives him all the credit for the common Franciscan position in the latter half of the century: whatever direct influence Avicbron had on the scholastic debate, it seems to have taken place in the decades prior to Bonaventure,

⁸⁷ John Francis Quinn, *The Historical Constitution of St. Bonaventure's Philosophy* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1973), 159, n.50: “Bonaventure does not refer to the *Fons vitae* of Avicbron, whose name, to our knowledge, never occurs in his writings.”

⁸⁸ Roberto Zavalloni, *Richard de Mediavilla et la controverse sur la pluralité des formes. Textes inédits et études critique* (Louvain, Ed. de l'Institut supérieur de philosophie, 1951), 422: “Comment apprécier l'influence d'Avicbron chez les scolastiques du XIIIe siècle, notamment chez les penseurs franciscains? M. Gilson la croit ‘profond et durable’. Elle nous semble, au contraire, plutôt secondaire. En ce qui concerne la composition hylémorphique de tous les êtres créés, l'influence d'Avicbron est incontestable, mais elle n'est ni exclusive, ni même prépondérante; celle de saint Augustin—nous le verrons dans le cas de Thomas d'York—semble plus directe et plus décisive que celle d'Avicbron.”

who set the tone for Franciscans after him but who, along with most of his successors, seems to have taken little or no account of Avicbron directly.

In the next chapter I will turn to the thirteenth century itself. After glancing at the development of the question in the decades which led up to St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure, whose positions gave the debate the basic shape it would assume for the rest of the century, I will examine these latter two in detail.

Chapter 2

Framing the Debate: Scholastics Through Bonaventure and Thomas

Aquinas

II.1. Early Scholastics

The scholarly literature on the debate over spiritual matter in the thirteenth century is not particularly extensive. To date the most comprehensive treatment remains the short dissertation by Erich Kleineidam, *Das Problem der hylomorphen Zusammensetzung der geistigen Substanzen im 13. Jahrhundert, behandelt bis Thomas von Aquin*.¹ As its title indicates, this work discusses our problem only up to Aquinas' contribution, while a mere few pages are given to a summary of thinkers between Aquinas and Scotus. Kleineidam's thesis, together with a supplementary article and another chapter by Lottin² (both of which confine themselves to the earlier scholastics without reaching even so far as Thomas), is still the most authoritative and most-cited resource for our subject after nearly eight decades, despite being out of date in certain respects. Besides these two authors, there has been some amount of scholarship devoted to universal hylomorphism in early thirteenth century

¹ Erich Kleineidam, *Das Problem der hylomorphen Zusammensetzung der geistigen Substanzen im 13. Jahrhundert, behandelt bis Thomas von Aquin* (Breslau, 1930). For a chronologically wider but doctrinally shallower view see also Paul Bissels, "Die sachliche Begründung und philosophiegeschichtliche Stellung der Lehre von der materia spiritualis in der Scholastik," *Franziskanische Studien* 38 (1956), 241-295.

² Lottin, O. "La composition hylémorphique des substances spirituelles." *Revue néoscholastique de philosophie* XXXIV (1932), 21-41; *Psychologie et morale au XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, Vol.1. Louvain-Gembloux, 1942, Chapter III: La simplicité de l'âme humaine avant saint Thomas d'Aquin, 427-460.

Oxford³, and as treated by Roger Bacon⁴, Albert the Great⁵, and Roger Marston⁶. As befits their importance in this debate, St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas have fared better than most, with fairly extensive treatments of their doctrine respectively accepting and rejecting spiritual matter available in various works dealing with their thought.⁷ Very little work has been done to illuminate the course of the debate between Thomas Aquinas and Gonsalvus of Spain.

The purpose of the present chapter, then, is to lay the groundwork for this illumination. It will first examine the stirrings of the debate in early scholasticism with a review of the scholarship of this (fairly well-documented) period, before going on to discuss the positions of Bonaventure and Thomas in substantial detail. It is not my intention here to reproduce in full all the work which has been done on the early scholastics, nor to correct or expand upon it, but merely to prepare the ground for the next chapter, in which I will discuss the question in a number of the more significant authors of the late thirteenth century whose

³ Long, "Of Angels and Pinheads," 239-54.

⁴ Theodore Crowley, *Roger Bacon. The Problem of the Soul in his Philosophical Commentaries* (Louvain-Dublin, 1950), Chapter II: "Hylomorphic Doctrine," 81-118; H. Höver, *Roger Bacon's Hylomorphism als Grundlage seiner Philosophischen Anschauungen* (Paderborn, 1912); R. James Long, "Roger Bacon on the Nature and Place of Angels," *Vivarium* 35 (1997): 266-82.

⁵ James Weisheipl, "Albertus Magnus and Universal Hylomorphism: Avicbron," in *Albert the Great Commemorative Essays*, ed. F. J. Kovach and R.W. Shahan (Norman, Ockla.: University of Ocklahoma Press, 1980), 239-60.

⁶ Roland Hissette, "Roger Marston a-t-il professe l'hylemorphisme universel?" *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 39 (1972), 205-223.

⁷ For Bonaventure the most important or useful sources are P. Robert, *Hylémorphisme et devenir chez Saint Bonaventure*, (Montréal: Librairie St.-François, 1936); Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure* (Paterson, N.J.: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1965); and John Francis Quinn, *The Historical Constitution of St. Bonaventure's Philosophy*, (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1973). For Thomas see especially John Goheen, *The Problem of Matter and Form in the De Ente Et Essentia of Thomas Aquinas* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1940) (this book also has chapters on spiritual matter in Avicbron and Augustine); James Collins, *The Thomistic Philosophy of the Angels* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1947); Aimé Forest, *La structure métaphysique du concret selon saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Vrin, 1956); John Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2000). Perhaps worthy at least of mention is Francis Cunningham, *Essence and Existence in Thomism: a mental vs. the "real distinction"?* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1988). This book, which contains extensive discussions of universal hylomorphism from Avicbron to Scotus and beyond, and which utilizes a vast array of primary and secondary literature, is nevertheless full of unconventional and frequently bizarre interpretations and seems to me very unreliable.

positions on spiritual matter have not been the subject of detailed study before now. In the next two sections, however, Bonaventure and Thomas receive treatment at least as full as any which have appeared before now.

In his book on the controversy over the plurality of substantial forms, a topic generally associated with the present one, Zavalloni notes that many historians of scholasticism, distracted by superficial aspects of the matter or the “puerile” character of some of the arguments marshalled in the course of debate, have overlooked the profound importance of the controversy and the metaphysical problem which it engages.⁸ Certainly the same could be said of the problem of spiritual matter, which has been relatively little studied and less respected as a serious philosophical issue.⁹ This issue is not, however, simply a case of primitive thinkers with little philosophical sophistication, unsure how to properly assimilate a new and foreign Aristotle, attempting a bizarre and *ad hoc* solution before casting it aside for a more mature Aristotelianism. (As the following chapters will show, the most thorough and sophisticated defenses of spiritual matter were undertaken by thinkers thoroughly familiar with Aristotle’s thought.) As Chapter 1 indicated, Aristotle’s works do

⁸ Zavalloni, *Richard de Mediavilla*, p. v. Avant-propos: “Beaucoup d’historiens de la scolastique, arrêtés peut-être par ces aspects superficiels ou par la caractèr puéril de certaines argumentations, n’ont pas saisi la portée profonde de la controverse ni l’importance du problème métaphysique qui s’y trouve engagé.”

⁹ See for instance the opening remarks in Long, “Of Angels and Pinheads,” 239: “Surely one of the strangest doctrines to emerge from the intense theological debates of the thirteenth century was the concept of *spiritual matter*. Traceable to the *Fons Vitae* of Ibn Gabirol, spiritual matter (or “universal hylomorphism”) in tandem with the doctrine of the plurality of forms became one of the pillars of what used to be called with such confidence the ‘Franciscan School.’ . . . this terminologically gauche teaching exemplifies the occasional ill fit between the newly discovered natural philosophy of Aristotle and traditional Christian teaching.” Long’s phrase “terminologically gauche” is based on the assumption that spirituality is inconsistent with materiality, a typical *petitio principii* in the literature. See e.g. David P. Lang, “Aquinas’ Impediment Argument for the Spirituality of the Human Intellect,” *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 11 (2003), 107-124; 113: “. . . the more profound issue of the spirituality—ontological independence from matter—of the human soul still remains as a looming question.” Lang’s target in arguing for the immateriality of the human soul in this article is not the medieval “universal hylomorphists,” who are not even acknowledged, but “materialists,” by whom he clearly means modern physicalists.

not give a ready-made solution to the problem simply because Aristotle does not conceive of human souls and angels as many Christians do, as finite individual substances subject to change. When Christian thinkers read Aristotle's compelling account of substances being composed of matter and form, in the light of their own common conception of spiritual creatures as substances in their own right (in the case of the human soul, even apart from the body), the idea of their hylomorphic conception was inevitable. Furthermore, some of those influenced by Aristotle's thought to think of matter as the principle of individuation concluded that incorporeal substances must need some sort of matter to exist as individuals with their own minds, wills, and individual eternal destinies.¹⁰

Again, matter-form composition in the spiritual world was seen by its defenders as the best way to understand the distance and difference between the absolutely simple Creator and every creature; this is stressed frequently in the literature of the early thirteenth century.¹¹ Asserting that the great divide of being was not between the corporeal and spiritual world, but between both corporeal and spiritual creatures and God, preserved the transcendence of the Creator and explained the mutability, imperfection, and finitude common to all creatures.¹²

These considerations, however, were not present to scholastic writers from the beginning. In an article summarizing early scholastic approaches to the doctrine of the

¹⁰ See Kleineidam, 17, 20.

¹¹ See Kleineidam, 16.

¹² Benoît Martel, *La psychologie de Gonsalve d'Espagne*, (Montréal: Institute D'Etudes Médiévales, 1968), 61: "S'ils préconisèrent la composition hylémorphique dans les êtres spirituels, et plus particulièrement dans l'âme humaine, c'est, d'une part, parce que cette doctrine leur était pour le moins suggérée par des autorités vénérables, notamment celle de saint Augustin, et d'autre part, parce que ce genre de composition leur paraissait le plus apte à expliquer les propriétés de la créature, telles que sa mutabilité, son imperfection et sa finitude."

angels,¹³ Marcia Colish presents thinkers up to the thirteenth century as being in general little interested in delineating the metaphysical constitution of the angels, concentrating their angelology instead on ethical and occasionally on epistemological questions. Not until we begin to approach 1200 do we see scholastics concerned with the problem of spiritual composition with any degree of concern or detail. This confirms Lottin's assertion that early scholastics did not yet see the question as very important, and many of them ignore it altogether. The matter does not begin to gain focus and precision, or to be debated at length, until around 1230.¹⁴

The first figure to merit individual notice seems to be Dominicus Gundissalinus (fl. 1150-90), a Spanish Christian associated with the translation of Avicbron into Latin. In the last chapter I questioned the assumption that Avicbron himself should be given complete credit for spiritual matter in the thirteenth century; Kleineidam also insists that one must not overestimate Avicbron's influence on the period, suggesting instead that the primary immediate source is Dominicus himself. Besides the actual translation of the *Fons vitae*, Dominicus¹⁵ composed several short independent philosophical treatises showing a marked

¹³ Marcia Colish, "Early Scholastic Angelology," *Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales* 62 (1995), 80-109.

¹⁴ Lottin, *Psychologie et morale*, 428-9. See also Lottin, "Le composition hylémorphique," 23-24: "Le résultat le plus tangible de cette petite enquête est que, si certains philosophes et théologiens ont abordé la question, ils l'ont d'ordinaire tranchée dans le sens de la composition, et que, d'autre part, aucun d'eux n'a abordé de front le problème spécial de la composition hylémorphique. La situation change aux environs de 1230."

¹⁵ Adeline Rucquoi has argued, however, that we must distinguish between the translator of the *Fons vitae* and the author of *De unitate et uno* and other treatises. See her "Gundisalvus ou Dominicus Gundisalvi", *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale*, XLI (1999), 85-106. The results of this article are summed up by Benoît Patar in *Dictionnaire abrégé des philosophes médiévaux* (Les Presses Philosophiques, 2000), 350: "Suite à l'article décisif d'Adeline Rucquoi, il n'est plus possible de parler de "Dominique Gundisalvi" comme on l'a fait jusqu'à présent. En réalité, d'après la démonstration pertinente de l'érudite française, il faut distinguer sous ce vocable deux personnages bien distincts ayant vécu à la même époque et, durant un certain temps, dans le même diocèse. L'un, qui s'appelle Dominicus Gundisalvi, c'est-à-dire Dominique fils de González, archidiacre de Cuéllar (Ségovie), et l'autre dont le prénom est Gundisalvus, c'est-à-dire González, archidiacre de Talavera, sans nom de famille connu. La confusion entre les deux est le résultat d'une méprise commise par l'historiographie française du XIXe siècle, Aimable Jourdain, qui crut justifié de mettre bout à bout les deux

Avicbronian influence. In fact, Kleineidam suggests, his contribution consists largely in translating Avicbron's concepts into Boethian/Aristotelian terminology, putting them in terms familiar and palatable to readers of these more mainstream authors.¹⁶ Of his own writings by far the most important for us is the *De unitate et uno*, a short tractate on the various kinds and degrees of unity showing clear affinities to Avicbron. For instance, it describes being as coming from form, but form having being only when united to matter. "Being therefore comes only from the conjunction of form and matter. Whence the philosophers have described it saying: being is the existence of form with matter."¹⁷

Dominicus describes different kinds of matter underlying different kinds of form, some subject to both change and corruption, some subject to change only but not corruption.

Rather than a universe divided into lower, material creatures, and higher, immaterial ones, he says that "unities" nearer to God inform a matter more one and more simple than the matter of lower things, whose matter is more multiple and composite.¹⁸ There is no question of

signatures." According to Rucquoi, Dominicus Gundisalvi, the archdeacon of Segovia, was one of the translators of the *Fons vitae*, while Gundisalvus, archdeacon of Talavera, was the author of *De unitate*. However, at least some scholarship since then has continued to regard the translator and author as a single figure. See for instance Alexander Fidora, *Die Wissenschaftstheorie des Dominicus Gundissalinus. Voraussetzungen und Konsequenzen des zweiten Anfangs der aristotelischen Philosophie im 12. Jahrhundert*, (Berlin, 2003), 9-23; Alexander Fidora and María Jesús Soto Bruna, "'Gundisalvus ou Dominicus Gundisalvi'?" *Algunas observaciones sobre un reciente artículo de Adeline Rucquoi*, *Estudios eclesiásticos*, 76 (Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 2001), 467-73; R.E. Houser, "Dominicus Gundissalinus," in *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jorge J.E. Gracia and Timothy B. Noone (Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 247-248. I will continue to call the author of *De unitate* "Dominicus," without claiming to determine either way whether he was also in fact a translator of Avicbron. I note, however, that if the two are distinct, this would put the influence of the *Fons vitae* on the defenders of spiritual matter—who often quote *De unitate* and never *Fons vitae*—at a further remove.

¹⁶ See Kleineidam, 12.

¹⁷ Dominicus Gundissalinus, *Die Dem Boethius fälschlich zugeschriebene Abhandlung des Dominicus Gundissalinus De Unitate*, ed. P. Correns, (Münster, 1891), 3: "Omne enim esse ex forma est, in creatis scilicet. Sed nullum esse ex forma est, nisi cum forma materiae unita est. Esse igitur est non nisi ex coniunctione formae cum materia. Unde philosophi sic describunt illud dicentes: esse est existentia formae cum materia."

¹⁸ Dominicus, *De unitate*, 5-6: "Sed quia creatrix unitas non habet principium neque finem nec permutationem nec diversitatem, ideo creatae unitati accidit multiplicitas et diversitas et mutabilitas; ita ut in quadam materia sit habens principium et finem, in quadam vero principium et non finem, quia in quibusdam subiacet permutationi et corruptioni, in quibusdam permutationi sed non corruptioni. In quibus enim materia est subtilis,

spiritual things lacking matter entirely. Dominicus even used the term “spiritual matter”:
 “Now some matter is spiritual and some is corporeal . . .”¹⁹

While there does not seem to be much evidence that many or most of the supporters of spiritual matter read the *Fons vitae* directly, it is certain, as we shall see, that *De unitate* was read and cited as authoritative throughout the thirteenth century until Gonsalvus Hispanus himself. Avicbron seems then to have exercised more of a remote and “grandfatherly” influence than that of a direct inspiration, as Weisheipl also seems to admit.²⁰ The Boethian cast Dominicus gives to his and Avicbron’s ideas was of the utmost importance in allowing this influence to take place. Because of it the *De unitate* came to be attributed to Boethius himself and was widely read in conjunction with Boethius’ other works.²¹ Whatever thirteenth-century scholastics may have thought of Avicbron or whether they paid him much attention at all, the philosophical and theological advantages of spiritual matter seemed to be backed by the authority of both Augustine and Boethius, whose authorities were at least comparable with if not superior to that of Aristotle. Dominicus

simplex, remota a contrarietate et separatione, parificatur ei unitas et unitur cum ea sic, ut haec et illa sint unum non divisibile in act; sicut in caelestibus, in quibus unitas a materia inseparabilis est; et ideo carent fine, quia perpetua sunt. In quibus vero materia fuerit spissa, debilis, non adaequatur ei unitas, sed debilitatur in uniendo et retinendo eorum essentiam, et ob hoc dissolvitur essentia eorum, quia non retinetur ab unitate; sicut in generatis, quae habent principium et finem. Quanto enim unaquaeque unitas fuerit propinquior primae et verae unitati, tanto materia formata per illam erit magis una et simplicior; et e contrario, quanto remotior fuerit a prima unitate, tanto erit multiplicior et compositior.”

¹⁹ Dominicus, *De unitate*, 7: “Nam quia aliquid materiae est spirituale et aliquid eius corporale . . .” Page 8 shows the germ of the theory of the plurality of substantial forms.

²⁰ Weisheipl, “Albertus Magnus and Universal Hylomorphism,” 246: “It may very well be that the vast number of Latin scholastics of the thirteenth century learned of Avicbron’s teaching not through reading the *Fons vitae* but through reading the shorter summaries and adaptations of Gundisalvi.”

²¹ Forest, *La structure métaphysique*, 108: “Le *De Unitate*, utilisé, comme nous venons de le voir, par Alexandre de Hales, était attribué par tout le Moyen Age à Boèce. En réalité, c’est une traduction de Dominique Gundisalvi, et ce n’est qu’un exposé des principes d’Avicbron.” See also Weisheipl, 247-8: “Gundisalvi’s treatise *De unitate et uno* circulated for centuries in the Latin West under the name of Boethius . . . While the treatment appears somewhat ‘Boethian’ in its explanation of the various senses in which *unitas* can be said of God and creatures taken singly or in aggregates, it utilizes material drawn from both Avicenna and Avicbron, as the critical edition clearly shows.”

himself seems to have retracted his commitment to spiritual matter at the end of his life, citing the opinion of Aristotle “and his followers”; according to Kleineidam this was the deciding factor in William of Auvergne’s decision against the doctrine. Meanwhile the *De unitate* continued to be widely-read and influential, while most thinkers in their questions on spiritual matter do not mention Avicbron at all. It is Albert the Great that traces the ultimate source of the doctrine to the *Fons vitae*, attributing it to Plato, while Thomas Aquinas after him traces both doctrine and book to Avicbron. When this attribution became widespread the detractors of spiritual matter used its apparent origin to discredit it.²² Nevertheless, despite the similarities in their concepts of matter, it remains unclear to me that Avicbron, even mediated through Dominicus, is the sole or primary *cause* of the later Franciscan position, rather than a convenient buttress for what originated in Augustine and a general metaphysical outlook infused with more Neoplatonic elements than a strict Aristotelianism would allow.

Some indication of this may be seen by considering Robert Grosseteste (1168-1253), one of the first scholastics in England with enough erudition to be in a position to examine the new influx of Aristotelian and Arabic learning in the light of medieval Christian tradition.²³ Grosseteste does not explicitly endorse spiritual matter and is not directly responsible for its presence soon after him in Oxford.²⁴ D.E. Sharp writes, “[I]t must be

²² See Kleineidam, 13-14.

²³ See Dorothea Elizabeth Sharp, *Franciscan Philosophy at Oxford in the Thirteenth Century* (London: Oxford University Press, 1930), 10: “In him [Grosseteste] the Augustinian thought first encounters the philosophy of Aristotle. Profoundly versed in the theories of Augustine, and citing as familiar Plato, the later Pagans, the early Fathers, Boethius, John Damascene, Bede, St. Anselm, and St. Bernard, Grosseteste is, nevertheless, the first Englishman to assimilate the new learning of Aristotle and the Arabians.”

²⁴ Long, “Angels and Pinheads,” 240: “On a number of occasions, in fact, Grosseteste insists that the angels are immaterial both in their nature and their activity.” In support of this Long cites the following from *De cessatione legalium* (3.1.27, 130): “Igitur simpliciter universitatem reducere ad completam unitatem non est, ut videtur, alio modo possibile, nisi isto, videlicet ut intelligamus angelum primo creatum a Deo ex nichilo, qui

remembered that he does not treat of the hylomorphic composition of spiritual beings,²⁵ although she believes that spiritual matter is consistent with and even implied by his principles.²⁶ These principles are not, however, reached via Avicbron: “Although there is a strong resemblance between his [Grosseteste’s] cosmogony and that of Avicbron the Jew he never cites Avicbron; it is impossible to say whether he knew the version of the *Fons vitae* made by Gundissalinus and John of Spain about 1150.”²⁷ Despite these statements J. McEvoy, in a book on Grosseteste published nearly fifty years after Sharp’s, accuses her of claiming that Avicbron was a major influence. In any case he offers additional evidence of Grosseteste’s independence from the latter’s work.²⁸

Grosseteste’s importance as an influence on later Franciscans, especially in Oxford, but also on continental thinkers such as Bonaventure, is well-known. Many principles employed in his thought become staples of Franciscan philosophy throughout the thirteenth century, including those marshalled in defense of spiritual matter: for instance, the correlative character of matter and form, and the notion of magnitude as a property of the composite substance rather than of matter prior to composition with form,²⁹ or matter’s status as having

non potest uniri corpori in unitatem persone nec participare cum corpore in aliqua unitate . . . Anima autem rationalis et angelus communicant in natura rationalitatis et intelligencie, qua communicacione habent indissolubile vinculum et concatenacionem naturalis unitatis”. I must admit, however, that I do not see the relevance of this passage to spiritual matter in any way.

²⁵ Sharp, *Franciscan Philosophy at Oxford in the Thirteenth Century*, 38.

²⁶ Crowley accepts this judgment in *Roger Bacon. The Problem of the Soul in his Philosophical Commentaries*, 85 n.21: “Grosseteste did not treat the question of the hylomorphic composition of spiritual beings but, considering the teaching of the Oxford Franciscans, it can be presumed that he was no adversary of the thesis.”

²⁷ Sharp, 11.

²⁸ James McEvoy, *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 228 n.5: “Sharp (*Franciscan Philosophy at Oxford*, pp. 9-46) held that Avicbron was a major influence. In fact there is no evidence to suggest that Grosseteste favoured the universal hylomorphism advocated by the Jewish thinker.” The same point is made on page 272.

²⁹ Sharp, 16: “The unifying natural correlative of a material cause is the formal cause which unites matter to produce the composite and so originates magnitude.”

some minimal degree of actuality of its own.³⁰ He seems to anticipate other later developments as well: “. . . he becomes the first of the English school to suggest the theory of the plurality of forms.”³¹

Furthermore, according to Sharp, Grosseteste accepts a composition of potency and act in the soul, distinguishing between a substance’s *quo est* and its *quod est*, according to the Boethian formulation, which on Grosseteste’s principles is practically equivalent to accepting a matter-form composition as well.³² Sharp is clearly sympathetic to spiritual matter and attributes it even to Boethius, almost certainly wrongly, and may overstep the mark here. McEvoy is adamant in rejecting any trace of universal hylomorphism in Grosseteste, along with any influence of Avicbron, to whom he attributes the doctrine.³³ At the same time McEvoy recognizes the difficulty of how to resolve the problem of the composition of

³⁰ Sharp, 15: “Grosseteste’s assertion that potency is not ‘quod nihil habet actu, sed quod non omnino habet actum’ . . . continued to be one of the chief tenets of the Franciscan philosophers who, refusing to regard potency as a mysterious nothingness from which new being emerges, declared it to be not being only in the sense of not being thus or thus.”

³¹ Sharp, 28. See n. 3: “In any case, Grosseteste possesses the rudiments of this theory, even if he does not consistently expound it; in man he allows a form of corporeity, the forms of elements and of mixtures, and the form which is the principle of activity.”

³² Sharp, 37: “The faculties of the soul signify that it is composed of potency and act, for not only does its *quo est* differ from its *quod est*, but even this latter, as essence, is fundamentally potentiality. So that if Grosseteste never definitely says that the soul has matter, we may safely attribute this view to him because he regards matter and potency as interchangeable terms; God alone is pure form in the sense of pure act. Besides, as we have seen, he admits that a composition of matter and form is not inconsistent with the nature of simple beings [in the case of the elements]. Such too had been the teaching of tradition as represented by Grosseteste’s chief sources, Augustine and Boethius. Only when matter came to be arbitrarily restricted to *materia signata* was the hylomorphic composition of angels and souls denied.”

³³ McEvoy, *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste*, 133: “Over against Grosseteste’s repeated assurances that the angels are immaterial in both nature and activity, there stands a single remark which seems to contradict the general principle. . . . he makes the brief, but at first sight disconcerting, remark that, although a distinction is often made between material and spiritual substances, still, by comparison with the absolute simplicity of God, all creatures are material, since they are formed by his gift of being [eius formarum largitione et prout eis possibile communicatione formatae]. The reader is immediately tempted to posit a connection between this remark and the theory of universal hylomorphism, which Avicbron’s influence did so much to spread among the thinkers of the thirteenth century. Nowhere else in his writings does Grosseteste evidence any sympathy for this idea, so far as I can tell.” Rather, McEvoy continues, Grosseteste most likely got this expression from John Damascene, in *De Fide Orthodoxa*, ch. 17, ed. Buytaert, p. 69: “Incorporeus et immaterialis dicitur quantum ad nos, sed comparatus ad Deum, corporeus et materialis invenitur.”

spiritual substances in Grosseteste, and writes that this remained a problem for Christian thinkers, claiming that Aquinas' distinction between being and essence was the first account "which overcame the difficulty satisfactorily."³⁴ While McEvoy's Thomist sympathies are in evidence here as elsewhere in his book, it's unclear why he regards other contemporary solutions—such as that of Bonaventure—unsatisfactory, since he doesn't treat the matter further. Regardless, without attempting to pinpoint Grosseteste's doctrine more precisely (even if this were possible), it seems clear that there are elements of his thought, in sympathy with later Franciscan positions on spiritual matter, which derive more from Patristic than from Avicbronian influence.

Before turning to Parisian thinkers we will briefly glance at two more Oxford men from this period. Richard Fishacre (ca. 1205-1248) was the first Dominican to write a commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences* at Oxford, while Richard Rufus (fl. 1231-1256) was the first Franciscan to do so; both embrace spiritual matter.³⁵ In his treatment Lottin gives the full text of a question on the subject by Fishacre and examines a few of the arguments, while in his article on spiritual matter in the early Oxford masters Long also discusses his position at some length. One argument he reproduces is, perhaps, especially worthy of note. Fishacre says that both the soul and an angel have composition in their substance, so that they are based in both matter and form. "For if the angel were a form without matter, that form would be in the mind of the person who understood the angel and not some likeness that was not the form itself . . . Therefore the very substantial form of the

³⁴ McEvoy, 134.

³⁵ Lottin, *Psychologie et morale*, 450. Lottin goes on to say, "Richard [Fishacre] se montre chaud partisan de la composition hylémorphique de l'âme et des anges." See also Kleineidam, 42.

angel [would be] in the intellect understanding that form.”³⁶ On this argument Long comments, “This is on the face of it a most curious argument and makes sense only if Fishacre is understanding matter here as having some degree of actuality.” If we accept this assessment, Long’s assertion should cause little consternation considering the number of Franciscans who held this view; for instance, in the next chapter we shall see Olivi defending it at length.

Fishacre insists that angels have matter on account of their passibility, but also because they need matter for individuation. If an angel or a human soul is to be an individual substance, rather than a universal form, its form must be sustained by a particular substratum. He cites Augustine for the view that there is one *materia* out of which all creation is made. To Patristic or other authoritative statements suggesting that spiritual creatures are immaterial, he replies that they are called immaterial insofar as they lack the matter of generable and corruptible things, not because they lack all matter whatsoever.³⁷ We see here a number of points very similar to those we will find much later in Gonsalvus of Spain, as well as in many others in between, even if here they are less precise in their details and less sophisticated in their arguments than the later iterations.

Again, both Lottin and Long examine Richard Rufus’ position; it is similar to Fishacre’s. Of two questions devoted to the subject, Lottin believes that one is exclusively indebted to Fishacre for its content. In the second he rebuts objections and confirms his

³⁶ Long, “Angels and Pinheads,” 241n.10, quoting Richard Fishacre: “His esset ostendendum quod anima habet compositionem in substantia, ut quod constat ex materia et forma. Et similiter angelus. Si enim angelus esset forma sine materia, ipsa esset in mente intelligentis eum, non similitudo eius aliqua, quae non sit ipsa”. Ibid., 242 n.11: “. . . Ergo ipsa forma substantialis angelis est in intellectu intelligente eam.”

³⁷ Long, “Angels and Pinheads,” 242-245. See also 245n.22: “Sed per naturam formae sunt angeli indissolubiles. Hinc enim est corruptio compositi, quia forma eius non est tam nobilis ut terminet et compleat omnem inclinationem materiae ad formam aliam . . .”

position, but without great confidence.³⁸ According to Long, Rufus says “that natural forms necessarily demand matter in which to inhere . . . From the point of view of matter Rufus’ position is that form-matter composition is simply entailed in mutability.”³⁹ At the same time Rufus does not give this opinion as a matter for absolute certainty. This question does not belong to the content of faith, although spiritual matter is the most probable solution.

Long sums up his survey of these thinkers with a rather harsh appraisal:

Common to both [Fishacre and Rufus] is a confusion with respect to the concept of matter. Neither seems to grasp the Aristotelian sense of *hyle* as pure potentiality. They are both apparently conceiving of matter in the sense of what Aristotle would consider quantified or second matter, a kind of stuff, having some actuality. Such confusion is in part testimony to that generation’s incomplete absorption of Aristotle’s natural philosophy . . . In the end, the doctrine of spiritual matter proved to be a thought-experiment, which despite its perceived virtues collapsed under the weight of its metaphysical tensions, the fault lines of which are already apparent [in Fishacre and Rufus].⁴⁰

Now it is certainly true that in the first half of the thirteenth century, despite the esteem in which they held Aristotle, thinkers had not completely absorbed his thought or taken for granted all of his definitions.⁴¹ Nevertheless this does not seem to be an adequate explanation for the widespread acceptance of spiritual matter and the principles underlying it, especially in light of thinkers later in the century who knew Aristotle very well and yet continued to accept similar principles and make similar arguments. Furthermore, Long seems to think that to deny that matter is pure potentiality and to grant it some degree of actuality can only rest on a confusion which fails to see matter in its pure nature and can only see

³⁸ Lottin, *Psychologie et morale*, 454-458.

³⁹ Long, “Angels and Pinheads,” 252. See the text in n.44: ““Ergo si materia vel causa mutabilitatis est vel ipsa mutabilitas, cum angelus mutabilis sit, sicut quaelibet creatura, . . . habebit omnis angelus materiam”.

⁴⁰ Long, “Angels and Pinheads,” 253-4.

⁴¹ See Kleineidam, 11, for the same point. He also states that nearly all thinkers of the time had a notion of matter similar to that of Avicenna, accepted the principle that “substance is identical with the composition of matter and form,” and assumed that the existence of matter and that of form were mutually dependent.

matter as imbued with quantity. This is far from true, however, as the same thinkers who grant matter its own degree of actuality tend to carefully distinguish between matter which is subject to quantity, a property belonging only to bodies, and matter which is not subject to quantity, such as that of spiritual creatures. The notion of spiritual matter only makes sense at all under the assumption that quantity and matter are not coextensive.

In fact Long, along with many other scholars, seems to have accepted at face value the story in which the “Aristotelian” side of the debate, spearheaded by St. Thomas Aquinas, deals a triumphant death-blow to the backwards “Augustinians” who eventually buckle under the pressure of a superior metaphysics. As I hope later chapters will make clear, however, this is by no means the only story that might be told. If we refuse to accept the story of the triumph of Thomism from the outset, it may then appear that early thinkers such as Fishacre and Rufus are anticipations of the very sophisticated metaphysical constructs of Franciscans at the end of the century and the beginning of the next, just before Scotus began to permanently alter the philosophical field.

The first Dominican Master at Paris (1229-1230), Roland of Cremona, also affirms spiritual matter, citing Augustine as an authority. According to him, matter and form are correlative and neither can exist without the other; angels have matter and form because they are substances and the subjects of contraries, not pure essences.⁴² Angels are composed “not from the matter which follows quantity, but from spiritual” matter.⁴³ Roland’s successor, Hughes of St. Cher, states that spiritual substances must be composed in some way, citing angels’ qualitative mutability; they do not have “integral parts” or a “composition of

⁴² Lottin, *Psychologie*, 428-9.

⁴³ Lottin, “Le composition,” 24: “non ex materia quam sequitur quantitas, set ex spirituali”.

concretion,” such as corporeal matter would occasion. Hugh says nothing, however, about spiritual matter, and states that angels and souls are simple except as compared with God.⁴⁴

A short time later Phillip the Chancellor (1165/85-1236) begins to give new shape and focus to the debate.⁴⁵ In Phillip’s discussion of spiritual matter many of the elements which will reappear in the debate throughout the century, including the *quod est/quo est* distinction and a number of standard authorities and stock arguments, are already present.⁴⁶ According to Lottin, he is the first to introduce at Paris the suggestion that spiritual composition should be understood in terms of the Boethian distinction between *quod est* and *quo est*, which are properly metaphysical terms, whereas the consideration of matter and form belongs only to the natural philosopher. For Phillip the notion of spiritual matter involves mistakenly imposing concepts proper to the narrow scope of physics on the broader realm of metaphysics.⁴⁷ (As we shall see, Olivi and Gonsalvus later make an exactly parallel argument, that only by imposing the restrictions of physics onto metaphysics do we *deny* matter in the spiritual world!) Phillip’s position is taken up in all essentials by John of Rochelle.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Lottin, “Le composition,” 24-25.

⁴⁵ For Phillip see Lottin, *Psychologie*, 432-438.

⁴⁶ Phillip the Chancellor, *Summa de bono*, ed. Nicolai Wicki, 2 vols. Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi (Berne: Editiones Francke, 1985), v.1, Q.III.1, 65-70.

⁴⁷ Lottin, “Le composition,” 32: “[Phillip] s’introduit dans le monde théologique le fameux *binarius* qui servira, au cours du XIIIe siècle, à désigner les positions adverses: *intelligentia est binarius eius quod est et quo est* (*lin.* 118). Du coup, point à l’horizon la composition physique et la composition métaphysique, qui sera d’ailleurs si diversement interprétée dans les siècles suivants: la composition de matière et de forme, remarque Philippe (*lin.* 154-155), intéresse le physicien, le *naturalis*; la composition de *id quod est* et de *id quo est* regarde le *metaphysicus*.”

⁴⁸ Lottin, “Le composition,” 32-33.

William of Auvergne (1180/90-1249) follows them in rejecting spiritual matter.⁴⁹

Before Lottin's studies appeared, Kleineidam believed that he was the first to give the theory serious opposition.⁵⁰ Despite this opposition, which included anticipating some arguments Aquinas was to make later, William does seem to have read Avicbron, who he claims was so wise that he must have been a Christian.⁵¹ Kleineidam suggests that John of Rupella (ca. 1200-1245) was perhaps influenced by William in rejecting spiritual matter as well. For him composition of matter and form are found in all things which are formed out of something (*de aliquo*), but not in things created *ex nihilo*, as angels are. Because of this, while all creatures are composed of *quo est* and *quod est*, only corporeal things are composed of matter and form. The *Summa fratris Alexandri* appears to use John's *De anima* as a source here, repeating its claim before denying that matter and magnitude or quantity are coextensive.⁵²

Alexander of Hales (ca. 1185-1245) embraces spiritual matter, as does the *Summa* which bears his name and his influence, if not his authorship.⁵³ Kleineidam writes that the merit of this *Summa*'s treatment is to reproduce the essentials of Avicbron's thought in

⁴⁹ William of Auvergne, *De universo* II, c.viii, in *Opera Omnia* (Paris, 1674), v.1, 851-852. See 851: "Quoniam materia prima potentia est substantiae sensibilis, et adiecit ad declarationem huiusmodi rationis, quia substantia sensibilis est ultimus actus materiae primae; ex hoc igitur manifestum est tibi, quia prima materia non est materia, nisi substantiarum sensibilium."

⁵⁰ Kleineidam, 47: "Der Erste, von dem wir wissen, daß er mit der Ansicht einer hylomorphen Zusammensetzung der geistigen Substanzen gebrochen hat, ist der denkstarke Bischof von Paris, WILHELM VON AUVERGNE."

⁵¹ William of Auvergne, *De universo* Ia-Iae, c.xxvi, in *Opera Omnia* (Paris, 1674), v.1, 621: "Avicbron autem Theologus nomine et stylo, ut videtur, Arabs, istud evidenter apprehendit, cum et de hoc in libro quem vocat fontem sapientiae, mentionem expressam faciat et librum singularem de verbo Dei agente omnia scribat. Ego autem propter hoc puto ipsum fuisse Christianum, cum totum regnum Arabum Christianae religioni subditum fuisse ante tempus non multum narrationibus historiarum manifestum sit." Note that just above the quoted passage William admits that certain few holy and wise Hebrews also attained to the wisdom he speaks of here, but he fails to make the connection and imagine that Avicbron might have been an Arabic Jew rather than an Arabic Christian.

⁵² Kleineidam, 49-51.

⁵³ For excerpts from and discussions of this part of the Alexandrian *Summa*, see Forest, *La structure métaphysique*, 107-108.

scholastic terms, although to a certain extent this had already been accomplished by Dominicus Gundissalinus.⁵⁴ An example of this affinity can be seen in a text clearly distinguishing between three different kinds of matter: “There is a certain matter subject to motion and to contrariety, and this is in the elements; and there is a certain [matter] subject to motion, [but] not to contrariety, and this is in the heavenly bodies; and a third which is subject neither to motion nor to contrariety, but only to form; and this is in the nobler creatures, as in spirits.”⁵⁵

In her article already cited, Colish presents Alexander as the first important figure to seriously attempt to reconcile Christian thinking about the angels with Aristotelian metaphysics. She contrasts Alexander primarily with William of Auxerre in his *Summa aurea*, composed between 1215 and 1229, writing that the amplitude of William’s “discussion of angels [is] quite striking in comparison with the lean treatment given to this topic by his immediate predecessors.” However, “William is not particularly interested in the angels’ metaphysical constitution.”⁵⁶ William’s interest in angels is, as with the mainstream of twelfth and early thirteenth century thinkers, primarily ethical and occasionally epistemological, and his lack of any overt consideration of their metaphysical status is “his most serious weakness.”⁵⁷ Alexander, on the other hand, grasps and attempts to grapple with the metaphysical problems arising from the Christian conception of angels. I quote Colish’s most salient passage, which sums up the matter well, at some length:

⁵⁴ Kleineidam, 25: “Alexanders Verdienst ist es, daß er gewissermaßen Avicibrons Gedankengut in die scholastische Sprache übersetzt hat.” In a footnote Kleineidam notes that by “Alexander” he means the author of the *Summa*, whoever it was. For his presentation of its question on spiritual matter, see pages 24-26.

⁵⁵ Alexander of Hales, *Summa theologica*, 2.2, n.249 ad 1: “Distinguunt quod quaedam est materia subjecta motui et contrarietati: et haec est in elementis; et est quaedam subjecta motui, non contrarietati; et haec est supercaelestibus corporibus; et tertia quae nec est subjecta motui nec contrarietati, sed tantum formae; et haec est in creaturis nobilioribus, ut spiritibus.” Quoted in Kleineidam 9-10.

⁵⁶ Colish, “Early Scholastic Angelology,” 99.

⁵⁷ Colish, “Early Scholastic Angelology,” 104.

What we have seen as the most salient weakness of William of Auxerre's angelology emerges as the most noteworthy strength of the angelology of Alexander of Hales. His focus on the metaphysical status of angels is what gives his teaching its special character. In addition, that teaching makes it clear that, by the time Alexander had written his *Glossa* on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard (1220-25), Aristotelian metaphysics had settled in for the duration and was informing the thought of scholastic theologians not hitherto regarded as hospitable to this new philosophy. . . . Given their nature as purely spiritual beings, he asks, how can angels be understood as created substances? How can such beings be distinguished from the deity? And how can they have location? In answering these questions, Alexander shows his awareness of the fact that the term *substantia* is defined differently by different schools of philosophy. At the same time, the definition that clearly sets the terms of the debate, for him, is the Aristotelian one. He acknowledges the fact that angels, understood as simple and spiritual beings, simply do not square with the Aristotelian notion of creatures as substances made up of matter and form. He sees, and poses, this problem quite clearly. Given the philosophy of Aristotle, which he refuses to fudge, angels are a metaphysical anomaly; from an Aristotelian perspective, simplicity and pure spirituality would appear to be attributable to the deity alone. Alexander's solution to this dilemma—and it is a solution that forecasts the essence-existence distinction applied to angels later in the century by Thomas Aquinas—is to invoke the distinction made by Boethius between the *quo est*, or essential character of being, and its *quod est*, or current manifestation of its being, which can differ in actuality from its *quo est*. This possibility extends to angels, and to all other creatures, while it does not apply to God . . .⁵⁸

As we will see very explicitly in Bonaventure, accepting a distinction of *quo est* and *quod est* in creatures does not preclude a matter-form composition as well. On the contrary, while everyone seems to accept the former distinction, the question is whether to understand it as equivalent to a matter-form distinction, or, if not, whether a matter-form distinction is necessary *as well as* the distinction between *quo est* and *quod est*.

The last two figures I will mention in this section are Albert the Great (ca. 1200-1280) and Roger Bacon (ca. 1214-1292). Although these two long-lived men overlapped the figures of the next chapter to a considerable degree, for different reasons a discussion of their influence on our debate seems to belong with the figures of this earlier period.

⁵⁸ Colish, "Early Scholastic Angelology," 106-107.

Albert⁵⁹ is probably the most important thinker to reject spiritual matter before Thomas Aquinas, but more on account of his great reputation and the vehemence of his opposition than because of any great originality.⁶⁰ Throughout his long career he vigorously campaigned against the doctrine. In rejecting spiritual matter Albert is always careful to affirm the composition of spiritual substances, and yet he doesn't seem to present a thoroughly-worked out metaphysical alternative. While confident that spiritual matter is not the answer to explaining the composition found in angels and human souls, neither is he concerned to investigate precisely how this composition is to be understood. For this reason Kleineidam claims that Albert is not particularly useful for illuminating our question.⁶¹

Albert is influenced by John of Rupella in enumerating the four possible principles of substantial composition: matter, form, *quo est* and *quod est*, of which the latter two correspond to nature and supposit.⁶² The former two of course are restricted for Albert to corporeal things because, as Albert sees it, speaking about matter and form is only appropriate in the context of natural philosophy. The intellect, whether human or angelic, is in potency to form in a different way than matter is, for corporeal matter is determined and bounded by the form it receives, while the intellect is not; passive potency, therefore, is present in spiritual and corporeal substances only equivocally. Furthermore, Albert avoids

⁵⁹ For a more detailed look at Albert's positions than I can give here, with selected texts, see Kleineidam, 51-7, Weisheipl, "Albertus Magnus and Universal Hylomorphism," *passim*, as well as Lottin, "La composition," 34-36, Forest, *La Structure*, 105-106.

⁶⁰ According to Lottin, Albert's position is substantially the same as that of Phillip the Chancellor, despite an increasing degree of precision in terminology and approach. See *Psychologie et morale*, 444.

⁶¹ Kleineidam, 51: "ALBERT DER GROSSE erklärte in seinem Sentenzkommentar: 'Mea opinio semper fuit quod Angelus sit composita ex essentialibus partibus, sed non ex materia et forma.' Diese Meinung vertrat er bis zu seinem Tode. . . . Das dünkt ihm das Wesentliche an der Frage zu sein, während er das 'Wie' dieser Zusammensetzung immer als Nebensache, nur als Anhang zur Hauptfrage behandelt. Darum sind auch seine Schriften für unsere spezielle Frage oft so wenig ertragreich."

⁶² Weisheipl, 256: "In Albert's view (*meo iudicio*) there is no matter in spiritual substances, but they are composed of *quod est* and *quo est*, meaning by *quod est* the *hoc aliquid* that really exists in nature and by the *quo est* the 'principium intelligendi et et subsistendi ipsum in tali esse.'" See also Lottin, *La composition*, 34.

the necessity of positing matter in the human soul by denying that the soul is *hoc aliquid*, something in its own right.⁶³ The soul is form alone, and if it included matter in its own constitution as a *hoc aliquid*, it could never come into composition with the body.⁶⁴

Kleineidam suggests that Albert's unique affinity for natural philosophy along Aristotelian lines led him to distrust the metaphysical obscurities ofhylomorphic theory in metaphysics, which presumes principles about nature and motion not gathered strictly from sense experience. It is admitted by all that the spiritual world is devoid of substantial change, but for a good Aristotelian matter is first and foremost the key to substantial change, and should be confined to the realm where it takes place. This focus on "physics" also explains his deep repugnance for Avicbron, whose concerns have nothing to do with natural philosophy.⁶⁵

St. Thomas, according to Kleineidam, is considerably dependent upon Albert for his opinion about spiritual matter, his evaluation of Avicbron, and for his general approach to the question, but he shows considerably more metaphysical sophistication,⁶⁶ especially in his efforts to construct an alternative account to spiritual creatures' matter-form composition by working out his own distinction between essence and existence. In the end, Kleineidam says,

⁶³ At the same time Albert affirms that the soul is a substance even independent of the body. For a detailed look at Albert's position on the soul, see Anton Pegis, *St. Thomas and the Problem of the Soul in the Thirteenth Century* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1934), 77-120. Note especially 110: "St. Albert will say that the soul, though a substance, is not a *hoc aliquid*. . . . His reason is that Aristotle applies the term *hoc aliquid* only to the compound of matter and form, and this would exclude the soul."

⁶⁴ Lottin, *Psychologie et morale*, 445: Albert appeals to the authority of Aristotle, for whom "anima non est materia, neque hoc aliquid siue compositum, sed forma. Si enim esset composita sicut hoc aliquid, nunquam ueniret ad compositionem . . ."

⁶⁵ Kleineidam, 51-54. For Albert's reaction to Avicbron, see Weisheipl, 257-8, and for both Thomas and Albert, *ibid.*, 248-9: "Neither Albertus Magnus nor Thomas Aquinas could find anything favorable to say about Avicbron's *Fons vitae*, although clearly both had read the entire Latin translation. Thomas . . . rejected all of his arguments as 'frivolous.' Albertus Magnus . . . found the entire work too 'fallacious,' 'improbable,' and 'ridiculous' to have been written by any serious philosopher at all, but a huge joke perpetrated by undergraduates on an unsuspecting public."

⁶⁶ Kleineidam, 53.

Albert's influence depends not so much on any arguments originating with him so much as on the fact that such an influential person came out so strongly against the doctrine.⁶⁷

Roger Bacon's position in our story is very different than Albert's. Since he was not only an avid supporter of universal hylomorphism but a prolific one, an entire study might be devoted to his writings on the subject alone.⁶⁸ I can only give his doctrine a brief glance, however. Bacon, of course, stands apart from all his contemporary Franciscans in his personal biography, intellectual preoccupations, and the unique nature of his works. He never taught as a member of a theology faculty and by the time Bonaventure and Thomas were helping to change the face of scholasticism, Bacon had largely laid the concerns of academia aside for his own. His place in intellectual history is great, but his place in our debate seems to be a minor one, despite the attention his writings on the subject may merit in themselves.

Crowley writes, "If we are to judge by the early writings of Roger Bacon, the influence of the doctrines of the *Fons Vitae* [sic] must have made itself strongly felt in the faculty of arts at Paris in the first half of the thirteenth century. Roger Bacon is a staunch supporter of universal hylomorphism."⁶⁹ In a brief passage Crowley sets out (with accompanying texts), a number of doctrines close to those of Avicbron not only in their content but in their wording:

A simple being is a contradiction in terms . . . Everything that is, is either matter or form or a composite of the two. Neither matter nor form can exist apart; matter cannot exist apart because it is pure potentiality; form cannot exist apart since no pure form

⁶⁷ Kleineidam, 57: "Weniger seine rationalen Beweise ließen den Gegner aufhorchen, als vielmehr die bloße Tatsache, daß eine solche autoritative Persönlichkeit wie Albert sich gegen die hylomorphen Zusammensetzung entschied und sich für diese Stellungnahme auf die Väter und Aristoteles berief, für deren Interpretation er als maßgebend galt."

⁶⁸ In fact, several have. Besides Crowley and Long's work, on which I will rely, there are several older book-length studies of Bacon and hylomorphism, including H. Höver, *Roger Bacon's Hylomorphismus als Grundlage seiner Philosophischen Anschauungen* (Paderborn, 1912); Joannes Antonius Sheridan, *Expositio plenior hylomorphismi Fr. Rogeri Baconis, O.F.M* (Rome, 1938).

⁶⁹ Crowley, *Roger Bacon*, 82.

is subject to receiving accidents. Every self-existing being is, therefore, composed of matter and form. To say that a thing is a substance is equivalent to saying that it is composed of matter and form. When we speak of matter as substance, we are using the word substance in the sense of substratum and matter is the primordial subject or substratum of all forms and changes. But matter is not substance in the sense of being subsistent. Form cannot exist apart from matter and this is true even of spiritual substances. . . .⁷⁰

On the one hand, Bacon's doctrine here is very similar to that of others who accept spiritual matter before and after him. He uses arguments similar to those of his contemporaries, and Crowley claims that "Bacon shows no great advance in respect of Hugh of St. Cher or Richard Rufus."⁷¹ On the other hand, Bacon approaches the problem in a more self-consciously philosophical way, adverting primarily to philosophical authors: Bacon is explicitly familiar with and cites Avicbron, Dominicus Gundissalinus (as the writer of *De processione mundi*, not *De unitate*), Macrobius, the *Liber de causis*, and others as well as Aristotle. "The name of Augustine does not occur in the discussion. This fact is not very surprising when we recall that Bacon was teaching in the faculty of arts and not in the schools of theology."⁷² The matter for him is one for philosophy, and Bacon is concerned with the philosophical consequences of rejecting matter in spiritual beings more than the theological ones. He believes that his teaching is faithful to Aristotle. "It is noteworthy that Bacon, in the whole course of this discussion, believes that he is being faithful to Aristotle. He is not aware that the problem which confronts him is not the same problem which confronted Aristotle and which he solved by the hylomorphic theory."⁷³ This explicitly philosophical bent, the authorities he uses and the motivations for his discussions, set him off

⁷⁰ Crowley, *Roger Bacon*, 82-83.

⁷¹ Crowley, *Roger Bacon*, 85.

⁷² Crowley, *Roger Bacon*, 91.

⁷³ Crowley, *Roger Bacon*, 89.

from theologians who treat the problem. Despite similarities in doctrine, Bacon is not to be classed with the Franciscans who have been lumped into an “Augustinian” school: he is his own man.

The similarities are, nevertheless, worthy of note. Two in particular are worth mentioning. Bacon distinguishes, as others we have seen, between three kinds of matter: “The participation in the nature of matter, in fact, takes place on three levels: spiritual matter, as for example the matter of the intelligences; intermediate matter (*materia media*), as the matter of heavenly bodies; and finally corporeal and sensible matter, as that of generable and corruptible substances.”⁷⁴ The second regards the reason matter does not cause corruptibility in spiritual creatures:

In the *Opus tertium*, for instance, after distinguishing spiritual and corporeal matter as two species of a *genus generalissimum*, Bacon argues that the cause of the angel’s freedom from corruption is that the form completes the whole potency of its matter and terminates its appetite. It is the potency and appetite for a new form that is the cause of corruption in corruptible beings, as all know and declare, says Bacon.⁷⁵

Both of these points are similar to those which will be made later by other Franciscans.

This survey of views on spiritual matter from a handful of scholasticism’s more prominent representatives in the first half of the thirteenth century, though necessarily rapid, shows the general uncertainty with which the subject was regarded in this period. The earliest scholastics considered the matter hardly at all, and it only became of pressing import when theologians began to grapple with the occasionally contradictory Aristotelian and neoplatonic metaphysics to which they were increasingly exposed. To my mind it makes little sense to claim, as Weisheipl does, that there was a consensus against spiritual matter before the

⁷⁴ Long, “Roger Bacon on the Nature and Place of Angels,” 268.

⁷⁵ Long, “Roger Bacon on the Nature and Place of Angels,” 269.

1230s, just as it makes little sense to claim that there was a consensus for it. Weisheipl wants to defend Thomas and Albert from John Peckham's accusations of introducing novelties into theology (Peckham insisted against Albert and Thomas that Alexander and Bonaventure were safer, more traditional guides whose writings did not cause controversies⁷⁶) by claiming that it was, in fact, the Franciscans and other defenders of spiritual matter who were introducing novelties.⁷⁷ The fact of the matter seems to be that the whole discussion is a "novelty" from the point of view of earlier angelology and psychology, with no established consensus in the beginning and an increasingly sophisticated (and stiffening) set of positions on either side emerging as philosophy and its contributions to theology developed with the passage of time, as thinkers assimilated the new learning and steadily drew the implications of their sometimes conflicting principles out to their logical conclusions. If Bonaventure's doctrine is not an authentic repetition of either Augustine or Aristotle, but a novelty, without a doubt the same is true of Thomas'.

Before Bonaventure and Thomas these positions had not yet hardened. As Long writes, "In the three or four decades before positions hardened into the *Wegenstreit* between the Dominicans and the Franciscans, masters belonging to both orders, as well as the secular masters, debated the issue without the constraints of a party line."⁷⁸ The Dominican school

⁷⁶ See John Peckham, *Registrum epistolarum fratris Ioannis Peckham*, ed. Charles Trice Martin, *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores*, 3 vols. (London, 1882-1885), 901: "Praeterea noverit ipse quod philosophorum studia minime reprobamus, quatenus misteriis theologicis famulantur; sed prophanas vocum novitates, quae contra philosophicam veritatem sunt in sanctorum injuriam citra viginti annos in altitudines theologicas introductae, abjectis et vilipensis sanctorum assertionibus evidenter. Quae sit ergo solidior et sanior doctrina, vel filiorum Beati Francisci, sanctae scilicet memoriae fratris Alexandri, ac fratris Bonaventurae et consimilium, qui in suis tractatibus ab omni calumnia alienis sanctis et philosophis innituntur; vel illa novella quasi tota contraria, quae quicquid docet Augustinus de regulis aeternis et luce incommutabili, de potentiis animae, de rationibus seminalibus inditis materiae et consimilibus innumeris, destruat pro viribus et enervat pugnas verborum inferens toti mundo? Videant antiqui in quibus est sapientia, videat et corrigat Deus coeli."

⁷⁷ See Weisheipl, 260 and *passim*.

⁷⁸ Long, "Angels and Pinheads," 239.

begins with Roland of Cremona positing spiritual matter, with masters taking both sides for some time,⁷⁹ and the Franciscan school begins with John of Rochelle denying it.⁸⁰ On this subject at least the early Dominicans as much as the Franciscans could be classified as “Augustinian”—to the extent that this term has any usefulness—if the term is not taken to imply the anti-Aristotelian rancor attached to it in later incarnations; but the Order of Preachers as a group could not resist the overwhelming current in the other direction provided by the combined force of Albert and Thomas,⁸¹ whereas first Bonaventure’s genius and then his leadership of his order took the Franciscans the opposite way. It is to these two crucial figures that I turn, then, in the next sections.

II.2. St. Bonaventure

From the earlier thinkers we have briefly glanced at to St. Bonaventure there is a great leap of progress.⁸² Whereas earlier scholastics tended to approach the question of

⁷⁹ At least as late as Robert Kilwardby, who accepts the doctrine. See Kleineidam, 43-45.

⁸⁰ Lottin sums up the matter well in a crucial passage in *Le composition*, 40: “[Cette enquête] aura convaincu en outre qu’en rigueur de termes, avant Bonaventure et Thomas d’Aquin, on ne peut guère parler de tradition au sein des jeunes écoles dominicaine et franciscaine. L’école dominicaine a commencé avec Roland de Crémone par prôner la composition hylémorphique; avec Hughes de S. Cher ell s’est portée en sens contraire, pour prendre enfin avec Albert le Grand la voie moyenne de la composition métaphysique que suivra à son tour S. Thomas d’Aquin. A l’inverse l’école franciscaine commence, avec Jean de la Rochelle, par nier la composition hylémorphique; mais bientôt, dans la Somme d’Alexandre de Hales, se dessine en sa faveur un mouvement dont Odon Rigaud tiendra compte et qui s’affirmera sous la poussée de Bonaventure.”

⁸¹ See Kleineidam, 40-42. Kleineidam also suggests that, precisely because this was the cause of the Dominicans’ party shift on the subject, adherence to spiritual matter lasted longer at Oxford than at Paris.

⁸² Other than the brief survey in the previous section I make no attempt here to determine Bonaventure’s sources for particular arguments or authorities. See Quinn, *The Historical Constitution of St. Bonaventure’s Philosophy*, 159: “Considered historically, then, the doctrine of Bonaventure on the essential constitution of the human soul contains an original synthesis of elements drawn from many sources. Each of these sources contributes in a proportionate way to Bonaventure’s thought on the problem.” Quinn notes that Avicbron’s name never appears in Bonaventure’s writings, and claims that Avicbron is not a major or direct influence on Bonaventure, nor, by extension, on Bonaventure’s successors. See also *ibid.*, 845 n.1: “The immediate source of St. Bonaventure’s doctrine on the universality of matter is probably one or more of his predecessors in the

spiritual matter hesitantly, without party lines or common teachings of the various “schools” to guide them, St. Bonaventure attacks the subject confidently and exhaustively, laying the foundation for the traditional Franciscan approach over the next half-century. And whereas relatively little metaphysical weight seems to have been placed on the question before him, “The doctrine that all creatures, even spirits, are composed of form and matter (the doctrine of [universal] hylomorphism) stands at the heart of the Seraphic Doctor’s understanding of the angelic nature.”⁸³ In accordance with the increasing metaphysical sophistication of his day, he constructs new arguments while strengthening and integrating the arguments of his predecessors and giving the question a hitherto unprecedented clarity and precision. At the same time he marshalls a greater array of authorities than had been done before, especially from Augustine (many of whose writings he brings to bear on the question for the first time⁸⁴) and from Aristotle, attempting to reconcile them while appreciating in full the way different philosophical principles give rise to different solutions.⁸⁵ His advance was so great and his influence so strong that he is justly considered the principal representative of what used to be called “Augustinianism”.⁸⁶ “But in all his work there is perhaps no doctrine that he

thirteenth century depending in some way on Avicbron, who is not named in St. Bonaventure’s texts. To establish the doctrinal dependence of St. Bonaventure on his immediate predecessors would be a huge task . . .”

⁸³ David Keck, *Angels & Angelology in the Middle Ages* (Oxford University Press, 1998), 93.

⁸⁴ According to Kleineidam, 27.

⁸⁵ See Kleineidam, 26: “Der Fortschritt von Alexander zu Bonaventura ist außerordentlich groß: Bei Alexander, wie wir gesehen haben, mehr ein Aneinanderreihen von Zitaten, um überliefertes Gut durch Autoritäten zu stützen, ohne eingehende eigene Stellungnahme; bei Bonaventura ein selbständig durchdachter, klarer Aufbau der Frage, wo sich die Zusammensetzung aus Materie und Form als klare Forderung seines gesamten philosophischen Systems ergibt, indem er versucht, den aristotelischen Begriff der Materie in augustinischem Sinne als prope nihil, als Bloße Seinsmöglichkeit aufzufassen. Seine Darlegungen bieten das Beste, was zur Begründung der hylomorphen Zusammensetzung geschrieben wurde.”

⁸⁶ See Quinn, *The Historical Constitution of St. Bonaventure’s Philosophy*, 42, n.58. According to Quinn The characteristic doctrines of “Augustinianism” as defined by de Wulf and other medieval historians of the early twentieth century were universal hylomorphism, seminal reasons, plurality of forms independent of the rational soul in relation to the human body, lack of a real distinction between the soul and its faculties, illumination.

affirms with such force and exactness as that of the hylomorphic composition of spiritual substances.”⁸⁷

For St. Bonaventure the question of whether spiritual substances are composed of matter and form is a more specific follow-up to the general question of whether they are composed at all: after affirming that all creatures are composed in some way, it remains to be asked which kinds of composition belong to which kinds of substance. The questions in which Bonaventure most thoroughly covers the ground which concerns us are laid out in his commentary on Peter Lombard’s *Sentences* according to the plan of that work and not in their logical order. I will discuss them in their logical order, beginning with the general question of the composition of creatures in *I Sent.* VIII.Pars II.Q.2, then the question on whether angels are composed of matter and form in *II Sent.* III.Pars I.Art.I.Q.1, followed by the same question as regards human souls in *II Sent.* XVII.Art.I.Q.12, before returning to *II Sent.* III.Pars I.Art.I.Q.2, which asks, given the existence of spiritual matter, whether spiritual matter is the same as the matter of corporeal things.

In *I Sent.* VIII.Pars.II.Q.1, Bonaventure had asked whether God was absolutely simple, and affirmed that he was. In the following question he asks whether *only* God is absolutely simple, that is, whether every creature has some composition. Since they have little bearing on our question, I will ignore the objections and responses and turn to the four reasons Bonaventure gives for affirming that every creature is composite. First, appealing to

⁸⁷ Robert, *Hylémorphisme et devenir chez Saint Bonaventure*, 5: “De l’augustinisme médiéval, saint Bonaventure est considéré à juste titre comme le principal représentant. Or il n’est peut-être pas, dans toute son oeuvre, de doctrine qu’il affirme avec plus de force et de netteté que celle de la composition hylémorphique des substances spirituelles.”

Boethius' own authority,⁸⁸ he invokes the distinction we have seen numerous times already between *quo est* and *quod est*. Since every creature differs in its *quo est* and *quod est*, “therefore in every creature act exists together with the possible; but every such thing has multiformity in itself and lacks simplicity.”⁸⁹ Second, Bonaventure appeals to the finite and limited character of creatures. Every creature has finite and limited being (*esse*), and therefore has contracted being; but wherever there is limited being, there is something which contracts and something which is contracted, and in every such thing there is composition and difference; therefore every creature is composite. (In the *corpus* of the question Bonaventure makes it clear that here he is thinking of the contraction of a genus by its specific difference, so that, for instance, substance is contracted and limited to corporeal, animate, sensible, etc.) Third, Bonaventure points out the derived nature of created being. Every creature has being given from elsewhere, i.e. God, and has accepted its being from a source outside of itself. Therefore no creature is its being (*ergo nulla creatura est suum esse*), and every being has dependence or difference in its constitution. Finally, Bonaventure appeals to pseudo-Dionysius for the principle that everything proceeding from the first unity falls short of it into duality, so that after the monad is the dyad,⁹⁰ and every creature must have at least a twofold constitution.

The principles behind these arguments become more clear in the *corpus* of the question, where Bonaventure explains the conditions for simplicity and why creatures fail to meet them. Simplicity is the absence of any kind of composition and difference or

⁸⁸ Boethius, *De Trinitate*, c.2; *De hebdomadibus* (PL 64, 1250, 1311).

⁸⁹ St. Bonaventure, *I Sententiarum*, in *Opera Omnia* (Quarrachi, 1882-1902) v.1, VIII.Pars II.Q.2, 167: “Nulla creatura est actus purus, quia in omni creatura, ut dicit Boethius, differt ‘quo est’ et ‘quod est’; ergo in omni creatura est actus cum possibili; sed omnis talis habet in se multiformitatem et caret simplicitate: ergo etc.”

⁹⁰ Pseudo-Dionysius, *De divinis nominibus*, c.1.4 (PL 3, 590sq).

multiplicity. Nothing can be considered simple which has either any composition of parts, or any multiplicity whether of actions or of forms. Bonaventure has shown in the previous question that God meets these conditions, but he believes that nothing else does. He goes on to explain, therefore, in what way creatures are subject to composition and to internal differentiation. First he distinguishes between three kinds of composition:

It should be noted that there are many kinds of composition. One composition is out of essential parts, and this kind is in all substances (*per se entibus*); another is out of integral parts, and this kind is in all bodies; a third is out of dissimilar or (mutually) repugnant parts, and this kind is in all living and animate things. Whence in every substance which has being per se (*omni substantia per se ente*), which is properly called a creature, there is composition, because every creature is either corporeal or spiritual or composed from both [kinds].⁹¹

There are two important points in this passage. First is the recognition of the difference between essential parts and integral parts: integral parts are spatial pieces which are joined via continuity or contiguity but may be separated, like drops of water in a pool (dissimilar or mutually incompatible parts, of course, are a subsection of integral parts, and e.g. organic substances are made up complexes of such dissimilar parts, such as moist and dry, flesh and blood). Essential parts, however, require neither spatial dimensions nor separability for there to be a real difference between them, as Bonaventure will explain in more detail later on. In other words, while things composed of integral parts (bodies) are also composed of essential parts, composition out of essential parts does not necessarily imply the presence of integral parts, so that spiritual substances can have composition without having any of the properties associated with corporeality.

⁹¹ St. Bonaventure, *I Sent.* VIII.Pars II.Q.2, 168: “Unde notandum quod multiplex est compositio. Una compositio est ex partibus essentialibus; et haec est in omnibus per se entibus; alia est ex partibus integrantibus; et haec est in omnibus corporibus; tertia est ex partibus dissimilibus sive repugnantibus; et haec est in omnibus animatis et viventibus. Unde in omni substantia per se ente, quae proprie dicitur creatura, est compositio, quia omnis creatura aut est corporalis aut spiritualis aut composita ex utraque.”

The other important point in this passage is the clarification that Bonaventure is speaking of substances which have *per se* being, not of things like intrinsic principles or accidents, which may be more simple than a substance but which do not exist apart from the substance in which they inhere or help to constitute. As Bonaventure explains at the end of the *corpus*, while such things may not be themselves composed of parts, still they are not to be considered simple beings, because they have no subsistent being in their own right, but only as a principle of a composite. Such a thing may not be produced out of other things, may not be a *principiatum*, but it is able to enter into composition with other things and relies on these others to exist, and so lacks self-sufficient simplicity. This line of argument is expanded on in the responses to objections 2-4, in which although Bonaventure concedes that, for instance, while a point may be called simple in the sense of lacking composition from parts, still he insists that it is not simple in the sense of lacking all internal difference and dependence on something without for its existence, or in the sense of not being apt to enter into composition with other things.

Bonaventure goes on to posit a threefold “difference” in all creatures which keeps them from simplicity. “The first is of substance, virtue, and operation, whether of substance or accident; the second is the difference between supposit and essence; the third is the difference between what belongs to being (*entis*) and being itself (*esse*).”⁹² These differences highlight the diversity within finite things by considering them either as subjects, as individuals, or as creatures. The first difference points out that no subject is pure act because its activity is not identical with either its power to act or its actual activity. Whenever a

⁹² Ibid., 168: “Prima est substantiae, virtutis et operationis, sive substantiae et accidentis; secunda est differentia suppositi et essentiae; tertia est differentia entis et esse.”

creature acts it holds something of itself back, so to speak, without exhausting its full potentiality in its present activity. Every subject has “mixed being” (*esse mixtum*), that is, its being is a mixture of act and potency, and therefore does not act from its whole self (*ex se toto*), “and therefore that by which it acts (*quo agit*) and that which acts (*quod agit*) differ in it [the subject], and the action or subject and the property [differ].”⁹³ The second difference points out that each individual has limited being, that is, something in which it agrees, and something in which it differs, from other things, “and therefore in every individual essence and supposit differ; for the essence is multiplied in [many] supposits.”⁹⁴ For instance, I am not humanity, for there are other men besides me, and yet humanity goes into my constitution. The third difference points out that the being of anything other than God is not self-generating or self-sustaining, but received from elsewhere (*aliunde*). “Therefore nothing is its being, as light is not its shining.”⁹⁵

Therefore, Bonaventure concludes, whether simplicity is taken to mean the privation of composition or the privation of difference or dependence in the essence, only God is simple. Every other creature is composed of potency and act and of essential parts, and has distinctions between its substance and its power or actions, between its supposit and its essence, between itself and its being.

Taken by itself, however, it must be admitted that Bonaventure leaves us in this question with certain ambiguities. The *manner* of composition from essential parts and from

⁹³ Ibid., 168: “Prima differentia est in omni subiecto, quoniam omne subiectum habet esse mixtum; ideo non agit ex se toto, et ideo differt in eo quo agit et quod agit, et actio sive subiectum et proprietas.”

⁹⁴ Ibid., “. . . et ideo in omni individuo differt essentia et suppositum; multiplicatur enim essentia in suppositis.”

⁹⁵ Ibid., “ideo nihil est suum esse, sicut lux non est suum lucere.” See Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 222: “St. Bonaventure calls this the distinction between what is and its existence: *differentia entis et esse*.” It seems to me, however, that to assume that *entis* here means simply *quod est* is to assume that Bonaventure and Thomas hold the same view on the real distinction of *esse* and *essentia*, which they do not.

potency and act is left unclear or undefined, as is the exact meaning of the Boethian distinction between *quo est* and *quod est*. On the one hand, in the opening argument *quo est* and *quod est* seem to be explicitly identified with the actual and possible elements in a creature. Furthermore, it is hard to avoid attempting to connect *quo est* and *quod est* with the *quo agit* and *quod agit* of the first “difference” to be found in all creatures, in which *quo agit* seems to be the operation of a subject and *quod agit* either the subject itself or the power by which the subject acts. On the other hand, one may be tempted to identify *quo est* and *quod est* with the second “difference,” the distinction between essence and supposit in an individual, as in Albert, or with the third “difference,” the distinction between something and its *esse*, which of course calls to mind Thomas’ position.

There is little enough evidence that Bonaventure thought of the Boethian distinction as being between *esse* and *essentia*, and we can safely rule out the third option, but the second must give us pause. Bonaventure certainly speaks of *quo est* and *quod est* as a distinction between the abstract and the concrete. In one place he writes:

Anything that we understand as complete, we understand under this double condition, namely through the mode of *quo est* and *quod est*; and indeed unity or identity according to species or genus comes on account of what is *quo*, according to diverse states or [according to] greater or lesser completeness. But unity or diversity according to number comes on account of the *quod est* according to being [*esse*], or as it exists in the individual supposit.⁹⁶

And in another he writes:

Since in anything common in lower things there is found *quod est* and *quo est*, which means signification in the concrete and in the abstract, just as we say ‘man’ and

⁹⁶ *I Sent.* XIX. Pars II. Art. Unicus. Q.4, *corpus*, 363: “in quolibet, quod intelligimus ut completum, intelligimus sub ista duplici conditione, scilicet per modum ‘quo est’ et ‘quod est’; et unitas quidem sive identitas secundum speciem vel genus venit a parte eius quod est ‘quo’, secundum diversos status sive completionem maiorem et minorem. Unitas vero, vel diversitas secundum numerum venit a parte ipsius ‘quod est’ secundum esse, sive prout est in supposito individuo.”

‘humanity’, so we understand the same way about divine things, although we do not understand those two [terms to signify] a difference [in God]. Therefore we signify abstractly by the word ‘deity’, and concretely by the word ‘God’. And therefore we assign a word by which the *quo est* itself is signified, and this is the essence, and [also for] the *quod est* itself, and this is the substance; and it is in this way that these two names are understood in regard to what is common.⁹⁷

These passages seem to clearly show that for St. Bonaventure this is a purely *mental* distinction, in itself not implying any real composition,⁹⁸ since it can properly be applied to God without understanding it to imply composition or real distinction.⁹⁹ It is used equally of God and creatures, but when applied to God it only picks out something *a parte mentis*, while when applied to creatures it also indicates something *a parte rei*. When I conceive of a creature in terms of *quo est* and *quod est*, then, and think of each term as applying to something different, this is because the creature’s composition must already be known on some other grounds, e.g. it must already be apparent that it is not the case that humanity and a man are really identical while still being logically distinct. Alone, therefore, composition of the two is not simply equivalent to a matter-form composition, or indeed to any real—as opposed to merely logical—composition at all.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, in the present question Bonaventure does assume that in creatures the difference between *quo est* and *quod est*

⁹⁷ Bonaventure *I Sent.* XXIII. Art.I Q.3, *corpus*, 409: “cum in communi in inferioribus inveniatur ‘quod est’ et ‘quo est’, ratione cuius significatur in concretionem et in abstractionem, ut dicatur homo et humanitas: sic in divinis intelligimus, quamvis non intelligamus in differentia illa duo. Ideo et in abstractionem significamus per hoc nomen ‘deitas’, et in concretionem per hoc nomen ‘Deus’. Et ideo imposuimus ei nomen, quo significaretur ipsum ‘quo est’, et hoc est essentia; et ipsum ‘quod est’, et hoc est substantia; et ita haec duo nomina accipiuntur ex parte communis.”

⁹⁸ This is Robert’s conclusion in *Hylémorphisme*, 78-81. Quinn, on the other hand, wants to simply identify *quo est* and *quod est* with matter and form for Bonaventure. See *The Historical Constitution of St. Bonaventure’s Philosophy*, 162: “The difference between Bonaventure and Aquinas on the essence of a spiritual creature is grounded in their separate views of *matter*. Those views involve distinctive interpretations of *quod est* and *quo est* with regard to the creature. The two theologians concur on the *quod est*, which is the form of the creature; but they depart from each other on the *quo est*. For Bonaventure, this is matter as the potential constituent of a created essence, which has *being* from form.” In my opinion, however, this identification is too hasty.

⁹⁹ See St. Bonaventure, *De Myst. Trin.* Q.3 a.1, *corp.*; *I Sent.* Dist. XXVI. Pars I. Art. Unicus. Q. 4 *corpus*.

¹⁰⁰ See Robert, *Hylémorphisme et devenir*, 78-79.

implies a distinction of potency and act, that is, a real metaphysical distinction. In addition to the internal “differences,” whose metaphysical status as really distinct entities is somewhat unclear, there are in creatures essential parts which seem to be as really distinct as integral parts are and which account for a real distinction of potency and act. Bonaventure gives no indication here of what these essential parts are. By itself it does not seem that the distinction between *quo est* and *quod est* sufficiently provides for the metaphysical composition of spiritual creatures.¹⁰¹ That an additional precision must be added by conceiving of them in terms of hylomorphic composition, however, is not made clear until Book II of the *Commentary In Sententiarum*.

In *II Sent.* III Pars. I Art.I Q.1, St. Bonaventure asks whether in an angel there is composition from diverse natures, namely from matter and form. I will discuss the body of the question first before examining the arguments pro and con, together with the responses.

As a kind of supplement to the question we’ve just looked at, Bonaventure begins by surveying the multiple kinds of composition to which an angel is subject. First, when one compares it with its principle, insofar as an angel is derived from another it is composite, for what is most simple is most absolute, and according to him everything which depends on what is absolute falls under some composition. Second, when one compares it to its effect, an angel must be composed of substance and power. But in addition to this, considering it as a being (*ens*) in a genus, the metaphysician can discern in an angel a composition of act and potency, and the logician one of genus and difference.¹⁰² Again, it has to be considered as an *ens in se*, and so according to actual being there is in it a composition of *entis* and *esse*,

¹⁰¹ See Robert, 81.

¹⁰² Note that *both* logical and metaphysical composition are implied by being included under a genus.

according to essential being one of *quo est* and *quod est*, according to individual being one of *quod est* and *quis est*.¹⁰³ When therefore we call the angelic essence simple, it is not on account of a privation of these kinds of composition.¹⁰⁴ At the same time Bonaventure affirms that there some kinds of composition to which angels are not subject, such as composition from quantitative parts (such as is found in water or a stone), composition from heterogeneous parts (such as is found in organic and living substances), or composition from both corporeal and spiritual natures (such as is found in man).¹⁰⁵

What is in doubt, then, is composition of matter and form. Some have maintained that the above-mentioned kinds of composition are sufficient and denied the need to recognize hylomorphic composition in angels. Bonaventure insists, however, that this is not the case, and gives a rapid list of reasons indicating that angels must contain matter: their capacity for change (not only from being to non-being or vice versa, but across diverse properties), their passibility, the requirements of their individuation and limitation, and finally the conditions for any kind of essential composition in a nature at all. Given all these, he says, the proposition that the substance of an angel, and the essence of every creature which is a being

¹⁰³ For this last distinction, see Bonaventure, *I Sent.* XXIII Art.I Q.3 *corpus*, 409: “Unde differunt ista quatuor nomina secundum modum intelligendi, sicut ‘quo est’, ‘quod est’, ‘qui est’, ‘quis est.’” In God the former two do not posit a real distinction even if the latter two do, whereas in creatures each term signifies something different.

¹⁰⁴ St. Bonaventure, *II Sent.* (Quaracchi, v.2) III Pars. I Art.I Q.1, 90-91: “Respondeo: Dicendum quod certum est, angelum non habere essentiam per privationem omnis compositionis; certum enim est quod angelus compositus est compositione multiplici. Potest enim considerari in comparatione ad suum principium; et sic in tantum est compositus, in quantum habet ad ipsum dependentiam. Simplicissimum enim absolutissimum est, et omne dependens hoc ipso cadit in aliquam compositionem. Habet secundo considerari in comparatione ad suum effectum; et sic habet componi ex substantia et potentia. Habet nihilominus considerari ut ens in genere; et sic secundum metaphysicum componitur ex actu et potentia, secundum logicum vero ex genere et differentia. Item, habet considerari ut ens in se; et sic quantum ad esse actuale est in ipso compositio entis et esse, quantum ad esse essenziale ex ‘quo est’ et ‘quod est’, quantum ad esse individuale sive personale sic ‘quod est’ et ‘quis est’. Cum ergo angelica essentia dicimus simplex, hoc non est per privationem harum compositionum.” Note how insistent Bonaventure is that there is composition, not only in the angel’s substance, but in the essence itself.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 91: “Sed hoc certum est aliquas compositiones a substantia angeli removeri, utpote compositionem ex partibus quantitativis, compositionem ex partibus heterogeneis et compositionem ex natura corporali et spirituali, qualis est in homine.”

per se, is not composed of diverse natures, is indefensible. “And if it is composed of diverse natures, those two natures are related through the mode of actual and possible, and so of matter and form. And therefore that position seems to be more true, namely that in an angel there is composition from matter and form.”¹⁰⁶

Bonaventure devotes a separate argument to all four of these reasons. The first is the argument from angelic mutability. Nothing, he argues, that is mutable is simple. But it is clear that angels by their nature are subject to change, and so angels are composed. But the principle of mutability is matter, and so matter must enter into the angelic composition. (For the principle that matter is the subject of all change, Bonaventure cites not Aristotle but Augustine.¹⁰⁷) Furthermore, angels are the subjects of accidents, but Boethius¹⁰⁸ makes it clear that forms are not the subjects of accidents, but matter: forms do not inhere in other forms. For angels to have accidents, then, they must be something more than form alone; there must be a subject in which an angel’s essence inheres, as well as any forms accidental to that essence.

Bonaventure considers the proposal that being created *ex nihilo* is sufficient to account for mutability, but rejects it. Coming to be *ex nihilo* is a pure privation, i.e. the privation of existing *de se*. But mutability is not merely a privation, i.e. the privation of perfect stability in being—it bespeaks something positive as well as something privative.

What is mutable has a positive capacity to have some form or property which it does not

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 91: “non video causam nec rationem, quomodo defendi potest, quin substantia angeli sit composita ex diversis naturis, et essentia omnis creaturae per se entis; et si composita est ex diversis naturis, illae duae naturae se habent per modum actualis et possibilis, et ita materiae et formae. Et ideo illa positio videtur verior esse, scilicet quod in angelo sit compositio ex materia et forma.”

¹⁰⁷ St. Augustine, *Confessiones* XII.19, 230: “Et uerum est, quod omne mutabile insinuat notitiae nostrae quandam informitatem, qua formam capit uel qua mutatur et uertitur.”

¹⁰⁸ Boethius, *De Trinitate*, in *De consolatione philosophiae; opuscula theologica*, ed. Claudio Moreschini, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana (Munich: Verlag, 2000), c.2, 170: “formae vero subiectae esse non possunt.”

presently have, *as well as* being in privation to that form. Mutability therefore bespeaks a principle which is neither wholly something nor wholly nothing, but a medium between them, and Bonaventure appeals to the *prope nihil* of Augustine to say that this is precisely what is meant by matter.¹⁰⁹

The second reason we must posit matter in angels is because of their passibility. Nothing both acts and suffers according to the same principle or element; nothing simultaneously teaches and is taught the same piece of knowledge by one act of the mind; nothing both heats and is heated at the same time and in the same respect. Angels, however, are both active and passive; for instance, they both give and receive intellectual illuminations, or perform morally significant actions and receive appropriate rewards. When an angel does what he should not, he receives what he ought: when he sins, he receives a punishment. That these are really distinct can be seen, for instance, in the fact that while the action performed is ugly, because wicked, the penalty suffered is beautiful, because just. “But one and the same angel acts and undergoes action: therefore it has one principle whereby it acts and another whereby it undergoes action. But the principle whereby it acts is form, and the principle whereby it undergoes action can be nothing other than matter.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ St. Bonaventure, *II Sent.* III Pars. I Art.I Q.1, 89: “a. Per rationem mutationis. Nullum mutabile est simplex; sed angelus de natura sua est mutabilis et mutatur: ergo habet compositionem. Sed ulterius, quod ex materia: cuicumque inest mutatio, inest principium mutabilitatis; sed principium mutabilitatis est materia: ergo etc. Prima manifestum est; secunda patet per Augustinum, XII Confessionem: ‘Omne mutabile insinuat quamdam informitatem, qua forma capitur vel mutatur vel vertitur.’ Et Boethius, in 2 cap. Libri De Trinitati: Nihil, quod est mere forma, accidentibus potest subici. Et ibidem expresse dicit, quod “forma non suscipit accidentia, quia haec non suscipit, nisi materia subiecta.” Si tu dicas mihi, quod mutabilitas venit rebus, quia sunt ex nihilo, sicut in pluribus locis vult Augustinus; sed constat, quod mutabilitas non est pura privatio, immo dicit aliquam positionem: ergo non habet causam ipsam puram privationem. Necesse est ergo quod habeat causam dicentem positionem; sed non positionem omnimodam, cum etiam dicat privationem: ergo aliquid, quod non est omnino aliquid, nec omnino nihil, sed quod est medium inter aliquid et nihil; hoc autem dicit Augustinus materiam; ergo etc.”

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 89: “b. Item, hoc ipsum ostenditur per rationem actionis et passionis: quia nihil idem et secundum idem agit et patitur; sed angelus idem agit et patitur: ergo habet aliud et aliud principium, secundum quod agit et secundum quod patitur. Sed principium, secundum quod agit, est forma, principium vero, secundum quod

Third, Bonaventure insists that angels must contain matter merely in virtue of being individual substances. Angels are numerically distinct from one another, prescinding from any accidental characteristics: in the first moment of their creation, before any intellectual or volitional acts, each angel was already a separate individual. But numerical diversity comes, not from a formal but from a material principle. Here he invokes the authority of Aristotle, who had said that the nature was from the form and numerical diversity from matter.¹¹¹

Bonaventure considers and rejects the notion that an angelic essence is individuated through its own substance, the *quod est* or “hypostasis,” which stands in place of matter. The essence is a universal form which is by nature capable of existing “always and everywhere,” that is, indefinitely multipliable and not restricted to a particular instance. Later in the present distinction Bonaventure will examine and reject the view that each angelic essence is unique and exhausted by a single individual, to insist that many angels are numerically and yet not specifically distinct. The very nature of an essence is, or is at least capable of being, common to many individuals.¹¹² The essence as such, then, is in need of some particularizing and individualising principle. This principle must add something over and above the essence, the form, in order to contract it to a single finite and limited instance, and mere *personality* is unable to do this.¹¹³ The angel is not merely personal, but “here and now,” a single

patitur, non potest esse nisi materia: ergo etc. Maior per se manifesta est; minor similiter patet; nam angeli est recipere illuminationes et dare: ergo etc. Si forte des instantiam, quod medium per eandem naturam recipit lumen et dat, ut patet in aere; nulla est instantia, quia medium non habet rationem activi nec cooperativi. Et rursus, haec instantia non potest fieri in vera actione et passione: angelus enim agit et patitur; dum enim agit quod non debet patitur quod debet; dum agit culpam, patitur poenam, ut nullo modo sit dedecus peccati sine decore iustitiae, et haec est passio proprie.”

¹¹¹ Aristotle, *De caelo et mundo*, I.9, *Physics* I.7, *Metaphysics* XIII.5, XI.5, etc.

¹¹² See Bonaventure, *II Sent.* III. Pars I. Art. II. Q.1.

¹¹³ Bonaventure recognizes the philosophical difficulties in saying that matter, an undifferentiated and common principle, is the sole source of individuality, at the same time wondering how it could be form, since every form is a universal: he does not conceive of Scotistic *haecceities*. He concludes that individuation arises from the actual conjunction of matter and form, implying of course that, although form has greater dignity and so has the

exemplatum of the universal essence. But this restricting, contracting, numerically distinguishing principle can only be matter.¹¹⁴

The final argument is from the nature of essential composition. “For an angel is defined, and so participates in the nature of a genus and of a difference: a nature in which it agrees with others, and a nature in which it differs.”¹¹⁵ The essence then must contain within itself all the reality (*totam veritatem definitionis realiter*) required for its definition to be a true one, meaning that it must contain different natures or forms, for instance, that of substance and that of intellect. But, Bonaventure argues, it is impossible for this plurality of natures to come together to constitute a whole substance unless they stand to one another in the relation of potency to act, for from two beings (*entibus*) in potentiality or from two in act, nothing is produced. It may be different with accidents—whiteness, for instance, does not seem to have in itself a potential and an actual principle—but this is because it is in the nature of accidents to be dependent on substance and its principles, that is, matter and form.

primary role, *both* are necessary elements in every individual. See *II Sent.* III. Pars.I. Art. II. Q.3, 109: “individuatō consurgit ex actuali coniunctione materiae cum forma, ex qua coniunctione unum sibi appropriat alterum . . .”

¹¹⁴ St. Bonaventure, *II Sent.* III Pars. I Art.I Q.1, 89: “c. Item hoc videtur per rationem individuationis. In angelis etiam est distinctio hypostatum, non per originem. Fiat ergo talis ratio: omnis distinctio secundum numerum venit a principio intrinseco et substantiali, quia, omnibus accidentibus circumscriptis, differentia numero sunt diversa; sed non venit a forma: ergo venit a principio materiali: ergo etc. Maior per se manifesta est; minor patet per Philosophum, qui dicit, De caelo et mundo: ‘Cum dico caelum, dico formam; cum dico hoc caelum, dico materiam’. Et idem in pluribus locis dicit, quod ‘omnino materia numerabiliter habet’. Si tu dicas, quod materia vocatur ipsa hypostasis, sive ipsum ‘quod est’; ego quaero a te de hypostasi: aut addit aliquid supra essentiam et formam aut nihil. Si nihil addit, ergo non contrahit: ergo sicut ipsum universale est natum semper esse et ubique, sic ipsa hypostasis, sicut patet in divinis, quia persona non addit supra essentiam, sed est ubique et immensa sicut essentia. Ergo cum hypostasis angeli sit finita et arctata et limitata, et ita ‘hic et nunc’, necessario oportet quod ultra formam addat aliquid arctans substantiale sibi; hoc autem non potest esse nisi materia.”

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 90: “d. Item, hoc ipsum ostenditur per naturam essentialis compositionis. Angelus enim diffinitur, et ita participat naturam generis et differentiae: naturam in qua convenit cum aliis, et naturam in qua differt.”

Accidents belong to various genera but always take their actual origin from something in another genus, that of substance.¹¹⁶

Bonaventure considers four objections, two from authority and two from reason. The authorities are Boethius and Aristotle, who both affirm the intellect to be immaterial. The text from Aristotle¹¹⁷ we have already seen. Boethius says that no incorporeal substance has a material foundation, since matter is the subject of change from one substantial form to another, and spiritual and corporeal things cannot be changed into one another. Since a corporeal thing cannot receive a spiritual substantial form, and vice versa, they cannot both have a material substratum.¹¹⁸ To this Bonaventure replies that Boethius is clearly speaking of matter under the aspect of natural substantial change, which the angelic world does not include, but not of matter absolutely speaking. Similarly when Aristotle calls the intellect immaterial he means that it does not have a substratum which is subject to generation and corruption. Neither then are speaking of matter in the most general sense, but in a way “appropriate” to their intention (*appropriate*). Bonaventure’s meaning here is clarified in the following question on the unity of matter. For now he adds that, if this were not Boethius’ intention, he would have contradicted himself in the text cited above, where he affirms that

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 90: “Sed impossibile est plures naturas concurrere ad constitutionem tertii, quin altera habeat rationem possibilis, altera rationem actualis; quia ex duobus entibus in potentia nihil fit, similiter nec ex duobus entibus in actu: ergo necesse est etc. Si tu feras mihi instantiam in albedine et in aliis formis, quae habent definiri et habent genera et differentias, nec tamen habent materiam partem sui; instantia omnino nulla est, quia secus est in naturis accidentium quae habent ortum ex substantia et eius principiis, et de naturis sive differentiis substantiae quae non habent ortum ex alio genere. Unde necessario sequitur, vel quod albedo habeat diversas naturas in se, vel natura speciei et generis primi et subalterni causentur a diversis naturis repertis in subiecto; quodsi ita non potest poni in angelo, primum ponendum est.”

¹¹⁷ Aristotle, *De anima* III.4.

¹¹⁸ Boethius, *De duobus naturis (Contra Eutychem et Nestorium)*, in *De consolatione philosophiae; opuscula theologica*, ed. Claudio Moreschini, c.6, 230: “Omnis enim natura incorporeae substantiae nullo materiae nititur fundamento; nullum vero corpus est cui non sit materia subiecta . . . in se non permutabuntur quibus non modo communis materia non est, sed cum alia res materiae fundamento nititur ut corpus, alia omnino materiae subiecto non egeat ut incorporeum.”

nothing is the subject of accidents except through matter; since God alone is without accidents and every sort of change, only God is without matter.

The third argument and the first from reason attempts to establish the plausibility of a wholly immaterial substance by an analogy. There are some forms which both in their very nature and in actual existence are the acts of a material substratum, namely material and corporeal forms; there are other forms which in the actual act of being, but not according to their essential constitution, inform a material subject, such as the rational soul (which after all can exist apart from the body to which it belongs); it stands to reason then that there can be a third kind of form which belongs to a material substratum *neither* by the necessity of its essential constitution *nor* in actual fact.¹¹⁹ In his rather curt reply, Bonaventure shows just how far away he is from St. Thomas on this issue and just how little he thinks of the idea of a subsistent form:

Considering the properties of a creature, that a creature by the very fact that it is a creature is not a pure act, it is necessary that it have possibility; because it is mutable, it is necessary that it have a foundation; because it is limited in a genus, it is necessary that it have composition: whence it cannot reasonably be thought that it is able not [to have these].¹²⁰

Clearly for St. Bonaventure possibility, a substrate for change, and real composition all involve matter, not merely in some cases, as in the corporeal world, but as a matter of

¹¹⁹ St. Bonaventure, *II Sent.* III Pars. I Art.I Q.1, 90: “quia rationabiliter cogitatur substantia Deo similis per spiritualitatem et immaterialitatem; et hoc videtur: cum enim sit aliqua natura quae secundum substantiam et esse est actus materiae, ut formae materiales et corporales, alia quae secundum actum essendi non secundum essentiam, ut anima rationalis; erit igitur tertia quae secundum actum et essentiam erit separata.” We will see this argument taken up again by Giles of Rome and John of Paris.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 91: “Quod obicitur, quod creatura simplex rationabiliter potest cogitari etc., dicendum quod consideratis proprietatibus creaturae, quia creatura eo ipso quod creatura non est actus purus, oportet quod habeat possibilitatem; quia mutabilis est, oportet quod habeat fundamentum; quia limitatum et in genere, oportet quod compositionem habeat: unde non potest rationabiliter cogitari quod non potest esse nec fieri.”

definition.¹²¹ To the objection that, after all, forms not inhering in matter are a metaphysical *possibility*, since God can cause the species of the consecrated host to exist without a subject in which to inhere, Bonaventure replies that this only occurs by a supernatural suspension of the natural order and goes against and above the natural inclination of the forms involved (which are in any case the species of corporeal things).¹²² To say that angels are all subsistent forms would be equivalent to saying that God supernaturally sustains the essence of every angel against its natural inclination to be united to a material foundation, which is gratuitous and absurd.¹²³

The final objection from reason suggests that if the angel were composed from, that is caused by, a material and a formal principle, this would imply that matter was superior to an angel, since a cause is nobler than its effect. But the angel is the noblest creature and as such should have no cause, i.e. no principle, other than God. The angel is therefore only its own essential form. To this Bonaventure simply replies that, while the efficient and final causes

¹²¹ Compare Vital du Fuor, *Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio* [attr. to Scotus], ed. M.F. Garcia, O.F.M. (Quaracchi, 1910), Q.VII, 140: “Non autem intendo negare, quin Deus facere posset aliquam substantiam spiritualem sine materia; sed dico, quod talis nullo modo esset passibilis, nec secundum aliquem modo alterabilis. –Primo, quia sicut si Deus faceret materiam per se existere absque forma, materia nihil ageret, quia quamvis compositum agat, potentiam tamen activam habet a forma, sic forma existens absque materia omnino nihil pateretur; sicut enim forma est principium actionis, sic materia passionis.”

¹²² When discussing the sacramental species themselves Bonaventure remains consistent with the metaphysics laid out here: the reason that the eucharistic host can change can only be supernatural, since it does not exist in a material subject. See St. Bonaventure, *IV Sent.* XII Pars I. Art. II Q.3 B.a., 281: “Forma de sui natura est in simplici et invariabili essentia consistens. Si ergo accidat ei variatio, hoc est per materiam: ergo separata a materia est invariabilis per naturam. Si ergo varietur, hoc est supra naturam: ergo etc.”

¹²³ St. Bonaventure, *II Sent.* III Pars. I Art.I Q.1, 91: “Et si obicias mihi, quod Deus potest facere, quod forma accidentalit sit sine materia, ut in Sacramento altaris, dicendum quod nunquam facit, quin semper sit nata esse in materia, et ad illam, quantum est de sui natura, habeat inclinationem. Si ergo Deus res condidit, secundum quod competit naturis ipsarum, patet quod nunquam debuit facere formam stare sine materia in conditione rerum, quamvis in miraculis faciat contra naturam et supra naturam. ‘In conditione enim rerum non quaerimus, quid Deus possit, sed quid congruat naturae ipsius creaturae’, sicut dicit Augustinus.”

are nobler than their effect, the formal and material causes are not absolutely speaking nobler than the substance of which they are components.¹²⁴

Before considering the question that follows this one, on the unity of angelic and corporeal matter, I will examine the later question at *II Sent.* XVII. Art.I. Q.2, on whether the soul (as the question words it, the soul of Adam) is composed of matter and form.

Bonaventure affirms that the rational human soul is subject to hylomorphic composition just as the angels are, and for the same reasons, but the peculiar nature of the human soul raises additional considerations which the natures of angels do not. Those who see the soul primarily as the form of the body assert that in the latter it has a material foundation which it informs, and that an additional spiritual material substrate would be superfluous.

Furthermore, they assert that since the soul is a form, it would be absurd to posit a form which is itself composed of matter and form. On the other hand, Bonaventure considers that one cannot speak of the soul simply in its relation to the body, since it has or can have an existence and operations entirely removed from the body.¹²⁵ Since it is something in its own right (*hoc aliquid*) and made to subsist and to act and to suffer *per se*, to move and to be moved, it has therefore within itself a foundation of its existence and a material principle from which it has existence (*existere*), as well as a formal one from which it has being

¹²⁴ Ibid., 91: “Item, videtur per deductionem ad inconueniens. Inconueniens enim est quod aliqua natura creata sit nobilior angelo; sed omnis causa nobilior suo effectu: ergo angelus non habet aliam causam quam increatam. Sed illa non potest esse causa materialis nec formalis: ergo angelus non habet nec materiam nec formam aliam: sed essentialiter est forma. . . . Quod obicitur, quod causa nobilior est effectu, verum est de efficiente et finali, quae proprie tenent rationem causae; sed de materiali et formali, quae sunt principia ordinata ad compositionem, non habet veritatem simpliciter, sed solum secundum quid.”

¹²⁵ See also *II Sent.* I. P.II. Art.III. Q.1, 48: “. . . cum anima sit substantia et forma substantialis, vel habens formam substantialem . . . Praeterea, anima separata spiritus est et substantia, prout est res per se existens, et per se substans accidentibus, et secundum sui mutationem susceptibilis contrariorum: ergo proprie est substantia et recte in genere substantiae sicut substantia prima, et angelus similiter; constat.”

(*esse*).¹²⁶ It is unnecessary to say the same of the souls of brute animals, since they have no incorporeal operations and their bodies provide a sufficient foundation, while the human soul cannot be founded upon the body to the extent that it can exist and act as an individual apart from it. Given this fact, and given that the principle from which arises the fixed existence of a creature in itself is the material principle, it is to be conceded that the human soul has matter. Bonaventure is careful to insist, however, that this matter is not what natural philosophers mean when they speak of matter. The matter which is the substrate of intellectual forms is lifted above the being (*esse*) of extension and above that of privation and corruption, and for this reason is called spiritual matter. Natural philosophers conceive of matter insofar as it is the principle of extension and insofar as its being is in privation to substantial form, and so subject to generation and corruption; but this is matter only as it exists in a given realm, that of the corporeal realm, and not matter in its metaphysical generality. When philosophers claimed that the soul had no matter, therefore, they meant to deny that it had matter as considered by physics (*prout ad eam stat resolutio physica*) and not absolutely.¹²⁷ This last train of thought will be elaborated in the final question we will

¹²⁶ Note that Bonaventure distinguishes between the stability and permanence of *existence* and the actuality of *being*. Each requires and implies the other (See *II Sent.* XIII. A.III Q.1 *corp.*) but they are provided to the composite substance respectively by matter and form. See Robert, *Hylémorphisme* p 26-7: “A cause de son incorruptibilité, de son immutabilité, la matière peut être considérée comme un principe de stabilité ou de permanence dans l’être . . .” See also Bonaventure, *I Sent.* XIX. Pars.II. Q.3, arg. 3, 360: “Materia in his inferioribus dat existentiam et permanentiam propter sui incorruptionem, unde fundamentum est existentiae creatae.” Bonaventure sees matter as something *real* and even more permanent than form. See Robert, 27: “En d’autres termes, saint Bonaventure attribue à la matière une universalité dans la réceptivité qui, pour saint Thomas, n’appartient qu’à l’essence par rapport à l’existence.”

¹²⁷ *II Sent.* XVII. Art.I. Q.2, 414-415: “anima rationalis, cum sit hoc aliquid et per se nata subsistere et agere et pati, movere et moveri, quod habet intra se fundamentum suae existentiae et principium materiale a quo habbet existere, et formale a quo habet esse. De brutali autem non oportet illud dicere, cum ipsa fundetur in corpore. Cum igitur principium, a quo est fixa existentia creaturae in se, sit principium materiale, concedendum est animam humanam materiam habere. Illa autem materia sublevata est supra esse extensionis et supra esse privationis et corruptionis, et ideo dicitur materia spiritualis. –Et propterea illi qui locuti sunt de materiali principio quantum ad esse sub privatione, dixerunt animam rationalem non habere materiam, non intendentes de materia in sua generalitate sed prout ad eam stat resolutio physica, sicut dictum est de simplicitate angeli.”

consider, and is an important interpretive key to the debate from Bonaventure's time down to Gonsalvus of Spain, to which we will be compelled to turn again a number of times.

Bonaventure considers arguments for his position which I will not examine in minute detail. He points out that even according to Aristotle¹²⁸ the soul has passive potency; that in its receptivity and change it is susceptible of contraries, such as joy and sadness, knowledge and ignorance, virtue and vice; that it is the subject of accidents, and that according to Aristotle¹²⁹ the subject of accidents is a composite of matter and form, just as the subject of substantial form is matter itself; that the soul has its own proper operation, and must therefore have something which acts and something different whereby it acts (for if it were pure form any action would exhaust the entire potential of the soul [*tunc ageret se ipsa*]); that the rational soul not only gives life to the body, but lives itself apart from the body, and must therefore have a principle which gives life, the form, and something which receives life, matter: for the soul is not life essentially, but something living through participation. Most of these are similar to the arguments positing matter in the angels, and Bonaventure refers the reader back to those arguments.

The objections and their responses are more illuminating. The first recalls that the soul is the form of the body, and claims that a form is simple—an element of composition and not a composite itself—and so not composed of matter and form. To this Bonaventure replies that the one (*auctor ille*) who defined a form as simple was speaking about a form

¹²⁸ Aristotle, *De anima* III.5.

¹²⁹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VIII.7.

which is only a form, not of that which is both a form and something in its own right (*hoc aliquid*) as the soul is, and so meant to define either an accidental or a universal form.¹³⁰

The second recalls Aristotle's text, which we noted in the first chapter, calling the intellect "unmixed and impassable". If the soul has matter then it has passive potency, so that if it is impassable it must not have matter. Unsurprisingly, this objection holds little weight with Bonaventure, who has already insisted that the soul does in fact have passive potency. He replies that Aristotle denies matter to the intellect the way the physicist does, i.e. insofar as matter is the principle of privation and potency for substantial change in the corporeal world. Aristotle doesn't deny that it has matter universally speaking, rather he implies that it has matter¹³¹ when he says that in the intellect there is a nature which acts and is acted upon.¹³²

The fourth objection is the argument from cognition, which as we shall see is St. Thomas' favorite way of refuting spiritual matter. According to this argument, intellectual activity is abstractive: in the act of thinking there is an assimilation of the thinking to the

¹³⁰ *II Sent.* XVII. Art.I. Q.2, 415: "Ad illud quod obicitur, quod omnis forma est simplex, dicendum quod auctor ille, definiens formam, loquitur de forma illa quae est forma tantum, non de ea quae est forma et hoc aliquid; unde vel definit ibi formam accidentalem vel definit formam universalem." For the reference, see the beginning of *Anonymi fragmentum vulgo vocatum 'Liber sex principiorum'* in *Aristoteles Latinus* I.6-7, ed. Laurentius Minio-Paluello (Bruges-Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1966), 35.

¹³¹ See Quinn, 142: "Although Aristotle does not teach that the human soul is composed of form and matter, nevertheless, we find St. Bonaventure drawing heavily on Aristotelian principles to demonstrate a necessity for form and matter in the human soul. The Bonaventurian position on the question, therefore, involves an application of Aristotelean principles to the problem rather than a strict interpretation of Aristotle's doctrine on the nature of the human soul. . . . But Aristotle teaches that the intellect is not mixed with matter, and that it has no passivity. . . . [Bonaventure] holds that Aristotle removes matter from the intellect according as matter is subject to privation and to a potency for transmutation with respect to being; so, not removing matter universally from the intellect, Aristotle in fact puts matter there when he says that, in the intellect, there is a nature making things known and a nature by which they become known."

¹³² *II Sent.* XVII. Art.I. Q.2, 415: "Ad illud quod obicitur, quod intellectus est impassibilis et impermixtus, dicendum quod Philosophus removet ab intellectu materiam, secundum quod consideratur sub privatione et sub potentia ad transmutationem secundum esse; non removet materiam universaliter, immo ponit, cum dicit quod in intellectu est natura qua est facere et qua est fieri." The third objection makes a similar point with regard to Peter Lombard, who writes in this distinction that the soul was not formed out of pre-existing matter, and receives a similar reply.

thought and vice versa, so that the forms of corporeal things are received in the intellect separated from their matter. But if the understood object is separated from matter in abstraction in order to be understood, it is necessary that the understanding subject also be separate from matter in order to so receive it. For Bonaventure, however, rather than proving that the soul is altogether immaterial, this argument proves that the soul cannot be truly and completely united to its object. Another way of replying is to say that the soul does not receive the actual corporeal form in the known object, but a similitude which it abstracts from the thing. For the thing to be understood it *is* necessary for this form to be separated from its own proper matter and imprinted on the mind, but Bonaventure sees no reason why a thing abstracted from its own proper matter cannot come into another thing which has its own proper matter and form, just as the similitude of color is received in a mirror.¹³³ I note here that this image seems to be the only indication in these questions that Bonaventure may have read Avicbron, who (as we saw in the first chapter) also makes use of the image of the mirror in discussing the soul's cognition of corporeal forms. This image may seem to be specific enough to suggest some dependence. On the other hand, the image is one which may have occurred naturally to Bonaventure, who frequently speaks of the soul as a mirror, and the parallel is not so close that the influence of Avicbron is certain or even highly probable. One final time I note that, while Avicbron certainly professed one kind of universal

¹³³ *II Sent. XVII. Art.I. Q.2, 415*: “Substantia intellectiva nihil cognoscit nisi abstrahatur a materia; sed in actu cognoscendi fit assimilatio cognoscentis ad cognoscibile et e converso: ergo si ad hoc quod intelligatur, necesse est quod abstrahatur a materia, ad hoc quod aliqua substantia intelligat, necesse est quod sit per naturam a materia separata . . . Ad illud quod obicitur, quod substantia intellectiva nihil cognoscit nisi quod abstrahatur a materia, dicendum quod hoc non facit propter hoc quod ipsa sit omnino immaterialis, sed propter hoc quod res non potest ei uniri secundum veritatem. Ideo oportet quod uniatur secundum similitudinem, quam anima abstrahit a re. –Alia est etiam ratio, quia intellectus per similitudinem, per quam intelligit, debet fieri in actu intelligendi; illud autem quod facit rem esse in actu, species est et forma. Ideo anima non cognoscit rem nisi speciem eius et formam sibi imprimat; et hoc non potest esse nisi illa abstrahatur a materia. Nec ex hoc sequitur quod anima careat materia; res enim abstracta a materia propria bene potest fieri in re alia, quae suam habet propriam materiam et formam, sicut similitudo coloris in speculo.”

hylomorphism, it is by no means clear that it is his philosophy, rather than Augustine's, which was the origin of Bonaventure's doctrine and that of his followers in the Franciscan school. As should be clear by now, Bonaventure's conception of spiritual matter differs from Avicbron's in important respects, and Bonaventure completely ignores even the existence of Avicbron in his texts, instead making frequent appeal to Augustine and Aristotle, and to a lesser extent Boethius.¹³⁴

The fifth objection recalls the one about the nobility of angels in the last question we examined. The argument claims that the nobler a form is, the simpler it is. But the soul is the noblest of all forms, and so the most simple; and if other forms are not composed of matter and form, then so much less is the rational soul.¹³⁵ To this argument *a minore* Bonaventure replies by reminding us that while this may be true of what is merely a form, the soul is not merely the form of something, but is something in its own right (*hoc aliquid*). If then the form of the soul is compared to other forms, without doubt it will be simpler than other forms. But the soul itself, since it is rational and exists *per se*, independently of the body, must have some composition which other forms, not being made such as to exist *per se*, do not naturally have.¹³⁶

Nevertheless, he continues, the soul can still in a sense be said to be simpler than other forms, and he goes on to distinguish between different kinds of simplicity,

¹³⁴ One cannot, therefore, along with Albert and Thomas make Avicbron the sole source of the doctrine. To do so is "nothing other than to exalt St. Thomas by deliberately, as part of the winning party, abasing all that surround him." See Robert, *Hylémorphisme*, 7-8, n.6.

¹³⁵ *II Sent.* XVII. Art.I. Q.2, 413: "Item, quanto forma nobilior tanto simplicior; sed anima inter omnes formas est nobilissima: ergo simplicissima; sed aliae formae non componuntur ex materia et forma: ergo multo fortius nec rationalis anima."

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 415: "dicendum quod istud habet locum in his quae sunt purae formae; anima autem non tantum est forma, immo etiam est hoc aliquid; et ideo, si comparetur forma animae ad alias formas, absque dubio simplicior erit quam aliae formae. Ipsa autem anima, cum sit rationalis, cum sit per se existens, aliquam compositionem habet quam aliae formae non sunt natae per se existere; nihilominus tamen ipsa anima simplicior aliis formis dici potest."

corresponding to different kinds of composition and different kinds of parts. There are substantial parts and quantitative parts, and composition from substantial parts and composition from quantitative parts. Although the terminology is slightly different here, Bonaventure seems to be speaking of the same things he called essential parts and integral parts in the former question. Since, therefore, simplicity is due to the privation of some composition, something can be called simple either because it lacks constitutive (substantial or essential) parts or because it lacks quantitative (integral) parts. With this in mind, one can say that the soul is not simpler than other forms according to constitutive parts, since it must have such parts in order exist *per se*; since corporeal forms do not exist *per se* but only as elements in composite substances, they do not need such parts. But the soul is simpler than such forms in its privation of quantitative parts. For the soul has extension neither *per se* nor *per accidens* nor according to its substance nor according to its proper act. But other forms can have extension and partibility *per accidens*, inasmuch as they inhere in an extended and partible subject. Since it is not subject to such vicissitudes, the soul, and most of all the rational soul as a *hoc aliquid*, is the nobler form.¹³⁷

The final objection attacks this notion of the soul as something in its own right. Agreeing that whatever has matter and form as constituent parts is a *hoc aliquid* and a complete being, it argues that nothing which is something in its own right and complete is a constituent of a third thing. But the rational soul is a constituent of a third thing, the whole

¹³⁷ Ibid., 415: “Est enim multiplex genus simplicitatis, secundum quod et multiplex est genus compositionis et partium. Sunt enim partes substantiales et sunt partes quantitativae, et compositio ex partibus substantialibus et compositio ex partibus quantitativis. Et sic simplex dicitur dupliciter: aut quod caret partibus constitutivis aut quod caret partibus quantitativis. Quamvis igitur anima non sit aliis formis simplicior quantum ad partes constitutivas, quia tales partes habere spectat ad complementum et perfectionem: hoc enim facit rem esse per se; simplicior tamen est quantum ad privationem partium quantitativarum. Ipsa enim nec habet extensionem per se nec habet extensionem per accidens nec quantum ad substantiam nec quantum ad proprium actum. Aliae autem formae per accidens possunt habere extensionem et partibilitatem vel secundum id quod sunt vel secundum id quod operantur. Et ideo quantum ad hoc anima, et maxime rationalis, est forma nobilior.”

human being, so that from soul and body there comes to be something essentially one. Because it is an element of a further composite, the soul cannot be its own actual complete composite substance, and must therefore be form alone.¹³⁸

Against this Bonaventure simply denies the universality of the principle that a complete composite of matter and form is not a constituent of a third thing. Such is the case when the matter of a substance terminates all the appetite of the form and the form all the appetite for the matter; then there is no appetite for something beyond itself, and so neither is there possibility for further composition, which presupposes an appetite and an inclination in the composing elements. But although the rational soul has its own matter-form composition, it still (unlike an angel) has an appetite to perfect a corporeal nature; just as an organic body is composed of matter and form and yet still has an appetite to receive a soul.¹³⁹

In *II Sent.* III. Pars I. Art.I Q.2 Bonaventure asks, “given that [spiritual creatures] have composition from matter and form, taking the word ‘matter’ broadly to mean everything potential which comes together with another [principle] to constitute something as its foundation, it is asked of that matter whether it is the same as the matter of corporeal things.”¹⁴⁰ Finding some difficulty even in clearly stating the problem, Bonaventure goes on

¹³⁸ Ibid., 413: “Item, omne quod habet materiam et formam ut partes constitutivas, est hoc aliquid et est completum; nihil autem, quod est hoc aliquid et completum in se, venit ad constitutionem tertii; sed anima rationalis venit ad constitutionem tertii, ita quod ex anima et corpore fit unum per essentiam: ergo anima non est hoc aliquid: ergo vel est materia vel forma pura; non materia: ergo forma.”

¹³⁹ Ibid., 415-416: “Ad illud quod obicitur, quod compositum ex materia et forma est ens completum, et ita non venit ad constitutionem tertii, dicendum quod non est verum generaliter, sed tunc quando materia terminat omnem appetitum formae et forma omnem appetitum materiae; tunc non est appetitus ad aliquid extra et ita nec possibilitas ad compositionem, quae praexigit in componentibus appetitum et inclinationem. Licet autem anima rationalis compositionem habeat ex materia et forma, appetitum tamen habet ad perficiendam corporalem naturam; sicut corpus organicum ex materia et forma compositum est et tamen habet appetitum ad suscipiendum animam.”

¹⁴⁰ St. Bonaventure, *II Sent.* III. Pars I. Art.I. Q.2, 94: “dato quod habeant compositionem ex materia et forma, large sumto nomine materiae ad omne potentiale, quod cum alio venit ad constitutionem tamquam fundamentum rei; quaeritur de illa materia utrum sit eadem cum materia corporalium.”

to say that he's not asking about numerical identity (the sense of identity in which Socrates as an old man is the same [*idem*] in substance as himself as a child); he's not asking whether the corporeal and the spiritual worlds somehow share the same material substratum. "But I am speaking about the identity of a common nature, just as all gold rings are said to have the same matter by nature or essence, even though there is numerical variety," so that some gold is in this ring, and some other gold in that ring.¹⁴¹ One might say that the purpose of this question, after positing "spiritual matter" in some creatures, is to ask how seriously the word "matter" is to be taken. Ought we really to think that there are only two constitutive metaphysical principles, matter and form, corresponding to substantial potency and act, for both the corporeal and the spiritual worlds, despite the enormous gulfs between the two? Do we mean that it's really the *same* principle in kind serving as a foundation for both bodies and spirits, or is "matter" meant only in an equivocal sense, to signify a potency which serves a function similar in spirits to that which matter serves in bodies, but fundamentally other in character? In this question Bonaventure confirms that the very same metaphysical laws and principles are applied equally across the created universe despite the enormous variety in natures found there.

To this end Bonaventure offers six arguments to show that there is one principle of potentiality and one matter for all created things. The first offers the authority of the (pseudo) Augustinian *De mirabilibus sacrae Scripturae*, which explicitly states that God made both the

¹⁴¹ Ibid., "Non loquor de identitate secundum essentiam numeralem, sicut Socrates senex est idem sibi puero secundum substantiam; sed loquor secundum identitatem naturae communis, ut sicut omnes anuli de auro dicuntur habere eandem materiam per naturam sive essentiam, cum tamen numeraliter varietur, et alia pars secundum substantiam sit in uno, alia in alio."

spiritual and the corporeal world out of one unformed matter. What, Bonaventure asks, could be more clear?¹⁴²

The second argument relies on the Aristotelian principle that in any genus there is to be found one first thing by which are measured all other members of the genus. Bonaventure notes that, whatever profound differences they have, spiritual and corporeal things are substances and equally fall under the overarching genus of substance, not only logically but in reality. An angel and a stone are both *per se* subsistent beings. There must be, therefore, something in the genus of substance by which everything in that genus is measured, that is, some standard or common property or element every substance has whereby it can be recognized as belonging to that genus. “But that cannot be an extrinsic principle, since it is according to greater and less intrinsic participation of it that things are said to belong more and less to that genus.” That is, there is not some first individual substance that sets the standard or exemplar for other substances, but rather some intrinsic principle belonging to each individual substance whereby its substantiality may be recognized. But, Bonaventure says, the only intrinsic principles are matter and form. “If matter, then I have the proposition [namely, that matter is homogeneous for spirits and bodies]; if form—but unity of form necessarily presupposes unity of matter.”¹⁴³ The only reason to posit the non-homogeneity of matter is because of the radically different natures of forms in spiritual and corporeal

¹⁴² St. Bonaventure, *II Sent.* III. Pars I. Art.I. Q.2, 94: “a. Auctoritate Augustini, De mirabilibus sacrae Scripturae, 1. cap.: ‘Omnipotens Deus ex informi materia, quam ipse prius de nihilo condidit, cunctarum rerum, hoc est sensibilem et insensibilem, intellectualium et intellectu carentium, species multiformes divisit’. Quid hoc expressius?”

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, “b. Item, ratione videtur: “In quolibet genere est reperire unum primum, quo mesurantur omnia quae sunt in illo genere”, ut vult Philosophus, in X primae Philosophiae; sed substantia est unum genus, non tantum secundum logicum qui considerat essentias rerum: ergo in genere substantiae est unum aliquod, quo mesurantur omnia in illo genere. Sed illud non potest esse principium extrinsecum, cum secundum huius maiorem et minorem participationem intrinsecam res illius generis magis et minus sint: ergo cum principium intrinsecum non sit nisi forma vel materia, erit vel materia vel forma. Si materia, habeo propositum; si forma, sed unitas formae necessario praesupponit unitatem materiae: ergo etc.”

creatures. But if there is some one same formal element by which every substance has its substantiality, and if all substances have a material substratum, then this common form must inhere in the same appropriate matter.

The sixth objection in the question argues against the procedure of this second argument. One should not, it counters, posit matter as the measure of the genus of substance. Insofar as something participates more in the *ratio* of matter, something is less of a being, and matter itself is the most ignoble in the genus of beings, since it is “next to nothing” (*prope nihil*). If there is to be, therefore, one thing posited as the measure of a genus, it ought to be the most perfect (not the most ignoble), thing in that genus, as whiteness is the measure of the genus of color.¹⁴⁴

Bonaventure’s response to this is neither a complete refutation nor a complete retraction, but a refinement of his original argument which sheds light on his conception of matter. First he notes that some people¹⁴⁵ claim that matter *is* the measure of the genus of substance since, in its function of providing a foundation, it gives to things their “fixed being” (*esse fixum*), and therefore “savors” (*sapit*) and participates more (than forms) in the genus of substance, which in itself rests more on matter than on form. But Bonaventure does not wish to go so far, and acknowledges the point that the measure of a genus ought to be the most complete and perfect thing in it, just as the perfection of a color is measured by its approximation to whiteness. “And therefore,” he writes, “we do not posit that matter is one,

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 96: “6. Item videtur quod non sit ponere materiam tamquam mensuram generis substantiae rerum, quia quae magis participant de ratione materiae, minus sunt entia, et ipsa est quid ignobilissimum in genere entium, quia “prope nihil”. Si ergo illud unum quod est mensura generis, debet esse perfectissimum in genere illo, ut albedo in genere coloris: patet etc.”

¹⁴⁵ While not identifying who these *aliqui* are, one might note that the position Bonaventure presents here does call Avicenna to mind, in whose conception matter simply *is* the substance of things. Hence Aquinas’ criticism that for the latter all forms are reduced to accidents and individual substances are ultimately blurred away; but whether or not this is a fair assessment of Avicenna, the objection certainly does not apply to Bonaventure.

because it is itself the measure, but because if there were not one matter, it would be impossible to posit one measuring thing, since the latter presupposes the former.”¹⁴⁶ The question of what then the measuring substance is, however, is left aside for another time.

The third argument proceeds similarly to the second by continuing to focus on what the spiritual and the corporeal realms have in common. Whenever some common property is in multiple subjects, it is necessarily in them according to something common. But number is in spiritual and corporeal things in the same way (*uniformiter*), for when I say “ten angels” and “ten men” I count them by using the same numbers.¹⁴⁷ There must be something common between them, then, according to which they can be equally counted, that is, according to which the property of countability is equally found in them. But this cannot be form—recall that numerical diversity is produced by the material principle—so it must be a common matter.¹⁴⁸

The fourth argument is particularly valuable, for in it Bonaventure reflects on the nature of matter itself. Take a corporeal and a spiritual substance, and then abstract from each all form, so that only their matter remains: what is the difference between the two matters?

¹⁴⁶ St. Bonaventure, *II Sent.* III. Pars I. Art.I. Q.2, 98: “6. Quod obiicitur, quod materia non est illud quo omnia mensurantur, dicendum quod, licet aliqui voluerunt dicere quod materia, ratione qua est fundamentum, dat esse fixum, et in ea ratione est ratio mensurandi, quia plus sapit et participat de natura generis substantiae, quod magis in se ipso fulcitum est; tamen illud non est conveniens dicere quod ipsa materia sit illud unum, cum hoc debeat esse completissimum, sicut dicitur in X primae Philosophiae, quod albedo est mensura omnium colorum. Et ideo dicendum quod non ponimus materiam unam, quia ipsa sit mensura, sed quia, si non est materia una, impossibile est ponere aliquod unum mensurans, cum illud praesupponat illam. Quid autem sit illud unum, quod est mensura omnium, quae sunt in genere substantiae, hoc est alterius inquisitionis.”

¹⁴⁷ Bonaventure uses this example because of the notion of medieval theologians that the number of men saved will be equal to the number of angels damned, in order to replenish their numbers. Besides its theological significance, this particular example has the virtue of making it clear that a multitude of men and another of angels are equivalent, so that a number of one can replace a number of the other to make up the same count.

¹⁴⁸ St. Bonaventure, *II Sent.* III. Pars I. Art.I. Q.2, 94: “Item, quodcumque aliqua passio communis inest aliquibus subiectis, necesse est quod insit eis secundum aliquod commune; sed numerus est in spiritualibus et corporalibus uniformiter, quia eodem numero, quo numeras decem homines, et decem angelos—numerus enim angelorum supplebitur ex hominibus—ergo necesse est aliquam naturam communem in eis reperire, secundum quam haec passio insit. Sed hoc non potest esse forma: restat ergo quod materia.”

For Bonaventure there can be no difference, since all difference and distinction is from the form. Perhaps one might object that, while perfect distinction is from the form, still, just as matter has incomplete being, so different matters have some incomplete distinction from one another. But what kind of distinction would this be? That in which spiritual and corporeal things differ most is in the (relative) simplicity of the former and the composition of the latter, that is, the former have only essential parts while the latter also have integral or quantitative parts. But, abstracted from every form, matter is as simple as a point: quantitative dimensions and partibility are properties introduced by a form, not intrinsic characteristics of matter *per se*. Spiritual and corporeal matter cannot therefore differ insofar as they have or lack quantity or spatial dimensions. One might claim, then, that they differ in their *capacity* to receive either spiritual or corporeal forms. But, on the contrary, for Bonaventure matter is *not* essentially its capacity, and we can consider it in abstraction even from its capacity. “Therefore let the matter of spiritual and corporeal things be abstracted from capacity; I ask what they differ by; there is nothing whatever to give, no difference to assign: therefore the essence is the same by nature.”¹⁴⁹ Any given instance of matter considered is spiritual or corporeal, not in itself, but as determined by the form under which it exists.

The third and the fourth objections in this question are aimed at different parts of this argument, the fourth at the claim that partibility is a formal rather than a material property,

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 94-95: “d. Item, abstrahatur materia corporalium ab omni forma, iterum materia spiritualium; aut distinguitur aut non. Si non: ergo sunt idem per essentiam; si sic: cum omnis distinctio sit a forma, ergo habent formam. Si tu dicas, quod distinctio perfecta est a forma, sed sicut materia habet esse incompletum, ita et distinctionem incompletam; contra: Illud in quo maxime differunt spiritualia et corporalia, est simplicitas et compositio; sed materia abstracta ab omni forma est ita simplex, ut punctus; ergo nullam partibilitatem habet: ergo, si in hoc non differunt, non videtur quod in alio. Si dicas, quod per capacitatem; contra: Materia non est sua capacitas per essentiam: ergo contingit eam abstrahi a capacitate. Abstrahatur ergo materia spiritualium et corporalium a capacitate: quaero, per quid differunt; nullam omnino est dare, nullam assignare differentiam: ergo essentia est eadem per naturam.”

and the third at the claim that matter can be considered apart from its capacity. As this is the order in which the topics appear in the original argument this is the order in which I will take them.

The fourth objection then considers the property of partibility in corporeal substances, which must be rooted in either the matter or the form. Now, it argues, it cannot be rooted in the form, since form as such is a simple essence which is divided, if at all, only *per accidens*, when the subject is divided. Principally and originally, then, partibility is rooted in matter. For if matter were not partible *per se*, if, as Bonaventure had claimed, matter abstracted from all form were as simple and undivided as a point, since distinction and difference is through the form, then matter could not be a part of a body any more than a point can be a part of a surface. But this is absurd; on the contrary, infinitely divisible dimensions are an intrinsic characteristic of corporeal matter, and so this matter cannot be homogeneous with spiritual matter.¹⁵⁰

To this Bonaventure replies by continuing to deny that partibility belongs to the *ratio* of matter itself. Matter abstracted from every form is simple. Still, matter does not have the kind of actual simplicity that a point does, but is simple in the sense that it lacks actual intrinsic extension, while having the possibility for it. When the nature of a corporeal form is given to matter, then this matter's capacity for extension is reduced to act. Therefore, when it is said that extension is from matter rather than from form, it must be understood that extension does not belong to the essence of matter, but follows from matter given the actual

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 95: “4. Item, partibilitas inest rebus corporalibus: aut ergo a parte formae aut a parte materiae radicaliter. Non a parte formae, quia omnis forma est in simplici essentia consistens: ergo principaliter a parte materiae et originaliter. Aut igitur consequitur ipsam materiam secundum se aut non; si non, ut si materia sit simplex, quantum est de se, ut punctus: ergo sicut punctus non potest esse materia pars corporis. Quodsi hoc absurdum est—quia dimensiones secundum rationem infinitam consequuntur materiam secundum se: cum ergo sit in corporalibus et spiritualibus, patet etc.”

state of its existence, as underlying a corporeal rather than a spiritual form. Since the nature of a corporeal form implies a substantial composition of integral or quantitative as well as essential parts, the presence of this form in matter produces its subject's partibility, even while the corporeal form itself remains a simple essence.¹⁵¹ On this conception, then, partibility seems to be a property of the composite substance, arising from the conjunction of its elements, and not an intrinsic property of either the matter or the form.

Again, the third objection takes aim at the notion that matter can be abstracted from its capacity. In a substance the potential to act is essentially dependent on the thing's form, and in the same way the potential to undergo action or to receive forms is even more essentially dependant on the thing's matter. But if two different forms give rise to two essentially diverse primary actions or operations, so that the one form is ordered to some effect or action to which the other is not, it follows that the two forms are essentially different. But the matter which is the subject of corporeal things can in no way receive spiritual forms "through its individual perfection", and neither can spiritual matter receive corporeal forms; that is, some given instance of corporeal matter has no capacity for spiritual forms, and vice versa. Just as forms with essentially different capacities are essentially different, then, so matter with essentially different capacities are essentially different.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 98: "4. Quod obicitur de partibilitate, dicendum quod hoc non est ratione ipsius materiae, quia materia abstracta omni forma, simplex est; non tamen habet actualem simplicitatem, ut punctus, sed est simplex, quia caret actuali extensione, habet tamen possibilitatem ad illam; et cum natura formae corporalis illi materiae datur, tunc reducitur ad actum. Unde cum dicitur quod extensio est a materia, non est intelligendum quod a materia secundum suam essentiam, sed secundum esse, prout suscipit formam corporalem, quae non est nata esse in materia nisi cum extensione, quamvis ipsa in se sit simplici essentia consistens."

¹⁵² Ibid., 95: "3. Item, ratione videtur: sicut potentia agendi essentialiter consequitur formam, ita potentia suscipiendi essentialiter, immo essentialius consequitur materiam; sed necessario sequitur, quodsi sunt diversae potentiae primae et essentialiter aliquarum formarum, ita quod ad aliquem effectum vel actum ordinatur una forma, ad quem non alia, quod differunt per essentiam. Cum ergo materia subiecta corporalibus formis nullo modo possit capere formas spirituales per individuam perfectionem, nec e converso, quia nunquam de angelo potest fieri corpus, nec e converso: ergo differunt per essentiam."

For Bonaventure, however, this argument depends on an insufficiently abstract consideration of matter. Considered in itself matter is no more disposed to receive any given form more than any other; “rather it is indifferently disposed to all” (*immo indifferenter se habet ad omnem*). For matter considered in itself is neither spiritual nor corporeal, and therefore the capacity consequent upon the essence of matter is indifferently disposed to receive either a spiritual or a corporeal form. But since matter is never despoiled of all being (*materia nunquam exspoliatur ab omni esse*), in other words, is never without some form to which it is united, and so that in its actual state of existence matter is always determined either with a corporeal or with a spiritual existence, so it is that matter as actually existing in spiritual and in corporeal things is different.¹⁵³

Bonaventure’s next argument *pro* combines, as it were, the abstraction of the fourth with the consideration of the substantial genus in the second to form an argument *a maiore*. As the preceding argument abstracted all form from the matter of a substance, so the present one asks us to abstract every difference from the generic formal characteristic whereby something belongs in the genus of substance. Corporeal and incorporeal are differences of a single common genus, and we can consider something under the aspect of substantiality without considering whether it is either spiritual or corporeal. Insofar as they belong to a common genus, then, spiritual and corporeal things do not differ even according to form,

¹⁵³ Ibid., 98: “3. Quod obicitur de potentia suscipiendi, dicendum quod potentia materiae secundum se considerata non est magis ad hanc formam quam ad aliam, immo indifferenter se habet ad omnem. Nam materia in se considerata nec est spiritualis nec corporalis; et ideo capacitas consequens essentiam materiae indifferenter se habet ad formam sive spiritualement sive corporalem; sed quia materia nunquam exspoliatur ab omni esse, et quae semel est sub esse corporali nunquam exiit, et similiter illa quae est sub esse spirituali: hinc est quod materia consequens esse in spiritualibus et corporalibus est alia et alia.”

similarity in which is consequent upon similarity of matter. Much less, therefore, do they differ according to their matter.¹⁵⁴

The final argument looks to the very meaning of the term “matter”. If we don’t mean the same thing by “matter” when we attribute it to spiritual things as when we attribute it to corporeal things, the term is used purely equivocally.¹⁵⁵

In the course of looking at Bonaventure’s arguments for his position I have had occasion to notice the corresponding objections, which are the most salient ones for my purposes. In the interest of brevity the only other one I will notice is the second, because it cites an important authoritative text of Boethius,¹⁵⁶ which states that whatever things are alike in their matter can be transformed into each other. Since spiritual and corporeal substances cannot be transformed into each other, their matter must be heterogeneous.¹⁵⁷ To this Bonaventure replies again that this argument, and Boethius’ text, only consider matter under its aspect of actual existence, i.e. as already being determined by its form to spirituality or corporeality. Once some matter has a corporeal form it can, due to the nature of corporeal forms, lose it in order to receive another, and so it is called “transmutable” matter. This matter is called “diverse” from spiritual matter because it never receives a spiritual form; but in itself, abstracted from its actual state of existence and from all form, it remains neither

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 95: “e. Item, forma generis est abstrahibilis a formis specierum sive a differentiis; sed substantia dicit formam generis, corporeum et incorporeum sunt differentiae: ergo ab his potest abstrahi. Sed forma generis naturaliter est prior quam forma differentiarum, sicut dicit Philosophus, quod prius est animal quam homo. Consideretur igitur materia spiritualium et corporalium sub forma generis; nec differunt quantum ad formam, quae consequitur ipsam essentiam materiae: ergo multo fortius non differunt quoad ipsam materiam, ut videtur.”

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., “f. Item, cum dicitur: materia rerum corporalium est materia, spiritualium materia est materia; aut est convenientia in solo nomine aut in habitudine aut in essentia. Si in solo nomine: ergo cum sit aequivocatio in primo principio, ergo nulla est univocatio. Si in comparatione: abstrahatur ab illa comparatione, tunc aut erit dictum per convenientiam in essentia, aut aequivocatio pura.”

¹⁵⁶ Boethius, *De duabus naturis*, c.6, 230.

¹⁵⁷ St. Bonaventure, *II Sent.* III. Pars I. Art.I. Q.2, 95: “2. Item, quaecumque communicant in materia, sunt ad invicem transmutabilia, sicut dicit Boethius, *De duabus naturis et una persona Christi*; sed spiritualia et corporalia non sunt huiusmodi: ergo etc.”

corporeal nor spiritual. Those who speak of matter as the stuff of corporeality consider it in its already-determinate state, rather than in its own nature, and speak as physicists rather than as metaphysicians.¹⁵⁸

While until now the bodies of the questions in this sequence on spiritual composition have been fairly short, simply giving a summary of the problem and the sketch of Bonaventure's solution, with most of the work being done in the *pro* and *con* arguments and the responses, the *respondeo* of the present question is different. Bonaventure gives a masterful overview of the various approaches to the problem of the homogeneity of matter and the ways in which the assumptions behind each approach give rise to different answers. Each answer is given its due and Bonaventure shows how, given the perspective of its framer, each one hits upon something true, and yet he corrects those he sees as falling short in the light of his own more comprehensive perspective.

About this question wise men seem to disagree. For great and profound clerks, both in theology and in philosophy, who were rather (*magis*) inquirers after the truth, had diverse opinions. For some posited that matter in spiritual and corporeal things differs, and does not possess any universality except that of analogy. Others posited that it is one by essence. But if anyone wants to consider which of these positions is more probable and more true, and attend to their motive reasons, he will see that either opinion expresses the truth according to diverse ways (*vias*), so that proponents on neither side are deceived.¹⁵⁹

The reason for this disagreement, according to Bonaventure, lies in the diverse ways of conceiving matter employed by different thinkers. There are two primary ways of

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 98: "2. Quod obicitur: quorum materia est una, etc., dicendum quod loquitur de materia secundum esse, hoc est de materia transmutabili, ratione cuius dicuntur res ad invicem transmutabiles; et ideo sermo ille secundum physicum et in genere physici est intelligendus, et alii sermones consimiles, qui dicunt materiam esse diversam. Omnes enim loquuntur de materia secundum esse."

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 96: "Respondeo: Dicendum quod circa hanc quaestionem sapientes videntur contrariari sapientibus. Nam magni et profundi clerici et in theologia et in philosophia, qui magis fuerunt veritatis inquisitores, diversificati sunt. Quidam enim posuerunt quod materia in spiritualibus et corporalibus differt nec habet universitatem nisi analogiae. Alii posuerunt quod est una per essentiam. –Si quis autem velit diligenter considerare, quae istarum positionem sit probabilior et verior, et attendere ad rationes moventes, videbit quod utraque opinio secundum diversas vias verum dicat, ita quod neutri sunt decepti."

understanding matter, one positive and the other privative, namely, according to privation and according to analogy. The privative way proceeds by conceptually removing or abstracting the form from substance, and then considering what is left as a disposition to or inclination for receiving that form. Without the form, what is left is the consideration of “a naked essence in itself like an intelligible darkness” (*essentiam nudam in se quasi tenebram intelligibilem*). The positive way is similar in that it thinks of matter according to its potency, but it conceives of matter not simply as the absence of form, but as a something which lacks form and is in potentiality to it. This potency of matter, conceived of in a positive manner, can in turn be compared to form in two ways, either insofar as it functions as a foundation of something in the aspect of being (*in ratione entis*), or under the aspect of something mobile (*sub ratione mobile*); the first is the way the metaphysician considers matter, while the second is the way the natural philosopher considers it. The metaphysician, therefore, conceives of matter primarily as the subject of *form*, while the natural philosopher conceives of it primarily as the subject of *change* between forms.¹⁶⁰

If one conceives of matter primarily in the privative way, as the privation of all form whether substantial or accidental, and yet affirms spiritual matter, the question of the homogeneity of matter is clear. For, if form is the principle of all diversity, what is deprived of all form lacks all diversity, and matter in itself is utterly undifferentiated.¹⁶¹ While this is

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 96: “Ratio autem huius diversae positionis fuit diversus modus cognoscendi materiam. Materia enim dupliciter est scibilis, scilicet per privationem et per analogiam. Cognitio per privationem est prius removendo formam, deinde disponens ad formam, et considerando ipsam essentiam nudam in se quasi tenebram intelligibilem. –Cognitio autem per analogiam est per consimilem habitudinem; habitudo autem materiae est per potentiam, et ita haec cognitio est per compartionem materiae ad formam mediante potentia. Potentia autem materiae dupliciter potest comparari ad formam: aut in quantum praebet ei fulcimentum in ratione entis, et sic considerat metaphysicus; aut sub ratione mobilis, et sic considerat naturalis philosophus.”

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 96: “Considerantes igitur materiam secundum privationem omnis formae, tam substantialis quam accidentalis, dixerunt quod eadem est in spiritualibus et corporalibus per essentiam; si enim ab omnibus formis et ab omnibus accidentibus separetur utraque materia, nullo omnino diversitas apparebit.”

Bonaventure's conclusion as well, he does not seem to find the privative way of understanding matter to be the most fruitful one, and gives much more consideration to the positive conception.¹⁶²

Those who think of matter (as the metaphysician does) positively and as a potency, namely, insofar as it provides a prop or support (*fulcimentum*) for form under the aspect of *being (sub ratione entis)*, say that matter in spiritual and corporeal things is the same according to analogy; that is, it is the same insofar as the material principle in each kind of substance serves the same metaphysical function. For just as the matter of corporeal things supports and gives existence and subsistence to the substance, so also does the matter of spiritual things. But in the two realms there is also a greater and lesser participation in matter (*est etiam ibi ratio participationis secundum plus et minus*), according to the way each utilizes the full range of matter's potential, or insofar as matter plays a greater and lesser role in each. For in spiritual substances matter "sub-stands" (*substat*), provides a foundation for, substantial form alone; in the heavenly bodies matter underlies both substantial and quantitative forms, and in the lower sublunar bodies it underlies substantial, quantitative, and also contrary forms. For this reason the different kinds of matter-form composites have

¹⁶² Despite this it is important to note that, unlike some other Franciscans, Bonaventure does *not* admit that matter has some degree of actuality of its own not given by form. While not conceiving of matter as *pure potency* in exactly the way Thomas does, still any act of being is from the form. This also accounts for the fact that matter considered in itself is not only essentially but even numerically homogeneous. See *II Sent.* III. Pars I. Art. I Q. 3 *corpus*, 100: "Quia enim materia omnino est ens in potentia, ideo per sui essentiam nullum habet actum, nullam formam, ergo nullam distinctionem; si nullam distinctionem habet et non est nihil, oportet ergo quod sit una sine multitudine, et ita numero una . . . Postremo, quia materia est ens in potentia, unitas eius non potest esse unitas individuationis, sive per continuitatem, sicut mons est unus, sive per actualem simplicitatem, sicut angelus est unus; sed si habet unitatem, unitatem homogeneous habet. Haec autem unitas simul manet in diversis, sicut patet: si de eodem auro fiant multa vasa, illa sunt de eodem auro per homogeneous; sed aurum quod est in uno, differt ab auro quod est in alio adeo, ut non sint unum per continuitatem." At the same time, since matter is not wholly nothing, it is not *merely* its potential relation to form. See Robert, *Hylémorphisme*, 44: "En d'autres termes, si la puissance, la potentialité est de l'essence de la matière, elle n'en est pas, pour lui, toute l'entité et toute la réalité."

different kinds, or grades, of substantiality. To be a substance is to be an independent, subsistent, *per se* being, and so the more something partakes of independence and permanence (*per se stantis*), the more purely substantial it is; whereas the more something draws near to the nature of accidents the further away it is from pure substantiality. Hence spiritual substances are substances in the most true and primary sense, heavenly bodies are somewhat less substantial—since at least according to place they lack permanence—and the lower sublunar bodies the least of all, since their being is the most fluid and receptive of accidental and impermanent forms. So, Bonaventure says, those thinking of matter in this metaphysical sense denied that spiritual and corporeal matter was the same properly speaking, since the matter of corporeal things is the subject of these unsubstantial, accidental forms, and can never receive the stable and permanent forms of spiritual things, and vice versa.¹⁶³

Those who think of matter positively as a potency, and yet take the perspective of the natural philosopher and think of it primarily as the subject of change, as a support for form under the aspect of mobile (*in quantum praebet fulcimentum formae in ratione mobilis*), also say that matter in spiritual and corporeal things is the same by analogy. Just as in corporeal things there is a substrate which supports variations in corporeal formal properties, so in spiritual things there is something which supports variations in spiritual properties. Again, as

¹⁶³ St. Bonaventure, *II Sent.* III. Pars I. Art.I. Q.2, 96: “Considerantes autem materiam secundum analogiam, scilicet sub ratione potentiae, in quantum praebet fulcimentum formae in ratione entis, dixerunt esse eandem secundum analogiam, quia est ibi consimilis habitudo. Sicut enim materia corporalium sustinet et dat suis formis existere et subsistere, ita etiam materia spiritualium. Est etiam ibi ratio participationis secundum plus et minus. Nam in spiritualibus substat formae substantiali tantum, in corporibus superioribus formae substantiali et quantitati, in inferioribus formae substantiali et quantitati et contrarietati. Et quoniam quod pure est in genere substantiae plus participat de ratione per se stantis et independentis, quod autem plus accedit ad naturam accidentium magis elongatur; hinc est quod substantiae spirituales per prius et verius sunt substantiae, deinde corpora superiora, postremo corpora inferiora. Et hi non dixerunt quod esset eadem proprie, quia nec materia corporalium est nata sustinere formas spirituales, nec e converso.”

for the metaphysician, there is in the two realms a greater and a lesser participation in matter. For in corruptible bodies matter is the support of variation according to both place and (both substantial and accidental) form; in heavenly bodies matter is the support of variation according to place (that is, accidental form) alone; whereas in spiritual substances matter is the subject neither of substantial nor of situational change, but of variations in spiritual influence, habits such as virtues and vices, or states such as beatitude or damnation. According to this way of considering things, matter is most properly said to found in corruptible bodies, less properly in heavenly bodies, and least of all in spirits, according to the range of variation it supports in each. This is the reason, according to Bonaventure, that spiritual creatures are sometimes called immaterial, because they have the least possibility for the range of variation that matter's nature offers. Again, therefore, according to this way of considering things, matter is not homogeneous, since the range of variation in spiritual creatures does not admit of substantial change, as in corporeal things, nor is it possible for a spiritual creature to receive corporeal forms.¹⁶⁴

Given these different approaches to the problem, it is clear to Bonaventure why thinkers affirming spiritual matter have reached different conclusions on the homogeneity of

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 96-97: "Considerantes autem secundum analogiam sub ratione potentiae, in quantum praebebet fulcimentum formae in ratione mobilis, dixerunt etiam esse eandem per analogiam. Quoniam, sicut in corporalibus est aliquid, quod sustinet variationes quoad proprietates corporales, ita in spiritualibus quoad spirituales; et est ibi ratio prioris et posterioris in participando. Nam materia potest esse fulcimentum variationis secundum situm et formam, ut in corporibus corruptibilibus; aut ad situm tantum, ut in superioribus; aut ad receptionem influentiae et habituum, et perditionem, ut in substantiis spiritualibus. Et secundum hanc considerationem proprie est materia in corporibus corruptibilibus, minus proprie in corporibus incorruptibilibus, minime in spiritibus—et inde etiam est, quod dicuntur aliquando immateriales, quia minimum habent de hac possibilitate—et secundum hoc materia est infimum. Et hi non posuerunt materiam unam, quoniam materia in angelis non habet possibilitatem ad transmutationem formarum substantialium nec est possibilis ad recipiendum formas corporales. Et inde est quod dicit Philosophus quod spiritualium et corporalium non est materia una, considerans potentiam materiae in relationem ad formam ut mobilem." Note that, for Bonaventure, the reason Aristotle denied that spiritual substances have matter as corporeal things do is because he conceived of the problem as a natural philosopher, rather than as a metaphysician.

matter. Each of them says something true according in his own way and according to his different modes of understanding, nor is there any contradiction, if one rightly understands each.¹⁶⁵ Another way of saying the same thing is that each person reasons correctly within the bounds of the science in which he operates. Each one thinks of matter in relation to the object of the science serving as the template of his investigation, and discovers matter under the aspect which it serves as a constituent of the object of that science. “For the natural philosopher (*naturalis*) resolves to matter, who considers generation and corruption; the universal physicist (*physicus*) resolves to it, who considers every body which is movable either [with respect to] place or to form; the metaphysician resolves to it, who considers every being; and each one resolves to it according to the extent of his consideration.”¹⁶⁶ The “lower” physicist, then, the natural philosopher whose object is being as subject to generation and corruption, as such considers matter only as the principle of generation and corruption, and in this respect it is true that matter exists only in these lower things. And because all generable and corruptible things can be transmuted into each other, therefore he says that only the matter which has this property is homogeneous. The “higher” physicist, on the other hand, who takes into account the heavenly as well as earthly bodies, considers matter as the principle of all corporeal mutability, whether substantial change is involved or only accidental change according to place; therefore he says that matter is homogeneous in all bodies, because they all have matter in this sense. Whereas the metaphysician considers the

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 97: “Ex his patet ratio diversitatis et via harum positionum, et quod verum dicunt secundum diversas vias et secundum diversos modos intelligendi. Et sic currunt diversae rationes, et auctoritates inveniuntur ad partes oppositas. Et patet responsio obiectorum. Nec est contradictio, si quis recte intelligat utramque.”

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., “Vel aliter potest dici quod cum loquimur de unitate materiae, loquimur de ipsa, prout ad eam stat resolutio principiatorum; ideo tripliciter possumus loqui, secundum quod tres sunt, qui docent resolutionum facere ad principium materiale. Nam ad materiam resolvit naturalis, qui considerat generationem et corruptionem; ad eam resolvit physicus universalis, qui considerat omne corpus mobile sive ad situm sive ad formam; ad eam resolvit metaphysicus, qui considerat omne ens; et unusquisque resolvit secundum amplitudinem suae considerationis.”

nature of every creature, not only of bodies. His consideration belongs especially to the nature of subsistent things (*per se entis*), which primarily involves two things: the act of being, which form gives to substance, and the stability of existing *per se*, which is given to substance by matter, on which the form rests. “And because to be *per se* in spiritual and corporeal things bespeaks commonality, not equivocation, and real and generic commonality, not merely analogical, therefore it is necessary to have recourse to a unity of principle. Therefore according to the metaphysician one must posit a unity of matter in all *per se* beings.”¹⁶⁷

Philosophers who express different opinions on this question, therefore, each consider things correctly given the exigencies of the science in which they approach it. The physicist says that matter is homogeneous among corporeal things, but not for both bodies and spirits, because he never comes to consider matter in its essence, but only according to being (*secundum esse*)—that is, he considers matter only according to the actual state in which his science finds it to exist. It is true that matter has a kind of being in corporeal things which it does not have in spiritual ones, and a manner of existence in corruptible things which it does not have in spiritual ones. But the metaphysician considers things, not only according to the state of their actual existence, but according to their very essence; and since, abstracted from

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 97: “Nam physicus inferior, qui negotiatur circa generationem et corruptionem, considerat materiam, ut est principium generationis et corruptionis; et sic est solum in his inferioribus. Et quoniam omnia talia sunt ad invicem transmutabilia, ideo solum dicit eandem materiam generabilium et corruptibilium. —Physicus superior considerat ipsam materiam mutabilem sive ad situm, sive ad formam, et videt eandem passionem in inferioribus et superioribus, per quam mutabilia sunt ad situm, ut partibilitatem mobilis, cuius principium est materia; et ideo resolvit ad materiam omnis rei corporalis, et secundum hunc physicum est eadem materia in omnibus corporalibus. —Metaphysicus considerat naturam omnis creaturae, et maxime substantiae per se entis, in qua est considerare et actum essendi, et hunc dat forma; et stabilitatem per se existendi, et hanc dat et praestat illud cui innititur forma, hoc est materia. Et quoniam per se esse in spiritualibus et corporalibus dicit communitatem, non aequivocationem, et communitatem generis et rei, non analogiae solum, ideo oportet recurrere ad principii unitatem; ideo secundum metaphysicum in omnibus per se entibus est ponere unitatem materiae.”

all being, one can neither find nor devise (*fingere*) any diversity in matter, the metaphysician says that it is essentially one. When a theologian such as Bonaventure, therefore, comes to discuss this question, he can handle it either like a natural philosopher or like a metaphysician, and either way he can come to a correct conclusion according to that science. But “since the metaphysician judges in a nobler way than the lower sciences, therefore those who posited that matter is the same in spiritual and corporeal things, being lifted up higher, judged better, although according to diverse considerations either could say something true, as was shown earlier.”¹⁶⁸

As noted at the beginning of this section, St. Bonaventure’s doctrine in the questions examined here paved the way for his Franciscan successors for the next fifty years. Before examining these, however, we must pause for a look at Bonaventure’s most significant contemporary competitor, St. Thomas Aquinas, whose vehement rejection of spiritual matter served as the foundation for the other side of the debate.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 97: “Omnium istorum philosophorum consideratio vera est, sed differenter iudicant. Physicus enim non dicit eandem esse materiam nisi in corporalibus, quia nunquam venit ad considerandum materiam secundum esse; et absque dubio aliquod esse habet in corporalibus, quod non in spiritualibus, et aliquod in corruptibilibus, quod non in incorruptibilibus. –Metaphysicus vero non tantum secundum esse, sed secundum essentiam considerat; et quia, abstracto omni esse, non est reperire nec etiam fingere diversitatem in materia, ideo dicit esse unam per essentiam. Et ideo, cum hanc quaestionem tractat theologus, aut pertractat eam sicut naturalis, aut sicut metaphysicus, quia ipse potest accipere modos omnium scientiarum, cum ei famulentur. Si ut naturalis, sic dicet non esse eandem; si ut metaphysicus, dicit eandem esse per essentiam, differentem secundum esse. Et quoniam nobiliori modo iudicat metaphysicus quam scientiae inferiores, ideo hi qui posuerunt materiam eandem in spiritualibus et corporalibus, altius elevati, melius iudicaverunt, quamvis secundum diversas considerationes utrique potuerint dicere verum, ut prius ostensum est.”

II.3. St. Thomas Aquinas

Spiritual matter occupies a surprisingly prominent place in St. Thomas Aquinas' metaphysical writings, considering that he firmly, even strenuously rejects it. In fact he may spend more time refuting it than he does any other contested metaphysical doctrine. This becomes less astonishing when one considers that Thomas' alternative to matter-form composition in spiritual creatures, that is, a composition of essence and existence, is both harder to sustain under the kind of metaphysics which embraces spiritual matter, and may even seem irrelevant and unnecessary in its light. Given that the distinction between and composition of essence and existence in everything other than God is one of Thomas' most distinctive doctrines and a cornerstone of his ontology, it is clear why he is so interested in ridding himself of the alternative explanation of spiritual composition. Indeed, the insistence of many of his contemporaries on a hylomorphic composition for all creatures became the whetstone against which Thomas sharpened his own argument for the necessity of a different kind of potency-act composition in creatures.¹⁶⁹

Thomas considers spiritual matter at such length in so many of his writings that it would be impossible to examine them all in the same detail with which we considered Bonaventure's texts; at the same time, Thomas' various treatments of the subject contain so much repetition that to do so would be prolix and redundant. In light of these facts I will examine only the most representative and salient of Thomas' texts which discuss the matter, including the most detailed.¹⁷⁰ Thomas' position on spiritual matter has been more often and

¹⁶⁹ See Kleineidam, 17.

¹⁷⁰ Primarily the early *De ente et essentia*, the late *De substantiis separatis*, and the relevant Disputed Questions.

more thoroughly studied than that of any other scholastic author, and many of the works cited in this chapter contain more thorough discussions of one or another of Thomas' texts than I can give here.¹⁷¹ It must be remembered that Thomas is important for the present work primarily as a foil to those who reject his own position and as an influence on the opposition to Bonaventure and the Franciscan tradition on spiritual matter in the later thirteenth century; in this section, therefore, I offer comparisons of Thomas' principles and arguments with those of Bonaventure where it seems helpful or illuminating.

In chapter four of *De ente et essentia* Thomas considers "the way in which essence is in separate substances, namely in the soul, the intelligences, and in the first cause."¹⁷² He has already discussed "composite," i.e. corporeal, substances, and shown that their essence is constituted by both form and matter. Now it remains to be seen in what way incorporeal substances have a simple, and in what way a composite, essence. Thomas writes:

Although all concede the simplicity of the first cause, nevertheless some try to introduce a composition of matter and form into the intelligences and into the soul; the author of which position appears to have been Avicenna, author of the book *Fons vitae*. But this is inconsistent with the common opinions (*dictis*) of the philosophers, because they call those substances separate from matter and prove that they are without all matter.¹⁷³

The very way that Thomas sets up the problem reveals important differences between his approach and that of St. Bonaventure and is, perhaps, representative of the difference between them on this point. For Bonaventure the theory of spiritual matter is a result of

¹⁷¹ A fairly rapid survey of the range of these texts (with the exception of *De substantiis separatis*), including the little-remarked-on questions from Thomas' Commentary on the *Sentences* and from his quodlibets, as well as remarks on Thomas' earlier scholastic influences and Arab sources for his treatments of spiritual matter, can be found in Kleineidam, 59-71.

¹⁷² St. Thomas Aquinas, *De ente et essentia* (Leon. ed., v. 42), c.4, 375: "Nunc restat uidere per quem modum sit essentia in substantiis separatis, scilicet in anima, intelligentia et causa prima."

¹⁷³ St. Thomas, *ibid.*, 375: "Quamvis autem simplicitatem cause prime omnes concedant, tamen compositionem forme et materie quidam nituntur inducere in intelligentias et in animam; cuius positionis auctor videtur fuisse Avicenna, actor libri Fontis vitae. Hoc autem dictis philosophorum communiter repugnat, quia eas substantias separatas a materia nominant et absque omni materia esse probant."

applying philosophical considerations—derived from both the pagan Aristotle and the patristic Augustine—to Christian notions of the sort of properties which characterize angels and human souls. If he comes to a different conclusion than Aristotle it doesn't bother him, because Aristotle's principles are useful for understanding angels and souls even if Aristotle himself never conceived of them as Christians do. For Thomas, on the other hand, the subject is a matter of debate *among* the philosophers, between the authoritative opinions of Aristotle and his followers and the second-rate opinions of Avicbron on the nature of souls and the intelligences. The Christian thinker should choose the truest philosophy to interpret the data of Christian faith, and this is Aristotle's. Thomas seems to consider spiritual matter as a historical curiosity arising because some Christian thinkers paid undue attention to inferior philosophers, and he prefers to resolve the problem first by situating the discussion in its historical context, in order to reveal the mistake, and then by gently guiding the reader onto the path of Aristotelian right thinking. The factors which motivated Bonaventure and others to posit spiritual matter, especially mutability and accidents in spiritual creatures, do not seem to bother Thomas; at the same time, he seems hardly to notice when his own explanation introduces radical innovations into Aristotelian principles.

The first argument against spiritual matter that Thomas makes in *De ente et essentia* is from the immaterial nature of cognition. Understanding takes place when an intellect separates the form of the understood object from its matter and material conditions, thereby causing it to become actually intelligible, and receives the form into itself. "Whence it is necessary that in any understanding substance there be a complete freedom from matter, so that it neither has matter as a part of itself, nor even is like a form impressed in matter, as it is

in material forms.”¹⁷⁴ Matter itself is an impediment to intelligibility, and thus to intellectuality. One cannot say that it is merely corporeal matter which impedes intelligibility, attempting to leave room for spiritual matter. For, according to this position, matter is corporeal only because it is the subject for a corporeal form; if it is unintelligible, then, this must be on account of its form, and so a corporeal form would not be intelligible. But a corporeal form *is* intelligibile, when it is abstracted from its matter! Intellectual substances therefore can have no composition of matter and form.¹⁷⁵ The view that a form might simply inform the matter of an intellect, as its intelligible object, in a different *way* than it informs its own proper matter, is not considered here.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 375-376: “Unde oportet quod in qualibet substantia intelligente sit omnino immunitas a materia, ita quod neque habeat materiam partem sui, neque etiam sit sicut forma impressa in materia ut est de formis materialibus.”

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 376: “Nec potest aliquis dicere quod intelligibilitatem non impediatur materia quolibet, sed materia corporalis tantum. Si enim hoc esset ratione materie corporalis tantum, cum materia non dicatur corporalis nisi secundum quod stat sub forma corporali, tunc oporteret quod hoc haberet materia, scilicet impedire intelligibilitatem, a forma corporali; et hoc non potest esse, quia ipsa etiam forma corporalis actu intelligibilis est sicut et alie forme, secundum quod a materia abstrahitur. Vnde in anima uel in intelligentia nullo modo est compositio ex materia et forma, ut hoc modo accipiatur essentia in eis sicut in substantiis corporalibus.”

According to Kleineidam, 42, this argument is “typisch thomistisch”, so much so that its presence in contemporary thinkers can be used to gauge the spread of Thomas’ influence; for anticipations of the argument in earlier thinkers, see Kleineidam, 60. The present passage in the *De ente* continues: “Sed est ibi compositio forme et esse; unde in commento none propositionis libri De causis dicitur quod intelligentia est habens formam et esse: et accipitur ibi forma pro ipsa quidditate uel natura simplice.” For St. Thomas’ relation to the *Liber de causis* in formulating his views on spiritual matter, see R.C.Taylor, “St. Thomas and the *Liber de causis* on the Hylomorphic Composition of Separate Substances,” *Medieval Studies* 41 (1979), 506-513. See especially 513: “. . . it is clear that [St. Thomas] imposed his own teachings on act and potency and existence and essence onto the metaphysics of the *De causis* in his interpretation. However, on the question of the hylomorphic composition of separate substance and, as well, on the question of the nature of the First Cause, St. Thomas correctly perceives that he and the author of the *De causis* are in agreement . . .” For a brief synopsis of the view which Thomas imposes on the author of the *De causis* but which is in fact his own, see *ibid.*, 509: “Although this composition of essence and existence is found in both sensible and immaterial substances, it manifests itself in different ways. In sensible substances the potential nature or form quidditatively dictates that the substance be composed of matter and form. In separate substances too, the form or nature again is in potency to the existential act which it receives and determines. In this case, however, the form or nature determines that the act of existence be manifested in a creature which is a pure immaterial form. Here there is no twofold composition of matter and form and essence and existence as found in sensible things, but only the immediate composition of essence and existence.” This is, of course, the same view presented in the *De ente et essentia* in Thomas’ own name. For the use of the *Liber de causis* in the *De ente et essentia* itself see Kleineidam, 58-59.

St. Thomas' rejection of spiritual matter is rooted in his rejection of the conception of matter and form as necessarily reciprocal and mutually dependent substantial principles.¹⁷⁶ While he agrees with Bonaventure that matter is dependent upon form for its act of being, he does not agree that form is reciprocally dependent on matter to provide a foundation for permanence and subsistence in every case. Instead, matter and form are mutually dependent in the case of corporeal things, but not spiritual ones, and so their necessary interrelation is not an absolute law governing the two principles, but a special case. Since form gives being (*esse*) to matter, it is impossible for matter to exist without some form. But it is not impossible for there to be some form without matter, for form *qua* form is not dependent on matter.¹⁷⁷ The reason that certain forms do not exist without matter is not because matter is a necessary complement to form, but rather because of the degree to which such forms "are distant from the first principle which is the first and pure act. Whence those forms which are nearest to the first principle are forms subsisting *per se* without matter, for form does not need matter according to its entire genus, as was said . . ."¹⁷⁸ So only some forms need matter to exist, namely corporeal ones.

¹⁷⁶ See Kleineidam, 61.

¹⁷⁷ For more on this topic in the context of the present debate, see St. Thomas, *Quaestiones disputatae de anima* (Leon. ed., v. 24-1), Q. 6, 51: "In substantiis enim ex materia et forma compositis tria inuenimus, scilicet materiam, formam, et tertium esse, cuius quidem principium est forma, nam materia ex hoc quod recipit formam participat esse. Sic igitur esse consequitur ipsam formam, nec tamen forma est suum esse, cum sit eius principium. Et licet materia non pertingat ad esse nisi per formam, forma tamen, in quantum est forma, non indiget materia ad suum esse, cum ipsam formam consequatur esse, set indiget materia cum sit talis forma que per se non subsistat. Nichil igitur prohibet esse aliquam formam a materia separatam que habeat esse . . ."

¹⁷⁸ St. Thomas, *De ente*, c.4, 376: "Quecumque enim ita se habent ad invicem quod unum est causa esse alterius, illud quod habet rationem cause potest habere esse sine altero, sed non conuertitur. Talis autem inuenitur habitudo materie et forme quod forma dat esse materie, et ideo impossibile est esse materiam sine aliqua forma; tamen non est impossibile esse aliquam formam sine materia, forma enim in eo quod est forma non habet dependentiam ad materiam. Sed si inueniantur aliquae forme que non possunt esse nisi in materia, hoc accidit eis secundum quod sunt distantes a primo principio quod est actus primus et purus. Vnde ille forme que sunt propinquissime primo principio sunt forme per se sine materia subsistentes, non enim forma secundum totum genus suum materia indiget, ut dictum est; et huiusmodi forme sunt intelligentie, et ideo non oportet ut essentie uel quiditates harum substantiarum sint aliud quam ipsa forma."

Clearly Thomas is shaping his notions of matter and form in a radically different direction from St. Bonaventure. At this point, however, the reasons for these differences are not entirely clear. No longer is a form as such dependent on matter; no longer does distance from the first principle regard only the kind and degree of nobility of a form and the composite to which it belongs; now the respective degrees of this “distance” separate all forms into two vastly different kinds, namely those which are able to subsist on their own and those which require an additional material principle in order to do so. Thomas has not yet, however, clarified the relation between different degrees of distance from God and the division of substances into spiritual and corporeal; nor has he showed how intellectual forms are able to subsist without matter, but rather has given only a negative reason why they do *not* contain matter.

These issues are dealt with in texts we shall come to later. In the *De ente*, however, Thomas simply states his views on the relation of form to matter before going on to draw some important consequences. Since spiritual forms¹⁷⁹ have no intrinsic relation to matter, while corporeal forms do, there are two important differences between them. The first is that in a corporeal thing the essential form of the composite cannot be identified with the substance itself: a man is not humanity. Because he has a material as well as a formal principle, the former receiving the latter, to designate his form is to designate only a part of a man, rather than the whole being. Spiritual things, however, are *only* form, which is not received into any other principle; the essence of a spiritual substance, then, is the same as the substance itself. The second difference between the two is that, since a corporeal essence is

¹⁷⁹ Qua spiritual. Insofar as it is the form of the body the intellectual soul does have an intrinsic relationship to the body even when separated from it.

received into a material principle, this form can be numerically multiplied according to its matter while remaining specifically the same, whereas, since a spiritual essence is not received into anything, but is self-subsistent, it cannot be numerically diverse while specifically identical. “And therefore in such substances there are not found many individuals of one species, but there are as many individuals as there are species.”¹⁸⁰

Having noted this, Thomas goes on to explain how, according to him, spiritual substances are composed of potency and act, even though not of matter and form.¹⁸¹ As we have just seen, whereas a corporeal substance is not identical with its essence, in a spiritual substance there is no distinction between subject and quiddity. The spiritual creature is not, however, purely simple, for even a self-subsisting essence is not identical with its being, or act of existence. Every essence, including spiritual ones, can be thought of in abstraction from existence (*esse*): “for I am able to understand what a man or a phoenix is and yet not know whether it has actual existence; therefore it is plain that being is other than the essence or quiddity.”¹⁸² In order to have an existing man, one must have human nature plus

¹⁸⁰ St. Thomas, *ibid.*, 376: “In hoc ergo differt essentia substantie composite et substantie simplicis, quod essentia substantie composite non est tantum forma sed complectitur formam et materiam, essentia autem substantie simplicis est forma tantum. Et ex hoc causantur alie due differentie. Vna est quod essentia substantie composite potest significari ut totum uel ut pars, quod accidit propter materie designationem, ut dictum est. Et ideo non quolibet modo predicatur essentia rei composite de ipsa re composita: non enim potest dici quod homo sit quidditas sua. Sed essentia rei simplicis que est sua forma non potest significari nisi ut totum, cum nichil sit ibi preter formam quasi formam recipiens; et ideo quocumque modo sumatur essentia substantie simplicis, de ea predicatur. Vnde Auicenna dicit quod ‘quidditas simplicis est ipsismet simplex’, quia non est aliquid aliud recipiens ipsum. Secunda differentia est quia essentie rerum compositarum ex eo quod recipiuntur in materia designata multiplicantur secundum diuisionem eius, unde contingit quod aliqua sunt idem specie et diuersa numero. Sed cum essentia simplicis non sit recepta in materia, non potest ibi esse talis multiplicatio; et ideo oportet ut non inueniantur in illis substantiis plura indiuidua eiusdem speciei, sed quot sunt ibi indiuidua tot sunt ibi species, ut Auicenna expresse dicit.”

¹⁸¹ For a more detailed presentation of Thomas’ arguments here than I can give, see John Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 140-150.

¹⁸² St. Thomas, *De ente*, c.4, 376: “Omnis autem essentia uel quidditas potest intelligi sine hoc quod aliquid intelligatur de esse suo: possum enim intelligere quid est homo uel fenix et tamen ignorare an esse habeat in esse natura; ergo patet quod esse est aliud ab essentia uel quidditate.”

individuating matter plus an act of existing; and even in an angel, one must have, not the essential form alone, but essential form plus an act of existing. In every creature the composite consists of, at least, the act of existing (*esse*) *along* with some form which is not identical with the act of being. Only in the unique case of God can the act of existing be identical with essence, for two self-subsistent acts of existence would have to be differentiated by something; but this could only be some form extraneous to the act of existence itself. God alone then is pure existence, without either matter or, strictly speaking, form. Since every thing other than God is created by God, it does not have its existence in virtue of its own essence, but because that essence receives existence from without, from God, the only *ipsum esse subsistens*. “Whence it remains that only one thing can be its own act of existing; whence it is necessary that in any thing besides this its act of existing is other than its quiddity or nature or form; whence in the intelligences *esse* is other than form, and therefore it is said that an intelligence is form and *esse*.”¹⁸³

An actually existing spiritual creature, then, is constituted by its essence and the act of existence which it receives from without. “But everything which receives something from another is in potency with respect to it, and that which is received in it is its act.”¹⁸⁴ While a spiritual creature therefore does not have the kind of potentiality associated with a material component, nevertheless it does have potentiality in its essence, since that essence itself is in potentiality to the act of existence which it receives from God. Just as in bodies the material subject is in potency to the act of the form, so in spirits the essential form or essence is in

¹⁸³ Ibid., 377: “Vnde relinquitur quod talis res que sit suum esse non potest esse nisi una; unde oportet quod in qualibet alia re preter eam aliud sit esse suum et aliud quidditas uel natura seu forma sua; unde oportet quod in intelligentiis sit esse preter formam, et ideo dictum est quod intelligentia est forma et esse.”

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., “Omne autem quod recipit aliquid ab alio est in potentia respectu illius, et hoc quod receptum est in eo est actus eius.”

potency to the act of the principle of existence. Because in spiritual things the formal principle plays a metaphysical role analogous to that which matter plays in bodies, without needing the additional principle of matter itself, one cannot say that matter and form are found in each except equivocally. “Wherefore to suffer, to receive, to be a subject, and everything of this sort which seems to belong to things by reason of matter, belongs only equivocally to both intellectual and corporeal substances.”¹⁸⁵ We see, then, that whereas for Bonaventure spiritual creatures have in common with corporeal ones those properties which betoken a material component, and therefore we must affirm that they both have matter, for Thomas we can deny that spiritual creatures have matter precisely by denying that they have these properties in any univocal sense.

Thomas discusses his rejection of spiritual matter at greater length in several texts, some of which we shall examine shortly, but first it seems appropriate to take note of his discussion of Avicbron in the late *De substantiis separatis*. In this work Thomas undertakes a historical survey of the various ways that spiritual creatures have been conceived of, from the presocratics until his own day, by both pagans and Christians, along the way comparing the various views against each other, refuting what he regards as their errors, and contrasting them with his own position. Although he mentions Avicbron as the source of the doctrine of spiritual matter nearly every time he discusses the subject, in this work Avicbron receives an exceptionally lengthy treatment. Although this treatment is only one out of many

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., “. . . ergo oportet quod ipsa quiditas uel forma que est intelligentia sit in potentia respectu esse quod a Deo recipit, et illud esse receptum est per modum actus. Et ita inuenitur potentia et actus in intelligentiis, non tamen forma et materia nisi equiuoce. Vnde etiam pati, recipere, subiectum esse et omnia huiusmodi que uidentur rebus ratione materie conuenire, equiuoce conueniunt substantiis intellectualibus et substantiis corporalibus, ut in III De anima Commentator dicit . . . et propter hoc a quibusdam ducuntur huiusmodi substantie componi ex quo est et quod est, uel ex quod est et esse, ut Boetius dicit.” Note that Thomas here identifies his principles of form and existence with the Boethian *quod est* and *quo est*.

discussions of spiritual matter, it is the only time he explicitly singles out a particular thinker's position for scrutiny and refutation.¹⁸⁶ Because of his opinion that Avicbron is the sole source of the doctrine, Thomas seems to think that a thorough refutation here will serve to demolish the position of all those among his contemporaries who defend it, and commentators have suggested that he has Bonaventure and his successors particularly in view.¹⁸⁷ As J. Collins writes:

By levelling his initial criticism at a thinker whom all contemporaries took to be an Arabian [Avicbron], Aquinas could clearly define his own position without directly engaging his colleagues until he had worked out the consequences of his distinction between essence and existence on all levels of reality. . . . Of all the medieval representatives of universal hylomorphism, none received more detailed treatment at the hands of St. Thomas than Avicbron.¹⁸⁸

While this interpretation has a *prima facie* probability, however, it must be emphasised that Thomas never discusses the particulars of the theories of St. Bonaventure or of any other contemporaries in this context. Scholars who assume that in refuting Avicbron he dispenses with the need to do so must also assume—and as this appears to be Thomas' own assumption Thomistic scholars frequently make it as well—that thirteenth-century thinkers rely entirely or substantially on Avicbron for their positions on spiritual matter, and that these positions are similar enough to Avicbron's to be caught in a common net. As I have already indicated,

¹⁸⁶ See Forest, *La structure métaphysique*, 99: "Saint Thomas n'a jamais examiné avec beaucoup de précision qu'une seule de ces doctrines, celle d'Avicébron . . ."

¹⁸⁷ Forest, *La structure métaphysique*, 116: "Mais son adversaire, sur ce point particulier [spiritual matter], n'est pas seulement Avicébron; saint Thomas s'oppose à toute la tradition de l'école franciscaine dont le représentant est surtout saint Bonaventure." Ibid., 118: ". . . la doctrine bonaventurienne n'est aux yeux de saint Thomas qu'une forme plus subtile des erreurs d'Avicébron."

¹⁸⁸ Collins, *The Thomistic Philosophy of the Angels*, 44. Throughout his discussion of spiritual matter in the *De substantiis separatis* Collins treats the position of the "hylomorphists" perhaps more contemptuously than Thomas and Albert themselves did. See, for instance, *ibid.*, 56: "To limit one's analysis of being to these constituents alone [matter and form] is to betray philosophical immaturity." Again, see page 73, where he says that after Thomas' analysis, to include spiritual and corporeal substances "under the common concept of matter is to resort to flagrant equivocity, now shorn of even the semblance of plausibility."

however, in my opinion these assumptions are open to serious doubt. If, as I believe, Bonaventure and his successors placed little or no reliance directly on Avicbron, building their position primarily on principles taken from Aristotle and Augustine, and secondarily on earlier scholastics (including, it is true, the Avicbronian *De unitate et uno*), then Thomas' extensive discussion of Avicbron at the expense of other representatives of universal hylomorphism seems almost irrelevant as a direct critique of the "Franciscan school." His attitudes towards Avicbron's authority and his work, however, are very valuable for illuminating his views on the doctrines held by the Franciscans and the reasons behind his rejection of their principles.

In chapter five of *De substantiis separatis*, therefore, Thomas comes to Avicbron after having examined at some length the positions of various of the presocratics, Plato, and Aristotle on the nature of spiritual substances. In his opinion Avicbron marks a distinct step backwards from the advances of Plato and Aristotle towards the materialist "ancients" who had not yet discovered metaphysics.¹⁸⁹ The fifth chapter presents a summary of Avicbron's position, while the sixth gives Thomas' critique. According to Thomas, the root of Avicbron's error¹⁹⁰ is that the latter returns to the viewpoint of the natural philosophers,

¹⁸⁹ St. Thomas Aquinas, *De substantiis separatis* (Leon. ed., v. 40), c.5, 48: "Eorum vero qui post secuti sunt aliqui ab eorum positionibus recedentes in deterius erraverunt. Primo namque Avicbron in libro Fontis vitae alterius conditionis substantias separatas posuit esse; aestimavit enim omnes substantias sub Deo constitutas ex materia et forma compositas esse, quod tam ab opinione Platonis quam Aristotilis discordat."

¹⁹⁰ According to Collins, *ibid.*, 55, St. Thomas boils down Avicbron's errors to two primary ones: 1) He confuses the logical with the real order, believing that logical composition (e.g. of genus and species) entails real composition, and 2) he overlooks the analogy of being, requiring that potency, substrate, etc. must be understood in the same way for all beings. On the second point more will be said later. The first point is best summed up in the body of *Summa Theologiae* (Edizioni San Paulo, 1999), I. Q.50 A.2, 247-248: "Respondeo dicendum quod quidam ponunt angelos esse compositos ex materia et forma. Et hanc opinionem astruere nititur Avicbron in libro *Fons Vitae*. Supponit enim quod quaecumque distinguuntur secundum intellectum, sint etiam in rebus distincta. In substantia autem incorporea intellectus apprehendit aliquid per quod distinguitur a substantia corporea, et aliquid per quod cum ea convenit. Unde ex hoc vult concludere quod illud per quod differt substantia incorporea a corporea, sit ei quasi forma: et illud quod subiicitur huic formae distinguenti quasi commune, sit materia eius. Et propter hoc ponit quod eadem est materia universalis spiritualium et

who thought that all being (*esse*) could be reduced to a single being (*ens*), and believed that the substance of all the universe was matter. Whereas both Plato and Aristotle recognized that matter has only potential being (and is, therefore, dependent on, and secondary to, form, rather than vice versa), the *naturales* mistakenly gave priority to matter, thinking that it was some being in act.¹⁹¹ Avicbron repeats this error, with the difference that—whereas the ancients thought that there were only bodies—he acknowledges that there are incorporeal substances, while still positing one underlying matter as the common substance of all created things. He fails to recognize that, since matter is being in potency, it is less of a being (*minus ens*) than form, which is being in act; this is the reason matter is incompatible with the existence of spiritual substances, which are the highest and preeminent beings.¹⁹²

According to Thomas, Avicbron's mistaken conception of matter as having its own act in addition to form implies that matter itself is the only true substance, and that all forms are accidents. Some forms can be called "substantial" in the sense that they are named in the definition of things, but no more really constitute a substance than whiteness constitutes the substance of a white man.¹⁹³ Under this theory "man" and "animal" are just two among many accidents, no more closely related to a substance than "white" and "musical": all are

corporalium: ut intelligatur quod forma incorporeae substantiae sic sit impressa in materia spiritualium, sicut forma quantitatis est impressa in materia coporalium. . . . Non est autem necessarium quod ea quae distinguuntur secundum intellectum, sint distincta in rebus: quia intellectus non apprehendit res secundum modum rerum, sed secundum modum suum. Unde res materiales, quae sunt infra intellectum nostrum, simpliciori modo sunt in intellectu nostro, quam sint in seipsis."

¹⁹¹ St. Thomas, *De substantiis separatis*, c.6, 49: "in antiquam quodam modo Naturalium opinionem rediit qui posuerunt omnia esse unum ens, dum ponebant substantiam rerum omnium non esse aliud quam materiam; quam non ponebant esse aliquid in potentia tantum sicut Plato et Aristotiles, sed esse aliquid ens actu."

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 49: "Comparantur enim materia ad formam sicut potentia ad actum; manifestum est autem quod potentia est minus ens quam actus, non enim dicitur potentia ens nisi secundum ordinem ad actum . . . Suprema autem in entibus oportet esse maxime entia . . . unde et Plato investigando suprema entium processit resolvendo in principia formalia, sicut supra dictum est."

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 50: "dicuntur tamen substantiales per comparisonem ad aliquas res in quarum diffinitionibus cadunt, sicut albedo est de ratione hominis albi."

accidental forms supervening upon a universal, homogeneous, substantial matter.¹⁹⁴ This position destroys the true notion of matter as pure potency; destroys the principles of logic by confusing the notions of genus and species, making them all mere accidents; destroys the foundations of natural philosophy by removing genuine generation and corruption; and, finally, destroys the principles of first philosophy by taking from singular things their unity, and hence their true being.¹⁹⁵ Some commentators have taken Thomas to say here that Avicbron's principles lead to pantheism,¹⁹⁶ but it should be remembered that the entire discussion takes place in the context of the created order. Avicbron certainly does not attribute "universal matter" to God.

One way Thomas believes Avicbron's position compromises the nature of matter as pure potency is the implication that matter would have some kind of distinction prior to the reception of substantial forms. If both spiritual and corporeal forms were received in matter, it would be necessary for the former to be received in a "higher and subtler" matter, and for the latter to be received in an "inferior and grosser" matter. Spiritual matter and corporeal matter must have some preexisting difference or distinction prior to the difference between

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 50-51: "Propter quod et antiqui, ponentes unam materiam quae erat substantia omnium de omnibus praedicata, ponebant omnia esse unum. Et haec etiam inconvenientia sequuntur ponentes ordinem diversarum formarum substantialium in uno et eodem."

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 50: "Sic haec positio tollit quidem veritatem materiae primae, quia si de ratione materiae est quod sit in potentia, oportet quod prima materia sit omnino in potentia; unde nec de aliquo existentium actu praedicatur, sicut nec pars de toto. Tollit etiam logicae principia, auferens veram rationem generis et speciei et substantialis differentiae dum omnia in modum accidentalium praedicationis convertit. Tollit etiam naturalis philosophiae fundamenta, auferens veram generationem et corruptionem a rebus, sicut et antiqui Naturales ponentes unum materiale principium; neque enim simpliciter aliquid generari dicitur nisi quia simpliciter fit ens, nihil autem fit quod prius erat: si igitur aliquid prius erat in actu—quod est simpliciter esse—, sequetur quod non simpliciter fiat ens sed fiat ens hoc quod prius non erat, unde secundum quid generabitur et non simpliciter. Tollit demum, et ut finaliter concludam, praedicta positio etiam philosophiae primae principia, auferens unitatem a singulis rebus et per consequens veram entitatem simul et rerum diversitatem."

¹⁹⁶ See Collins, 60-62.

their forms.¹⁹⁷ There follow in the seventh chapter arguments from the different modes of reception of form in corporeal and spiritual substances, and from matter's having a low grade of being unsuited to spiritual things. If there were spiritual matter, it would have to be of a higher grade than corporeal matter, and thus must have less potency and more act. Therefore spiritual matter would not be pure potency, and hence not really matter.

This confusion which gives some act to matter, which in itself is only pure potency, is further revealed by considering the soul. The soul informs the body as its form, while the form of anything is its act. The soul, then, as a form is something existing in act. If matter is pure potency, therefore, it couldn't be found in the soul.¹⁹⁸ Since the body is the subject of the informing soul, it would be irrational and redundant to speak of the soul as having a material subject and form of its own.

We have seen that Bonaventure also refers to matter as pure potency, and that he as well as Avicenna agree that in itself matter has no act of being which is not given by form. To Thomas' point that because of this matter must be wholly undifferentiated in itself, being distinguished only through form, Bonaventure had replied that this is precisely why we must not restrict matter to corporeality, which it in itself is a *formal* determination of matter's potency. As we shall see in the next chapter, while it is true that some thinkers in the Franciscan tradition ascribe some degree of act to matter considered even apart from form,

¹⁹⁷ St. Thomas Aquinas, *De substantiis separatis*, c.6-7, 51-52: "si ergo sit una materia communis omnium, ad hoc quod diversas formas recipiat oportet quod nobiliorem formam in subtiliori et altiori materia recipiat, ignobiliorem vero in inferiori materia et grossiori: puta formam spiritualitatis in subtiliori materia, formam vero corporeitatis in inferiori, ut ipse dicit. Praeexistit ergo in materia differentia subtilitatis et grossitiei ante formam spiritualitatis et corporeitatis . . . Ex hac autem ratione ulterius concludi potest quod spiritualis et corporalis substantia non potest esse una materia. Nam si est materia una et communis utrorumque, oportet in ipsa distinctionem praetelligi ante differentiam formarum, scilicet spiritualitatis et corporeitatis."

¹⁹⁸ St. Thomas, *ibid.*, c.7, 53: "Hoc etiam apparet in infimis substantiarum spiritualium, scilicet animabus, si quis eas ponat corporibus uniri ut formas. Impossibile est enim id quod est ex materia et forma compositum esse alicuius corporis formam, nam esse formam alicuius est esse actum eiusdem; nulla igitur pars eius quod est alicuius forma potest esse materia, quae est potentia pura."

from the fact that Avicenna and Bonaventure do not it seems clear that this is not the crucial point that Thomas thinks it is. Rather, the real locus of disagreement is the understanding of potency itself. Whereas for Bonaventure the fact that matter is pure potency implies that in itself matter is wholly undifferentiated and thus open to the reception of any form whatsoever, for Thomas matter is only a particular *kind* of potency, however “pure”, open to the reception of only certain kinds of forms. Essences, including the essences of incorporeal things, are themselves intrinsically in potency to the act of existence, and so potency does not in itself bespeak matter, whose realm is restricted to spatial dimensions, local motions, and the alterability of substantial forms. Thomas writes:

To be a subject does not follow only upon matter which is a part of substance, but universally follows upon all substance; for everything which is related to another as potency to act is naturally apt (*natum est*) to be a subject for it: and in this way spiritual substance, although it does not have matter as a part of itself, nevertheless insofar as it is a being (*ens*) in potency in some respect, can be a subject for intelligible species.¹⁹⁹

The notion of a single kind of potency underlying every created form and created act, so that (for instance) one might think of a particular substantial form incorruptibly actualizing its potential, i.e. material, principle, which would nevertheless remain in further potency to accidental change, is foreign to Thomas’ whole way of thinking. As Collins writes, “Angels are composed of potency and act, but their essence does not admit of that sort of potency which is in the genus substance. There is not matter in angels unless the concept be distorted to include the potentiality of an actual spiritual substance to receive intelligible forms

¹⁹⁹ St. Thomas, *ibid.*, c.8, 54: “esse subiectum non consequitur solum materiam quae est pars substantiae, sed universaliter consequitur omnem potentiam; omne enim quod se habet ad alterum ut potentia ad actum ei natum est subici: et per hunc etiam modum spiritualis substantia, quamvis non habeat materiam partem sui, ipsa tamen prout est ens secundum aliquid in potentia potest subici intelligentibus speciebus.”

according to their totality as further actualizations in the accidental order.”²⁰⁰ The substantial form of an angel for Thomas needs no subject in which to inhere, and the Boethian insistence that form is not the subject of form has been discarded, or at least seriously reduced in scope.²⁰¹ For spiritual creatures the substantial form, having its own potency, *is* a subject. “By widening the notion of subject beyond the special case of matter, St. Thomas removed the form from such arguments as understood receptivity in an unduly narrow sense.”²⁰² On the other hand, it is not clear to me that Thomas’ conception of matter is not open to an accusation of being “unduly narrow” from a Bonaventurean perspective.

That this may be the case is indicated by a comment in chapter 8, in which Thomas takes it upon himself to refute Avicbron’s arguments. Thomas makes it clear that for him matter can only exist where there is a potentiality to substantial change:

It is clear, therefore, how the potency which is in spiritual substances differs from the potency which is in matter: for the potency of a spiritual substance is demarcated (*attenditur*) only according to its relation to the act of existence (*esse*), while the potency of matter is demarcated both according to its relation to form and to *esse*. But

²⁰⁰ Collins, 68-69.

²⁰¹ See St. Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de anima* Q. 6, ad.1, 51: “Ad primum ergo dicendum quod Boethius loquitur ibi de forma que est omnino simplex, scilicet de diuina essentia, in qua, cum nichil sit de potentia set sit actus purus, omnino subiectum esse non potest. Alie autem forme simplices, si sint subsistentes, ut angeli et anime, possunt esse subiecta secundum quod habent aliquid de potentia, ex qua competit eis ut aliquid recipere possint.” See also *Quaestio diputata de spiritualibus creaturis* (Leon. ed., v. 24-2) Art. 1, ad 1, 14: “Ad primum ergo dicendum quod ratio forme opponitur rationi subiecti: nam omnis forma in quantum huiusmodi est actus, omne autem subiectum comparatur ad id cuius est subiectum ut potentia ad actum. Si qua ergo forma est que sit actus tantum, ut diuina essentia illa nullo modo potest esse subiectum, et de hac Boetius loquitur; si autem aliqua forma sit, que secundum aliquid sit in actu et secundum aliquid in potentia, secundum hoc tantum erit subiectum, secundum quod est in potentia. Substantie autem spirituales, licet sint forme subsistentes, sunt tamen in potentia in quantum habent esse finitum et limitatum. Et quia intellectus est cognoscitiuus omnium secundum sui rationem, et uoluntas est amaiua uniuersalis boni, remanet semper in intellectu et uoluntate substantie create potentia ad aliquid quod est extra se: unde, si quis recte consideret, substantie spirituales non inueniuntur esse subiecte nisi accidentium que pertinent ad intellectum et uoluntatem.” I must admit that, even leaving aside the question of whether angels might have accidents pertaining to location or other interactions with bodies, I find it hard to see why mental and volitional accidents do not need a subject other than the substantial form and its powers, merely in virtue of being spiritual.

²⁰² Collins, 69.

if anyone would say that each potency is matter, it is manifest that he calls [them both] matter equivocally.²⁰³

Since the substantial form of a spiritual creature is not subject to generation and corruption in a substrate, but is itself its own subject, the spiritual world does not have the same kind of potentiality that the corporeal world does.²⁰⁴ However, the Bonaventuran response would of course be that Thomas is approaching the question as a physicist, a natural philosopher, rather than as a metaphysician.

Before completing a comparison of Bonaventure's and Thomas' principles with respect to our question, however, I will examine texts from Thomas' disputed questions which develop the ideas already presented more thoroughly. At the beginning of the corpus of the first article of the disputed question *De spiritualibus creaturis*²⁰⁵ Thomas writes that in order to usefully carry on an enquiry about matter in spiritual creatures, we must clarify what the term "matter" signifies. Since potency and act divide being (*ens*), and since any genus is divided by potency and act, that which is a certain potency in the genus of substance, understood apart from all species and form, and even apart from privation (and yet which is susceptible of both forms and privations) is commonly called prime matter.²⁰⁶

²⁰³ Thomas Aquinas, *De substantiis separatis*, c.8, 56: "Patet igitur in quo differt potentia quae est in substantiis spiritualibus a potentia quae est in materia: nam potentia substantiae spiritualis attenditur solum secundum ordinem ipsius ad esse, potentia vero materiae secundum ordinem et ad formam et ad esse. Si quis autem utramque potentiam materiam esse dicat, manifestum est quod aequivoce materiam nominabit."

²⁰⁴ See also Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis*, Art. 1, set contra 3, 9: "nec materia quereretur nisi propter motum: secundum ergo quod aliqua habent motum, secundum hoc querenda est in eis materia. Vnde illa que sunt generabilia et corruptibilia habent materiam ad esse, que autem sunt transmutabilia secundum locum habent materiam ad ubi; set substantie spirituales non sunt transmutabiles secundum esse; ergo non est in eis materia ad esse, et sic non sunt composite ex materia et forma."

²⁰⁵ For a detailed discussion of Thomas' position in this work, especially as it pertains to Avicbron, see Forest, *La Structure*, 112-120.

²⁰⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *De spiritualibus creaturis* Art.1, 11: "unde ad huius ueritatis inquisitionem ne in ambiguo procedamus, considerandum est quid nomine materie significetur. Manifestum est enim quod, cum potentia et actus diuidant ens, et cum quodlibet genus per actum et potentiam diuidatur, id communiter materia prima nominatur quod est in genere substantie ut potentia quedam, intellecta preter omnem speciem et formam, et

According to Thomas, this definition shows how impossible it is for matter to be found in spiritual creatures, and for reasons very similar to those already seen in *De ente et essentia*. Potency necessarily depends on a prior act, but not vice versa. There can then be no matter without form, but there can be a kind of form without matter.²⁰⁷ But from God, the first and simply perfect act, “who has in himself all the fullness of perfection,” the act of being is caused in all other things, but according to a certain order. No caused act has God’s fullness of perfection, for compared to God every other act is imperfect; nevertheless, the more perfect a created act is, the nearer it is to God.²⁰⁸ Spiritual creatures, of course, come nearer to God’s perfection than any others, and are to lower creatures as perfect is to imperfect and as act is to potency, and so have no need of prime matter, “which is the most incomplete of all beings, but they [spiritual creatures] are elevated far above all matter and all material things.”²⁰⁹

Thomas also repeats and somewhat expands on the argument from intellection here. We should look in any substance only for the kind of potency necessary for it to perform its

etiam preter priuationem, que tamen est susceptiua et formarum et priuationum, ut patet per Augustinum XII Confessionum et I Super Genesim ad litteram et per Philosophum in VII Methaphisice.” Note that while both Thomas and Bonaventure cite Aristotle and Augustine as primary authorities and agree with this description of matter as a pure potency divested of all form, Thomas makes an assumption which Bonaventure does not, namely, that this pure potency in the genus of substance necessarily implies an aptitude for *substantial* change, rather than (in some cases) a foundation for substantial form and an aptitude for accidental change.

²⁰⁷ See also Thomas’ remarks in *De spiritualibus creaturis*, 1 ad. 25, 19: “quanto aliquid est plus in actu tanto perfectius est, quanto autem aliquid est plus in potentia tanto est imperfectius; imperfecta autem a perfectis sumunt originem et non e conuerso. Vnde non oportet quod omne quod quocumque modo est in potentia hoc habeat a pura potentia, que est materia. Et in hoc uidetur fuisse deceptus Auicebron in libro Fontis vitae, dum credidit quod omne illud quod est in potentia uel subiectum quodammodo hoc habeat ex prima materia.”

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 12: “A primo autem actu perfecto simpliciter, qui habet in se omnem plenitudinem perfectionis, causatur esse actu in omnibus, set tamen secundum quandam ordinem: nullus enim actus causatus habet omnem perfectionis plenitudinem, set respectu primi actus omnium actus causatus est imperfectus; quanto tamen aliquis actus est perfectior, tanto est Deo propinquior.”

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 13: “maxime accedunt ad inferiores creaturas sicut perfectum ad imperfectum et sicut actus ad potentiam. Nullo ergo modo hoc ratio ordinis rerum habet, quod substnatie spirituales ad esse suum requirant materiam primam, que est incompletissimum inter omnia entia, set sunt longe supra totam materiam et omnia materialia eleuata.”

proper operation. Now the proper operation of a spiritual creature is an intellectual one, and intellectual operations do not require the kind of potency provided for by prime matter, but only the kind “which is proportioned to the reception of intelligible forms. But this kind [of potency] is not the potency of prime matter: for prime matter receives form by contracting it to individual being [*esse*].”²¹⁰ Matter gives limitation and individuality to a corporeal substance, but the way the forms of corporeal things exist in the intellect is precisely without this limitation and individuality, since things are understood according to their common and universal nature, i.e., precisely as they are apart from their matter. Since the act of understanding is the reception of form apart from and separated from its matter, the presence of matter in either the understanding subject or the understood object would impede the intellectual process.

If we want to say that spiritual creatures have matter because we call whatever things that have the relation of potency to act “matter and form,” Thomas does not object, in order to avoid a fight over words; but for him this is clearly an equivocation, as we have seen.²¹¹ Spiritual creatures entirely lack the kind of potency that corporeal creatures have in prime matter, while at the same time they share with corporeal creatures a different kind of potency, that is, the potency of the essence to the act of existence. Just as God is the perfect act, having in himself the full plenitude of perfection, so he is the infinite act, having in himself the full plenitude of being, not limited to any nature of a genus or species, and so his act of being is not poured into or stamped upon any essence which is other than this act of being, by

²¹⁰ Ibid., 13: “Perfectio autem cuiuslibet intellectualis substantie in quantum huiusmodi est intelligibile prout est in intellectu; talem igitur potentiam oportet in substantiis spiritualibus requirere, que sit proportionata ad susceptionem forme intelligibilis. Huiusmodi autem non est potentia materie prime: nam materia prima recipit formam contrahendo ipsam ad esse indiuiduale.”

²¹¹ Ibid., 13: “Si tamen quecumque duo se habent ad inuicem ut potentia et actus nominentur materia et forma, nichil obstat dicere, ut non fiat uis in uerbis, quod in substantiis spiritualibus est materia et forma . . .”

which it would be bounded or limited. God, then, is his own act of existing. But this cannot be said of anything else.²¹² Unlike God, any other existent has its existence, not as a proper possession of its own essence, but as an actualizing principle poured into its essence from without. Spiritual creatures are essentially intellectual, incorporeal, and so forth, but they do not essentially *exist*. They exist in act only because they participate in the pure existence of the first and self-subsistent act. Therefore the existence of any creature, including spiritual ones, stands in relation to the existence it receives from God as potency does to act.

In spiritual creatures, according to Thomas, we find therefore a single potency, that of the essence, and its act, that of the essence's existence. In material things, on the contrary, we find a twofold potency and a twofold act:

Whence in composite things one must consider a double act and a double potency: for matter, first, is as a potency with respect to form, and form is its act; and again the nature constituted from matter and form is as a potency with respect to its act of being inasmuch as it [the composite nature] is susceptible of it [the act of being]. Therefore, the foundation of matter being removed, if there remains any form of a determinate nature subsisting per se—not in matter—it will still be related to its being as potency to act . . . in this way the nature of a spiritual substance, which is not composed from matter and form, is as a potency with respect to its act of being, and so in spiritual substances there is a composition of potency and act, and in consequence of matter and form, if every potency is called matter and every act is called form. Still, this is not properly said according to the common use of the words.²¹³

²¹² Ibid., 13: “Manifestum est enim quod primum ens, quod Deus est, est actus infinitus utpote habens in se totam essendi plenitudinem, non contractam ad aliquam naturam generis uel speciei; unde oportet quod ipsum esse eius non sit esse quasi inditum alicui nature que non sit suum esse, quia sic finiretur ad illam naturam: unde dicimus quod Deus est ipsum suum esse. Hoc autem non potest dici de aliquo alio . . .”

²¹³ Ibid., 14: “Vnde in rebus compositis est considerare duplicem actum et duplicem potentiam: nam primo quidem materia est ut potentia respectu forme, et forma est actus eius; et iterum natura constituta ex materia et forma est ut potentia respectu ipsius esse in quantum est susceptiua eius. Remoto igitur fundamento materie, si remaneat aliqua forma determinate nature per se subsistens—non in materia—adhuc comparabitur ad suum esse ut potentia ad actum . . . hoc modo natura spiritualis substantie, que non est composita ex materia et forma, est ut potentia respectu sui esse; et sic in substantia spirituali est compositio potentie et actus, et per consequens forme et materie, si tamen omnis potentia nominetur materia et omnis actus nominetur forma. Set tamen hoc non est proprie dictum secundum communem usum nominum.”

In order to achieve the elimination of spiritual matter from metaphysics, and allow spiritual substances to be completely simple in comparison to corporeal ones, it seems that Thomas has had to make metaphysics as a whole significantly more complicated. Not only do different laws of constitution apply to the spiritual and the corporeal realms, but in each realm the traditional Aristotelian principles of matter and form play new and, from an Aristotelian perspective, unexpected roles. For spiritual creatures the form is not the principle of actual existence at all, but a passive principle, receptive of its act from the distinct principle of existence. For corporeal creatures, on the other hand, the form is *both* an active and a passive principle, active with respect to the matter to which it gives being in act, but (together with matter) passive with respect to existence. For Thomas, while matter is pure potency, potency is no longer equivalent to matter: in the order of existence, the form may be potency as well.²¹⁴ And while Thomas agrees with Augustine that matter is a principle midway between something and nothing, at the same time here in Thomas it is *form* that is midway between actuality and pure potency, rather than itself being the ultimate actuality of the composite substance.²¹⁵ On this point it seems it could at least be argued that Thomas

²¹⁴ See Kleineidam, 77: “Diese klare Unterscheidung zwischen Potenz und Materie, wie wir sie hier bei Thomas finden, bedeutet einen bedeutenden Fortschritt gegenüber Aristoteles. Dieser brauchte beide Worte synonym; eine Abgrenzung beider Begriffe hatte er nie vorgenommen. Infolge dieser fehlenden Abgrenzung zwischen Akt und Potenz einerseits und Form und Materie andererseits konnte überhaupt erst eine solche Unklarheit in unserer Frage entstehen; denn die Vertreter der hylomorphen Theorie konnten sich tatsächlich mit Recht auf viele aristotelische Stellen berufen, die für ihre Meinung sprachen.” Although Kleineidam, sympathetic to Thomas’ position, speaks of the difference from Aristotle as an advance, one may recognize that Thomas is *not* an Aristotelian here without judging whether his theory must thereby be superior to any other which employs more authentically Aristotelian concepts.

²¹⁵ See Goheen, *Essence and Existence in the De ente et essentia of Thomas Aquinas*, 115: “The Aristotelian concept of form as being and act has met with severe modification in face of the distinction between essence and existence. The pure act, which Aristotle would identify with form, is associated by Aquinas with existence or being and is attached to form by the very act of creation . . . The only aspect, as we have seen, under which form as form seems to retain in part the rôle given it by Aristotle is in the composite substances where it is said that ‘form gives matter existence.’ This rôle, however, is subsidiary to the wider principle that form is potential with respect to existence.” Goheen seems to forget here that for Thomas, as for Aristotle, form still specifies or determines the *kind* of being it belongs to.

departs further from the mind of Aristotle than Bonaventure does: Bonaventure's conception of the roles matter and form play in the constitution of any composite substance seem more Aristotelian than does that of Thomas, even if his notion of just what a spiritual substance is lies further away from Aristotle's. As we shall see in the next chapter, this is precisely the claim that Peter John Olivi will make about the Franciscan position.

The arguments in the texts from *De substantiis separatis* and *De spiritualibus creaturis* apply, of course, to all spiritual creatures, but in the sixth of the *Quaestiones disputatae de anima* Thomas (in addition to repeating much of same material) gives more arguments against spiritual matter specifically as regards the human soul; this question also discusses different ways spiritual and corporeal things are subjects.

In the *sed contra* Thomas argues that the soul cannot be composed of matter and form. If it were, then in addition to its material subject the soul would have a form of its own. But the soul *is* a form, the form of the body. Therefore a form, the soul, would have a form, which seems impossible, since it would lead to infinite regress, i.e., one would have to ask why the form of the soul is not itself composed of matter and form, and so forth.²¹⁶ Later in the question Thomas elaborates on the reasons why it would be impossible for the soul to have a material principle. If the soul were composed of matter and form, it would make up a complete nature by itself, and the whole human species would consist in the soul. Its union with the body would therefore be accidental.²¹⁷ Furthermore, if the soul were composed of

²¹⁶ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de anima* Q. 6, 49: "Set contra. Omne compositum ex materia et forma habet formam. Si igitur anima est composita ex materia et forma, anima habet formam. Set anima est forma. Ergo forma habet formam; quod uidetur impossibile, quia sic esset procedere in infinitum."

²¹⁷ Ibid., 50: "forma materie adueniens constituit speciem. Si igitur anima sit ex materia et forma composita, ex ipsa unione forme ad materiam anime consuetur quedam species in rerum natura . . . Non igitur anima uniretur corpori ad constituendam humanam speciem, set tota species humana consisteret in anima; quod patet esse falsum, quia si corpus non pertineret ad speciem hominis, accidentaliter anime adueniret." Compare this

matter and form, it would be impossible for the soul in its entirety to be the formal principle of being for the body. Therefore the form of the body would not be the soul, but something belonging to the soul. But the soul is precisely whatever is the form of the body. Therefore what had been said to be a composite of matter and form, the soul, is still only a form.²¹⁸

At the beginning of the *corpus* of the question Thomas as usual repeats that Avicenna, the author of the *Fons vitae*, is the first author of the position that all substances besides God are composed of matter and form. The reason he attributes to Avicenna here (which is really more reflective of Bonaventure's position than of Avicenna's) is that "it is necessary for matter to be found wherever the properties of matter are to be found. Whence, since in the soul are found the properties of matter, which are to receive, to be a subject, to be in potency, and other things like this, it is thought necessary that there be matter in the soul. But this argument is frivolous, and the position impossible."²¹⁹ The reason for this is not that the common properties of spiritual and corporeal creatures can be explained in some other way than each being composed of matter and form. Rather Thomas denies the assumption that there really are common properties which need to be grounded in the same principles.

objection to Bonaventure's insistence that, in addition to being the formal principle of the body, the soul is *hoc aliquid*, something in its own right. Note that for Thomas the soul's individuation is through its relation to the body, even when the two are separated, whereas for Bonaventure the soul is individuated apart from the body precisely because the former can exist without the latter.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 50: "Si igitur anima sit composita ex materia et forma, impossibile est quod anima secundum se totam sit principium formale essendi corpori. Non igitur anima erit forma corporis, set aliquid anime. Quicquid autem est illud quod est forma huius corporis, est anima. Non igitur illud quod ponebatur compositum ex materia et forma est anima, set sola forma eius." Again, recall that for Bonaventure the same consideration leads to the opposite conclusion. It is precisely *because* the soul's operations and existence are not encompassed by those of the body that the soul is not *merely* the form of the body, but is also something in its own right without respect to the body.

²¹⁹ Ibid., *corpus*, 49: "Cuius quidem positionis primus auctor inuenitur Avicenna, auctor libri Fontis vite. Huius ratio est . . . quod oportet in quocumque inueniuntur proprietates materie inueniri materiam. Vnde cum in anima inueniantur proprietates materie, que sunt recipere, subici, esse in potentia, et alia huiusmodi, arbitratur esse necessarium quod in anima sit materia. Set hec ratio friuola est, et positio impossibilis."

In the replies to the objections Thomas reveals in more detail than he does in the body of the question how accidents appear in the soul in a different way than they do in bodies. The first objection raises again Boethius' point that form is not the subject of form. The soul is the subject of forms, so it cannot be form alone. The second objection continues in citing Boethius to the effect that forms do not participate in accidents, but the subjects of those forms do. So whiteness cannot participate in anything but whiteness, but a white thing can. In his responses Thomas claims that, since simple subsistent forms, such as angels and human souls, have some potency in their constitution, insofar as they are in potency to the act of existence, they are also able to participate in some further form.²²⁰ Against this, the third objection asks how this potency is sufficient to account for the presence of accidents in subsistent forms. The potency of such a form is to existence. "But of one simple potency, there is one act. The soul, therefore, cannot be the subject of anything other than the act of being itself. But it is manifestly the subject of other things [i.e. accidents]. It is not therefore a simple substance, but composed of matter and form."²²¹ The potency of the essence of the soul to exist is not the same as its potency to know. The soul's activity of existence is not the same as its activity of knowing some particular thing. How is the potency to exist a sufficient explanation of the soul's potency to have an operation in addition to and other than mere existence? Thomas' response is odd, in that it seems to beg the question:

Some form is not only related to the act of existing [*esse*] itself as potency to act, but also nothing prevents one form from being related to another as potency to act, as the

²²⁰ Ibid., 51: ". . . Alie autem forme simplices, si sint subsistentes, ut angeli et anime, possunt esse subiecta secundum quod habent aliquid de potentia, ex que competit eis ut aliquid recipere possint. . . . Non est autem similis ratio de aliis formis subsistentibus, quas necesse est participare ipsum esse et comparari ad ipsum ut potentia ad actum. Et ita, cum sint quodammodo in potentia, possunt aliquid aliud participare."

²²¹ Ibid., ob. 3, 46: "Set unius potentie simplicis, unus est actus. Non igitur poterit anima esse subiectum alterius nisi ipsius esse. Manifestum est autem quod est etiam aliorum subiectum. Non est igitur substantia simplex, set composita ex materia et forma."

transparent medium to light and the moist one to heat. Whence if transparency were a separate, *per se* subsistent form, it would not only be receptive of *esse* itself, but also of light. Similarly nothing prohibits subsistent forms, which angels and souls are, from being susceptible, not only of being itself, but also of other perfections. Nevertheless, the more perfect subsistent forms of this sort are, the fewer things they participate in for their perfection, having more perfection in the essence of their nature.²²²

Given that the question at issue in this passage is whether or not there can be a subsistent form, without any dependence on matter, this response seems very unsatisfying. If the principle being taken for granted by St. Thomas' opponents is that the subject of form is matter, and that form is not the subject of form,²²³ it would seem that both transparency and illumination require a material subject in which to inhere. So to say that *if* transparency were a subsistent form it could be the subject of an additional form would be irrelevant, given the claim that *no* form can be subsistent precisely because it needs a non-formal subject.

Furthermore, the hypothetical claim itself seems to remain open to question. Say that the angel Gabriel could be a subsistent form. This form is in potency to existence, and receives its existence from God. According to Thomas, this potency also renders Gabriel in potency to the accident of knowledge. But once Gabriel exists, it seems that the whole potency to exist latent in Gabrielity has been actualized. If knowledge were an essential property of Gabrielity,²²⁴ if it belonged to the angel's essence, to know certain things, God's

²²² Ibid., ad 3, 51-52: "forma aliqua non solum comparatur ad ipsum esse ut potentia ad actum, set etiam nichil prohibet unam formam comparari ad aliam ut potentia ad actum, sicut dyaphanum ad lumen et humorem ad calorem. Vnde si dyaphanitas esset forma separata per se subsistens, non solum esset susceptiva ipsius esse, set etiam luminis. Et similiter nichil prohibet formas subsistentes, que sunt angeli et anime, non solum esse susceptivas ipsius esse, et etiam aliarum perfectionum. Set tamen quanto huiusmodi forme subsistentes perfectiores fuerint, tanto paucioribus participant ad sui perfectionem, utpote in essentia sue nature plus perfectionis habentes."

²²³ St. Thomas does not accept this principle in any case, since he holds that one accidental form inheres in another, e.g. color in quantity.

²²⁴ It isn't, of course. In proving that Gabriel is not strictly speaking the same as Gabrielity, that the supposit of an angel is not identical with his nature, even without matter, Thomas brings as evidence the fact that, in

bestowal of existence would confer on Gabriel not only actual angelity but also actual knowledge. But it is taken for granted that it is possible for Gabriel to be either knowing or ignorant, either good or wicked. If this is the case, how can his existence include knowledge simply by virtue of the actual existence of his essence? In fact Thomas does not claim that it does, but these questions are not resolved here, or to my knowledge in any of the other places where he discusses spiritual matter. We have to look elsewhere in his writings for his own account of accidents in spiritual creatures. Thomas does indeed deny that an intellect knows things outside it by its own essence or substance.²²⁵ Knowledge, love, and other accidents do not modify or inhere directly in the spiritual substance, but in its corresponding powers, which are accidents really distinct from the substance, and flowing from it. The subject, the angel or soul, is the subject of these mutable accidents only through its proper accidents, as quantity in bodies is an accidental form serving as the subject for further accidental forms like color. Curiously enough, however, Thomas does not appear to invoke this explanation in defending his position in the spiritual matter debate.²²⁶

At any rate, Thomas denies that spiritual things are subject to accidental change in the same way that bodies are: “Souls and angels are called changeable spirits because they can be changed according to choice; which change is from operation to operation, for which change matter is not required, but for natural changes [matter is required], which are from

addition to his existence, which is other than the essence, an angel has accidents which are “besides the essence of the species itself.” See St. Thomas, *Quaestiones quodlibetales* (Marietti, 1942, v.5) II.II.4, 25: “In angelo autem non est omnino idem: quia aliquid accidit ei propter quod est de ratione suae speciei: quia et ipsum esse angelis est praeter eius essentiam seu naturam; et alia quaedam ei accidunt quae omnino pertinent ad suppositum, non autem ad naturam. Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod non solum in compositis ex materia et forma invenitur aliquod accidens praeter essentiam ipsius speciei, sed etiam in substantiis spiritualibus quae non compununtur ex materia et forma; et ideo in utrisque suppositum non est omnino idem quod ipsa natura.”

²²⁵ See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I.84 A.2, 401-402.

²²⁶ See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I.77 A.1-3, 5-8, 362-368; *Summa theologiae* I-II.50 A. 4-6, 759-761; John Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 292-294.

form to form or from place to place.”²²⁷ It seems that Thomas indicates why change “from operation to operation” does not require matter, why a change from willing *a* to willing *b* needs a material substrate less than a change from black to white or from sitting to running, only implicitly, in his description of motion as an imperfect act and operation as a perfect one,²²⁸ able to take place in proper accidents, the powers, of the intellectual subject.

To return to the body of the question, Thomas restates his claim that spiritual substances are not receptive, are not subjects, and so forth, in the same way that corporeal things are. Prime matter always receives something through transmutation and motion, i.e. change in a material substratum can always be reduced to a rearrangement of its parts by moving them about, which requires that all such transmutation and motion is ultimately reduced to local motion. Matter, therefore, is only found in things with a potency to local motion, and these are only corporeal things, which are circumscribed in place. What happens in spiritual creatures is not motion, strictly speaking, except in an equivocal sense. “Whence matter is found only in corporeal things, according to the way the philosophers spoke about matter, unless one wishes to take matter equivocally.” Changes in the soul, however, do not come about by local motion. Instead the soul receives (forms in intellection) through separation from motion and mobile things.²²⁹

²²⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de anima* Q.6, ad 17, 53: “anima et angeli dicuntur spiritus mutabiles prout possunt mutari secundum electionem; que quidem mutatio est de operatione in operationem, ad quam mutationem non requiritur materia, set ad mutationes naturales, que sunt de forma ad formam uel de loco ad locum.”

²²⁸ Kleineidam, 78: “Wir hatten mit Thomas festgestellt: Bewegung im eigentlichen Sinne kommt der denkenden Seele nicht zu; wohl aber zeigt auch sie eine operatio. Wie aber unterscheiden sich operatio und motus? Thomas sagt es uns: Motus ist ein actus imperfecti, operatio aber ein actus perfecti. Beide sind von Grund aus verschieden.”

²²⁹ Aquinas, *ibid.*, 49: “Debilis autem huius rationis apparet ex hoc quod recipere et subici et alia huiusmodi non secundum eadem rationem conueniunt anime et materie prime, nam materia prima recipit aliquid cum transmutatione et motu. Et quia omnis transmutatio et motus reducitur ad motum localem sicut ad primum et commune, ut probatur in VIII Physicorum, relinquitur quod materia in illis tantum inuenitur, in quibus est

As we have seen, this argument from the nature of cognition is one of Thomas' favorite arguments against spiritual matter. It seems worth noting here how the different emphases with which Thomas and Bonaventure approach cognition in this context lead to their different conclusions, because this point is related to Thomas' treatment of spiritual accidental change. When Thomas thinks of the soul's operation in cognition he thinks most of all of abstraction, of the mechanism of the form's removal from its natural habitat, so to speak, and its new place in the soul, which it inhabits under different conditions. (The form in the intellect has intentional being, not accidental being in the manner of corporeal things, and so the intellect is not a subject in the same sense that a body is.²³⁰) This emphasis, of course, follows Aristotle's concerns in explaining intellectual activity: how does the form of the known come to be in the knower, and what is its status there? In most of his treatments of the question, pride of place is given to establishing potentiality in spiritual creatures by proving that the essence is in potency to existence. Spiritual creatures' potency to accidents is an afterthought, when it is mentioned at all, and accidental change even more so: Thomas' emphasis in the present discussion is overwhelmingly on their *static* constitution.

When Bonaventure, on the other hand, considers cognition in this context, although he does not reject abstraction, he pays far more attention than does Thomas to the "stream of consciousness" in intellectual activity. A soul or angel thinks first of this thing, then of that; he makes first this choice, then a contradictory one; he first enjoys performing a wicked act, and then suffers the just punishment for it. While the mechanism of abstraction removes a

potentia ad ubi. Huiusmodi autem sunt solum corporalia, que loco circumscribuntur. Vnde materia non inuenitur nisi in rebus corporalibus, secundum quod philosophi de materia sunt locuti, nisi aliquis materiam sumere uelit equiuoce. Anima autem non recipit cum transmutatione et motu, immo per separationem a motu et a rebus mobilibus . . ."

²³⁰ Aquinas, *ibid.*, ad. 6, 52: "recipere et subici et alia huiusmodi alio modo competunt anime quam materie prime. Vnde non sequitur quod proprietates materie in anima inueniantur."

form from its own material conditions, and so from local motion, these interior spiritual processes seem to point without question to a kind of motion and change within the spiritual substance, although not a local kind. This emphasis on the nature of the experience of the inner life is, of course, typically Augustinian. But it also explains why for Bonaventure Aristotle's insistence that all motion is ultimately local motion cannot be the last word. Given the facts of spiritual life, it becomes clear that this principle is merely a principle of physics, insufficiently universal to apply without exception in metaphysics. Even if Bonaventure did not assume the complementarity of matter and form, even if he granted that absolutely speaking there *could* be a subsistent form, for him it could only be a kind of Platonic Idea, completely incapable of alteration. As long as there is change, there must be a subject of change; spirits and bodies may be subject to different sorts of change, but they are equally substances and equally subject to the laws of change, which requires a substratum which can only be matter, the prop and foundation of form. For Thomas, therefore, Bonaventure's mistake is to overlook the essential differences between corporeal and spiritual operations, and so to make unwarranted inferences from the physical to the spiritual world; for Bonaventure, on the other hand, Thomas' mistake is to approach a metaphysical question from the perspective of the physicist,²³¹ and thereby to become so distracted by the narrow exigencies of physical change and its inapplicability to the spiritual world as to overlook the more fundamental metaphysical principles which apply to every creature.

²³¹ See Kleineidam, 75: "Der Ausgangspunkt der Materiebegriffs liegt durchaus in der Physik. Welches ist hier der Grundbegriff, der diesen ganzen Fragenkomplex beherrscht? Es ist der Begriff der Bewegung. Nur er fordert überhaupt den Begriff der Materie erst. Man muß darum von ihm ausgehen; denn nur durch ihn kann man den Begriff einer Materie begeifen. Vergißt man diesen Ausgangspunkt, so biegt sich der Materiebegriff unversehens ins Logische um."

The difference between Thomas and Bonaventure on spiritual matter, however, cannot be resolved simply by saying that Thomas takes a narrower physical approach to the problem, while Bonaventure takes a broader metaphysical approach. For Bonaventure *does* insist on the essential complementarity of matter and form and *does* absolutely deny the possibility of any kind of subsistent form, indicating a fundamental rift between the two thinkers' metaphysical principles.

Scholars have attempted to locate the crux of their disagreement in different places. Quinn attempts to pinpoint it at the way different interpretations of the traditional distinction between *quo est* and *quod est* reveal differing conceptions of the nature of matter:

The difference between Bonaventure and Aquinas on the essence of a spiritual creature is grounded in their separate views of *matter*. Those views involve distinctive interpretations of *quod est* and *quo est* with regard to the creature. The two theologians concur on the *quod est*, which is the form of the creature; but they depart from each other on the *quo est*. For Bonaventure, this is matter as the potential constituent of a created essence, which has *being* from form. For Aquinas, the *quo est* is *being*, which is the act of a created essence, whether composed of matter and form or consisting of form alone. The fundamental point of difference between Bonaventure and Aquinas, then, has to do with the *essential dependence* of the creature on *being*, or with its *quo est* . . .²³²

It seems to me somewhat misleading, however, to say that the “two theologians concur on the *quod est*, which is the form of the creature”—this may be true insofar as each agree that that the *quod est* is the form, but they radically disagree on the nature of the form, and consequently on the relation of the form to existence. For Bonaventure the form is in no way a passive principle, but simply *is* the actual being of the composite creature, that is, for him the form itself plays the role which Thomas gives to the distinct principle of *esse*. As Robert points out, “*Actus essendi, perfectio, esse, complementum, esse in actu, principium esse, etc.*”

²³² Quinn, *The Historical Constitution*, 162-163.

. . . are merely synonyms which express the nature of form and its role in the composite.”²³³

This role of form is to give *both* essence *and* actual existence to the composite.²³⁴ In this metaphysics, therefore, it makes as little sense to make form a subject as it would for Thomas to make existence itself a subject. Later Franciscans would object that, whereas form is in reality the act of a substance’s matter, Thomas makes the essence itself like a kind of matter which must be “informed” by *esse*!²³⁵ From the perspective of Bonaventuran principles he takes a merely mental distinction, the distinction between an essence considered as concretely existing or considered in abstraction, and turns it into two principles which stand in a real relation of potency and act, making the form simultaneously the principle of actuality in physics and the principle of potency in metaphysics. It seems clear, then, that the differences between the Thomistic and the Bonaventuran conceptions of matter are necessarily accompanied by equally stark differences on the nature of form and the nature of existence itself.

Others have spoken of their disagreement in terms of metaphysical analogy. Forest writes:

Being designates in creatures a perfection which is not analogical, but which is that of a genus; one must then say that matter is found, in the proper sense of the word, in all concrete beings. This is, it seems to us, one of the important points of Saint Bonaventure’s argumentation, and it will be useful now to contrast it with that of Saint Thomas. In the Bonaventuran philosophy, being is no doubt an analogical notion, but only when one considers the community that it designates between God and creature. Within the domain of creatures, it becomes a univocal notion.²³⁶

²³³ Robert, 65: “*Actus essendi, perfectio, esse, complementum, esse in actu, principium esse*, etc . . . sont, sous sa plume, autant de synonymes qui expriment la nature de la forme et son rôle dans le composé.”

²³⁴ See Robert, 66.

²³⁵ See Robert, 62; Olivi, *Qq in II lib. Sent.*, ed. B Jansen, S.J., (Quaracchi, 1922-1926), v.1, Q.VIII ad 1, 152-153.

²³⁶ Forest, A. *La structure*, 118: “L’être désigne dans les créatures une perfection que n’est pas analogique, mais qui est celle d’un genre; il faut donc dire que la matière se retrouve, au sens propre du mot, dans tous les êtres concrets. C’est là, nous a-t-il semblé, un des points importants de l’argumentation de saint Bonaventure et qui nous servira à l’opposer tout à l’heure à celle de saint Thomas. Dans la philosophie bonaventurienne, l’être est

Collins makes the same point several times. Thomas accuses Avicbron of overlooking the analogy of being and of insisting that potency, substrate, etc., must be understood in the same way for all beings. “To a predilection for univocal predication on the created level Aquinas traces the second source of philosophical error supporting universal hylomorphism [recall that, according to Collins, the first was a confusion of the logical with the real order]. Only by ignoring the diverse modes of participation in being could this doctrine acquire its deceptive plausibility.”²³⁷ Again: “A major defect in Avicbron was his univocal notion of being, a shortcoming which also seriously handicapped St. Bonaventure in his metaphysical speculation on spiritual matter. Since being is not predicated univocally of all things, there need not be the same mode of being in all orders of reality.”²³⁸

Attempting to compare Thomas and Bonaventure in terms of an analogy of being, however, is in my view unhelpful for several reasons. Analogy is somewhat of a loaded term for Thomists, for some of whom, unfortunately, “analogy” more or less means “good metaphysics” and “univocity” means “bad”. Added to this, one must recognize, along with Gilson, that the “idea of analogy has not the same meaning for St. Bonaventure as for St. Thomas Aquinas, and in the sometimes identical formulae which they employ the principal terms have scarcely ever the same significance.”²³⁹ A discussion of what analogy in created being means in either Thomas or Bonaventure would be a task far beyond the scope of this chapter, and it is not in fact attempted in the authors just cited. Even if one admits their

sans doute une notion analogique, mais c’est seulement lorsqu’on considère la communauté qu’elle désigne de Dieu à la créature. A l’intérieur du domaine des créatures, elle redevient une notion univoque.”

²³⁷ Collins, 55-56.

²³⁸ Collins, 71.

²³⁹ Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 213.

claim, however, to evaluate Bonaventure's metaphysics from within a Thomistic framework and then to reject the former for failing to conform to the latter is simply to prejudge the issue without having to confront Bonaventure's principles and arguments in their own right.

Without speaking in terms of analogy, one might safely say that Thomas and Bonaventure have profoundly different ways of conceiving the created universe, which are reflected in their positions on spiritual matter. Bonaventure is struck by the common properties of all created beings. Substances may be divided between corporeal and spiritual, but are united under a common genus of substance. Whatever makes something a substance, therefore, will belong to every substance without exception. For him the same metaphysical rules apply across the spectrum of being, so that potentiality, mutability, to be a subject of accidents, and so forth, are rooted in the same principle for any substance, regardless of whether that substance has spatial dimensions or is subject to local motion or not. Since substantiality is more primitive as well as wider in scope than corporeality, one need not share the common properties of the latter to share the common properties of the former.

For Thomas, on the other hand, the universe of beings is one because of the common participation of all creatures in the principle of existence given by God, and not because of any common essential principle in which every substance shares in order to be a substance. For him different metaphysical rules apply in the two created realms, so that for corporeal creatures potentiality, being a subject, the reception of form, individuation, and so forth, are governed by entirely different principles than for spiritual creatures.

Given this fundamental difference, it's hard to see how either one could refute or persuade the other. Quinn highlights well the ultimate irreducibility of the two thinkers' sets of principles:

St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas use in large part a common vocabulary and handle several philosophical themes common to the thirteenth century. But the meanings of many common terms and the understanding of particular themes are so different in the Bonaventurean and Thomistic syntheses that, as original compositions of philosophical doctrines, they really cannot be reduced fundamentally to a common frame of metaphysical principles. This fact is very evident in the different meanings of *act* and *potency* in the two syntheses . . . Hence, for St. Thomas, one and the same substantial form of a corporeal creature is a potency in the order of metaphysics and an act in the order of nature. . . . [Whereas for Bonaventure] the form of a human nature gives *being* at once to both a spiritual and a corporeal matter; this is possible because matter, the universal foundation of existence, has a unity of homogeneity enabling it to receive, while retaining its essential unity, the one *being* of a substantial form in both a spiritual and a corporeal way. . . . These different uses of *act* and *potency* by the two theologians make their syntheses irreducible not only to a common frame of metaphysics, but also to a common ground in the metaphysical principles of Aristotle. Although the metaphysical insights of St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas are expressed in Aristotelean terms, nevertheless, their personal insights are no more Aristotelean than the metaphysical insights of Aristotle himself are Platonic, and Aristotle expresses his personal insights in many Platonic terms.²⁴⁰

It seems likely enough that, just as this fundamental irreducibility of competing metaphysical systems was not always recognized by modern scholars, so it may also have not been immediately apparent even to those taking part in the debates firsthand in the thirteenth century. If a modern reader can be deceived by a shared vocabulary, method, and body of authoritative literature, it seems likely enough that these same factors might confuse even thinkers in the process of building and defending very different philosophical systems. This might, perhaps, account for some of the repetition we see in the debate, as either side finds the apparent obtuseness of the other somewhat incredible. But by the time of Gonsalvus of Spain, as we will see, the irreducibility of metaphysics along Bonaventurean and along Thomistic lines begins to become apparent to some.

²⁴⁰ Quinn, 882-883.

Chapter 3

The Debate in the Later Thirteenth Century

The present chapter attempts to chart the course of the debate over spiritual matter in the later thirteenth century after St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas Aquinas on the one hand, and before Gonsalvus of Spain on the other. As we have seen, after the former two thinkers the fluidity of opinion in the earlier part of the century settled into a rigid dispute with solid battle-lines on either side. The Franciscans of this period practically all affirm spiritual matter, while nearly all Dominicans¹ and many others reject it. A large number of authoritative texts and arguments become standardized and are repeated again and again, while opposed positions are commonly lumped together with little regard for individual variations. The true interest in the debate is provided by the innumerable variations of content and shifts of emphasis among thinkers with broadly similar positions.

Keeping these points in mind, the strategy of this chapter is not to provide an exhaustive survey of opinions from the period. A brief glance at a multitude of thinkers, merely registering their position and basic approach, would impart to most figures on either side a dull and homogeneous cast. Consequently I present instead a smaller number of thinkers in significant, if not always exhaustive, detail. I have attempted to make the selection broad and distributed across the period covered, ranging from very significant and influential figures to more obscure ones, and illustrating approaches to the debate ranging from full and comprehensive to brief and perfunctory. My criteria for inclusion have been

¹ There are exceptions, such as (for instance) Robert Kilwardby.

chiefly two: illustration of the range of positions taken in the history of the debate, and relevance to Gonsalvus of Spain, whose solution to the problem is the subject of the next chapter. John Pecham (ca.1230-1292) and Matthew of Aquasparta (ca.1240-1302) are included because each illustrates the Franciscan response to and appropriation of St. Bonaventure's treatment. John's discussion is perfunctory and fails to match Bonaventure's insight, while Matthew's more impressive treatment uses Bonaventurian positions and arguments to critique St. Thomas Aquinas' position in some detail. William de la Mare (d.1298) is included because of his "textbook" status in the period; his *Correctorium* was widely read, making his influence very widespread, appearing especially clearly in the British thinker Nicholas of Ockham (fl. ca. 1285). Richard of Middleton (ca.1249-1302) and Peter John Olivi (ca.1248-1298) are major figures of the period in their own right and also particularly significant influences on Gonsalvus. Richard represents a way of defending the standard Franciscan position while also departing from it in some respects, looking to compromise with competing positions, while Olivi represents the hard-line Franciscan stance: each is of unique value and interest in his argumentation. Among represented non-Franciscans Henry of Ghent (d.1293) is hugely important in the period, and is explicitly named in Gonsalvus' Q.XI; his idiosyncratic discussion of spiritual matter, however, is fraught with unusual and interesting difficulties. Giles of Rome (ca.1243/7-1316) is presented on account of his intrinsic importance and wide influence, especially in the field of "angelic studies," and for the high quality of his opposition to spiritual matter. Dietrich of Freiberg (ca.1250-1310) represents an alternative approach to the opposition of the Franciscan position, eschewing metaphysical considerations entirely in favor of a solution dependent on the principles of physics; this approach receives particular consideration by

Gonsalvus. Finally, John of Paris, also known as John Quidort (ca.1255-1306), offers a more typical Thomistic response. As the author of a response to William de la Mare's *Correctorium* John is another "textbook" author whose approach, while not philosophically brilliant, was widely disseminated. He is of particular importance for us since he makes a personal appearance in the debate of Gonsalvus' Q.XI and offers several arguments there. Godfrey of Fontaines, who might have been included here, is reserved for the final chapter.²

The portrait of the debate in this chapter is, therefore, less a painting in broad brushstrokes than a series of detailed snapshots illustrating various approaches to the problem of spiritual matter. Consequently I am careful to avoid hasty claims of dependence or influence between the thinkers treated. As I have noted, so many of the arguments and texts used in the debate are so common, and so many positions so similar, that it is frequently difficult to tell exactly where any given argument, text, or turn of phrase may have actually been taken from. A thinker whose similarity to and juxtaposition with another here seems to indicate a dependence may actually rely on some third figure not treated. Only where the dependence seems undoubtable, as in the case of Nicholas of Ockham and William de la Mare, do I venture to assert it. Instead I usually content myself with indicating points of similarity and divergence between accounts. In addition, I generally pay closer attention in these snapshots to arguments than to authorities, and to unique rather than to stock arguments. One result of this is that a few discernable trends—for instance, the tendency,

² For dates and other biographical information I have systematically consulted, in addition to the sources cited in the individual subsections, the relevant articles or chapters in *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jorge J.E. Gracia and Timothy B. Noone (Blackwell Publishing, 2006); Benoît Patar, *Dictionnaire abrégé des philosophes médiévaux* (Les Presses Philosophiques, 2000); François-Xavier Putallaz, *Figures franciscaines de Bonaventure à Duns Scot* (Paris: Cerf, 1997).

steadily increasing throughout this period, to refer to Arabic authors in order to justify incidental principles used in arguments not taken from them—I have passed by largely unremarked.

The order of the sections is more doctrinal than chronological, dealing first with Franciscans who accept spiritual matter, and second with non-Franciscans who reject it. Within the major divisions the subsections are arranged roughly chronologically, but again primarily on account of their content. Thus John Pecham and Matthew of Aquasparta are presented first as especially looking back towards Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure; William de la Mare and Nicholas of Ockham are in the center, as representing the prevailing Franciscan thought of the period; while Richard of Middleton and Peter Olivi are placed at the end of the first major section as looking ahead towards Gonsalvus. Again, Dietrich of Freiberg and John of Paris are placed at the end of the second division because they are more immediately relevant to Gonsalvus of Spain than are Henry of Ghent and Giles of Rome.

III.1. Franciscans

III.1.1. John Pecham

John Pecham (c.1230-1292), an English Franciscan from Sussex, studied in Paris and held the Franciscan chair of theology in Paris beginning Spring 1270. Returning to England, he was Regent Master of theology at Oxford 1271-1274, and then was the Provincial Minister in England 1274-1277. After two more years spent in Europe as lecturer to the papal curia, he was made Archbishop of Canterbury in 1279, holding the see until his death.

Pecham was a follower (though an uneven one) of Bonaventure and an early opponent of Thomas Aquinas, and exemplifies the so-called “Augustinian” school.³

In his *Quaestiones tractantes de anima* John Pecham’s position on spiritual matter is similar to that of St. Bonaventure. He takes several arguments positing matter in the human soul from authorities Bonaventure also used, especially *De unitate et uno* and pseudo-Augustine, and gives abbreviated versions of several traditional arguments. The soul separated from the body can be moved, but everything that is per se moved (Pecham takes it for granted that the soul moves itself) is divided into something which is moved and something which moves, which, he claims, can only arise in a composite of matter and form.⁴ The soul must have matter because it contains possibility, and possibility is from matter;⁵ individuation is from matter and the soul is individual. The soul cannot be individuated by the matter of the body, since its individuality remains even when it is separated from the body.⁶

In the body of the question Pecham appears to refer to St. Thomas’ position. Some say that that the soul is not composed of matter and form, citing Boethius to the effect that a

³ For a selection of the scholarship on Pecham’s life and thought, see André Callebaut, “Jean Peckham OFM et l’augustinisme,” *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 18 (1925), 441-72; Victorin Doucet, ‘Notulae bibliographicae de quibusdam operibus Fr. Joannis Pecham’, *Antonianum* 8 (1933), 307-328, 425-459; David Knowles, ‘Some Aspects of the Career of Archbishop Pecham’, *English Historical Review* 57 (1942), 1-18, 178-201; Decima Douie, *Archbishop Pecham*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952); Girard Etkorn, “John Pecham, OFM: a career of controversy,” in *Monks, Nuns, and Friars in Medieval Society* (Sewanee: Press of the University of the South, 1989), 71-82; Gordon A. Wilson, “The Critique of Thomas Aquinas’s Unicity Theory of Forms in John Pecham’s Quodlibet IV (Romanum)”, *Franciscan Studies* 56 (1998), 421-431; Alain Boureau, *Théologie, science et censure au XIIIe siècle. Le cas de Jean Peckham*, L’âne d’or 11 (Paris, 1999).

⁴ John Pecham. *Johannis Pechami Quaestiones tractantes de anima*, ed. P.H. Spettmann, O.F.M., Monasterii Guestfalorum (Aschendorff, 1918), 184: “Anima a corpore separata potest moveri. Sed omne per se motum dividitur in duo, quorum unum est motum primum et reliquum movens. Sed hoc non est nisi compositum ex materia et forma. Ergo etc.”

⁵ Ibid., “Item possibilitas est a materia. Anima est possibilis et variatur. Ergo habet materiam.”

⁶ Ibid., “Item individuatō est a materia. Sed anima a corpore separata est vere individuata. Ergo etc. Si dicas quod individuatur per materiam corporis, cui unitur, contra: Ergo separata a causa individuationis non remaneret individua.”

spiritual substance needs no material foundation. But these say that it is composed of quiddity and being (*esse*), and of *quo est* and *quod est*. The appeal to Boethius, however, is in vain: the latter only excludes from spiritual substances the sort of matter which is the subject of substantial change. Otherwise he would contradict himself in his *De unitate et uno*.⁷ Note that Pecham assumes the authenticity and authority of the *De unitate* without question, whereas Thomas had already rejected its Boethian authorship and its authority.⁸ The work will continue both to be cited as an authority and rejected as spurious throughout the thirteenth century; its dubious status will be recognized in Gonsalvus of Spain's question on spiritual matter, as we will see in the next chapter.

The only argument Pecham gives at any length to support his position is here in the body of the question, and seems to depend on Bonaventure for its concepts if not its wording. The genus of substance is divided into spiritual and corporeal substances. Each is called "substance" univocally and shares equally in the overarching genus, being distinguished from the other by an additional something (i.e. a difference). If, therefore, it belongs to the genus substance to be composed of first principles, namely matter and form (John invokes Boethius himself for this principle), then every substance which is in this genus must also be composed of matter and form.⁹ As Bonaventure did, John here emphasises the commonality between spirits and bodies, insisting that substantiality is more universal than the distinction

⁷ Ibid., 186-187: "Ad primum quaestionem intelligendum quod dicunt quidam animam non componi ex materia et forma, quia universaliter secundum Boethium substantia spiritualis nulli materiae innititur fundamento. Dicunt tamen eam componi ex quidditate et esse, et quo est et quod est. Sed frustra Boethio innituntur, quia ipse a substantiis spiritualibus excludit tantum materiam quae potest esse subiectum transmutationis. Alias sibi a parte contradiceret in libro *De unitate et Uno*."

⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de spiritualibus creaturis* Q.1 ad. 21.

⁹ John Pecham, *ibid.*, 187: "Praeterea cum genus substantiae dividatur per spirituales et corporales substantias et de ipsis univoce praedicetur, cum in omnibus, quae secundum rectam lineam sunt in genere, sit res generis cum aliquo addito, si genus est compositum ex primis principiis, scilicet materia et forma, ut dicit Boethius, *Super Praedicamenta*, manifesta est omnem substantiam, quae est in genere, esse compositam et materia et forma."

between corporeal and spiritual, and that the constituent principles of substances must be the same for all.

Among the objections and Pecham's responses, the second and third are of particular interest, since they deal with problems raised by the consideration of existence in relation to a composite substance, and have no analogue in Bonaventure. The second objection states that every composite has existence (*esse*). If a man is a composite of body and soul, and part of that composite, the soul, is itself a composite of matter and form, then, since the man will have two compositions, so he will have a twofold existence: one existence for the soul, and one for the whole man.¹⁰ In his response Pecham admits that the soul has an existence of its own, inasmuch as it is a spirit (in other words, he seems to mean, the soul is a *hoc aliquid*), but this existence is incomplete and inclined to another—inclined, namely, to unite with a body to constitute a complete man. The soul is not something numerically other than and alongside the man whose soul it is; neither, therefore, is its existence other than and alongside the existence of the man.¹¹

The third objection proceeds along similar lines. What has in itself complete existence is not united to something else, except accidentally, for everything which arises in a substance already complete is an accident. Therefore, if the soul is itself composed of matter and form (and thus an already complete substance), it cannot form any but an accidental

¹⁰ Ibid., 183: "Quia forma non est materia, nec componitur, ut dicit Philosophus. Anima est forma. Ergo sicut non est materia, ita nec composita."

¹¹ Ibid., 187: "Ad secundum dicendum quod vere anima, in quantum spiritus est, habet esse quoddam, sed incompletus et ad aliud inclinatum, ad tertiam scilicet constituendum. Unde sicut anima non ponit in numerum cum homine, ita nec esse eius cum esse hominis."

unity with the body.¹² In his response Pecham continues to defend the soul's autonomous existence, but qualifies its independent substantiality, its status as something in its own right. The separated soul, inasmuch as it is a spirit, has its own existence and is subsistent even apart from the body. But this situation is unnatural for it. Inasmuch as it is a soul it essentially depends on and is inclined to perfect a body. Without the body it does not have stability, full and absolutely perfect existence; the body is in a certain way essential to it, for inasmuch as it is a soul it has an essential relation to the body.¹³ This admission, that the soul is incomplete without the body and essentially belongs to it, provides a counterbalance to Pecham's statement elsewhere, that "the soul is neither a body nor a bodily form, but is a spiritual substance, constituted from its own matter and form."¹⁴ Without denying this, here he gives a more nuanced view of the soul's substantiality: it is not complete without the body, and its union with the body is not accidental to it. In itself this point is not novel; what seems noteworthy is that Pecham is brought to make it by considering the *existence* of the composite soul and of the whole man, an example of the increasing prominence of the principle of existence in discussions on spiritual matter after St. Thomas.

In his fourth *Quodlibet*¹⁵ Pecham considers the question of matter in the angels. Like the question just examined on the soul, this question is short and not very novel; in it he

¹² Ibid., 183: "Item quod habet in se esse completum, non unitur alteri nisi accidentaliter. Omne enim quod advenit substantiae completae, est accidens. Ergo si anima est composita ex materia et forma, ex corpore et anima non est unum nisi per accidens."

¹³ Ibid., 187: "Ad tertiam dicendum quod anima separata, licet in ratione qua spiritus est, habeat esse completum potens subsistere sine corpore, in quantum tamen anima, dependet et inclinatur per essentialia sua ad corporis perfectionem. Sine corpore enim non habet esse stabilitatum, plene et absolute perfectum, sed sibi est quodammodo essentialia, in quantum anima est, corpus, ad quod habet essentialia respectum."

¹⁴ John Pecham, *Tractatus de anima*, ed. G. Melani, (Biblioteca di Studi Francescani I. Florence, 1948), 47: "igitur anima neque est corpus neque forma corporalis, sed est substantia spiritualis, ex materia et forma propria constituta, sicut expresse docet Boetius, in libro *De unitate et uno*."

¹⁵ John Pecham. *Quodlibeta quatuor*, IV (*Romanum*) ed. F. Delorme, O.F.M., revisit G. Etzkorn. (Quaracchi: Grottaferrata, 1989), *Quod*. IV.15, "Utrum in angelis sit materia."

argues for spiritual matter from the fact that angels are contained in a genus, from their having potency and accidents, and from motion, but all very briefly. He considers objections from the immateriality of cognition—replying that the objects of thought are abstracted from their own proper matter but then must be united to the possible or “material” intellect (*intellectui materiali*), so that even in actual cognition intelligibles are not altogether separated from matter—and from the intrinsic relation of matter to quantity, which he denies.

More interesting is the *responsio*, which at first glance appears simply to repeat Bonaventure, but which has an important difference:

Just as there are three grades of sciences so there are three grades of essences. For physics considers natural essences and sensible matter which is subject to contrariety and to quantity. But mathematics considers mathematical essences subject to quantity but not to contrariety, and therefore considers intelligible and imaginable matter. But the metaphysician considers essences removed from contrariety and magnitude, and consequently matter which is intelligible but not completely imaginable. To the examination of this pertains the consideration of separate substances, which have matter of the third sort, intelligible and not imaginable. I concede this on account of the aforesaid arguments and because many authorities among the Saints said this, and especially Boethius in the book *De unitate et uno*, as is clear to anyone who looks at it.¹⁶

Recall that Bonaventure also admitted three different grades of materiality. For him, however, the grades are determined by the manner in which a form informs its matter and by the kind of potentiality for variation that matter supplies to the various sorts of substances, whether potentiality to substantial, local, and accidental change (in the sublunar bodies), local accidental change (in the heavenly bodies), or non-local accidental change (in spiritual

¹⁶ Pecham, *ibid.*, “7. Iuxta gradus scientiarum tres sunt gradus essentiarum. Quoniam physica considerat essentias naturales et materiam sensibilem subiectam contrarietati et quantitati. Mathematica autem considerat essentias mathematicas subiectas quantitati sed non contrarietati, et ideo considerat materiam intelligibilem et imaginabilem. Metaphysicus autem considerat essentias subtractas a contrarietate et magnitudine, et materiam per consequens intelligibilem et non complete imaginabilem. Ad eius autem speculationem pertinet consideratio de substantiis separatis, quae habent materiam intelligibilem tertio modo et non imaginabilem. Quod concedo propter rationes praedictas et quia multae auctoritates Sanctorum hoc dicunt, et praecipue Boethius, libro *De unitate et uno*, ut intuenti patet.”

substances). These three levels of materiality are considered by, respectively, the natural philosopher or lower physicist, the universal or higher physicist, and the metaphysician. By substituting the mathematician for the universal physicist, and the kind of matter common to all bodies for the “intelligible and imaginable matter” of geometry, Pecham destroys, or at least overlooks, the simplicity of Bonaventure’s solution, and is not likely here to be following Bonaventure at all (Pecham is repeating a traditional doctrine on levels of abstraction, found in, among others, Boethius, Hugh of St. Victor, and also Thomas Aquinas, which may not be as relevant to the present context as he thinks). In addition to the matter of corporeal substances and of spiritual substances, Pecham introduces the matter of “mathematical essences” which are surely *not* substances themselves. Although he is not here considering the question of the homogeneity of matter, on the basis of this discussion it seems that it would be impossible for Pecham to claim that for the metaphysician all matter is essentially one, since it is impossible that geometrical matter could have the same sort of existence as the real potential principle of either corporeal or spiritual substances, while remaining distinct from them. The three kinds of science that Bonaventure considers, that of the *naturalis*, the *physicus*, and the *metaphysicus*, all have real substances for their object, and by invoking them Bonaventure shows how, given their different ways of considering the problem of the unity of matter, different thinkers can come to legitimately different, though not equally general, conclusions.¹⁷ Pecham’s invocation of three kinds of science, in contrast, only seems to muddy the waters, providing neither demonstrative force nor conceptual clarity.

¹⁷ It might also be recalled that Bonaventure only invokes the different considerations arising from the perspectives of different sciences *after* proving the existence of matter in the spiritual as well as the corporeal realm, in order to consider matter’s homogeneity. Pecham’s invocation here in the question on whether angels have matter does no more than Bonaventure’s to establish the point.

Pecham, then, is not simply a Bonaventurean in this area, either in his principles or in his procedure. This can be confirmed if we look at the first question of the fourth *Quodlibet*, which asks whether God can make matter without form. The arguments maintaining that matter without form is impossible and contradictory rely on principles which, as we have seen, Bonaventure accepts: that being comes from form and that matter has only potential existence.¹⁸ Against these Pecham argues that, on the contrary, both matter and form have their own being. “Form gives to matter specific and complete being, but it does not give it the being of incomplete essence, since it is a principle essentially other than form.”¹⁹ The potency which belongs to matter and which is oriented to form does not itself derive from form, but is rooted in its own essence. This essence has a certain diminished actuality of its own, and therefore its own act of being, which it has directly from God and not from form.²⁰ Pecham does not make, therefore, Bonaventure’s distinction between the *stability of existence* which matter gives to the composite and the *act of being* which is the provenance of form and which are mutually interdependent; instead he gives a measure of independent actuality to each. Since it is certain that matter and form are essentially different principles, God is able to separate them, and can, if he wills, make matter to exist without any form.²¹

¹⁸ John Pecham, *Quod.* IV.1: “Quia Deus non potest facere opposita contradictorie, ergo non potest facere idem esse et non esse. Sed esse est [a] forma. Ergo si materia est sine forma, idem est et non est, quod Deus facere non potest. Item, esse materiae est tantum in potentia, cum potentia sit a materia sicut actus a forma. Actus autem prior est quam potentia; destructo enim priore destruitur posterius. . . .”

¹⁹ Pecham, *ibid.*, “Et dico ‘principia’ materiam et formam, quarum utraque habet suum esse . . . Forma igitur dat materiae esse specificum et completum, sed non dat ei esse essentiae incompletae, cum sit principium essentialiter aliud a forma.”

²⁰ *Ibid.*, “Ad secundum dicendum quod materia est in potentia ad formam, et ista potentia materiae non fundatur in nihilo, sed in ipsa essentia materiae. Unde, quamvis, sit in potentia ad formam, est tamen essentia quaedam diminuta in actu, sicut est etiam principium. Et illum actum essendi non habet a forma, sed a create, sicut etiam habet essentiam, scilicet a Creatore: essentiae autem est esse sicut lucis lucere. Quia igitur a propria natura habet posse capere formam, istam potentiam non habet a forma, quae radicatur in essentia ipsius materiae. Habet igitur actum essentiae incompletae ordinatum potentialiter ad receptionem formarum. . . .”

²¹ *Ibid.*, “Item, certum est quod materia est alia essentia quam forma, cum materia et forma sint duo principia essentialiter differentia. Deus autem omnia essentialiter diversa potest separare, cum eiusdem sit componere et

While, therefore, Pecham affirms the necessity of positing spiritual matter using traditional arguments similar to some of Bonaventure's, he does so without making the traditional and Bonaventurean assumption that matter and form are essentially complementary. At the same time, in undermining this assumption in order to maintain that matter could at least possibly exist without form, he seems to leave room for the question why a form could not exist without matter. For Bonaventure, spiritual creatures must be composed of matter and form not merely because of potentiality, motion, accidents, and so forth, but because the notion of a subsistent form, just as that of subsistent matter, is fundamentally incoherent. But Pecham accepts the coherence of the notion of subsistent matter, leaving open the question: why not that of subsistent form also? Pecham's affirmation of spiritual matter, therefore, rests on the properties belonging to spiritual creatures as to all composite substances, but without additionally relying on any interrelated and mutually complementary properties of their substantial principles.

III.1.2. Matthew of Aquasparta

Matthew of Aquasparta (c.1240-1302) studied in Paris about 1268-1273. He taught at both Bologna and Paris in the ensuing years, and then succeeded Pecham as lecturer in the *studium* of the papal curia when Pecham was made Archbishop of Canterbury. Matthew held the post much longer than Pecham did (1279-87), and went on to be elected, like Bonaventure before him and Gonsalvus Hispanus after him, Minister General of the

dividere. Posset ergo, si vellet, facere materiam esse sine omni forma.” Compare Pecham's position with that of Vital du Fuor, for which see above, Chapter 2 n.119.

Franciscans (1287-1289). Afterwards he was made Cardinal, worked to rehabilitate Peter John Olivi, and was important as a defender of papal authority. Philosophically Matthew was a follower of Bonaventure and influenced by Pecham; he gives special emphasis to Augustine in defending his doctrines.²²

The tenth of Matthew of Aquasparta's thirteen Disputed Questions on the soul²³ treats the question of whether the soul, and all spiritual substances, are composed of "true matter and true form," in a much more comprehensive manner than the texts of John Pecham just examined. While Matthew's question provides a good overview of what had been said on the matter already, it is most noteworthy for the way in which Matthew attempts to grapple seriously with the challenges raised by St. Thomas' alternative to spiritual matter, a composition of essence and existence in spiritual creatures.

The opening arguments give an unusually broad survey of the standard authorities invoked in the debate: Matthew cites twelve authorities for the negative position, that

²² For Matthew of Aquasparta, see Martin Grabmann, *Die philosophische und theologische Erkenntnislehre des Kardinal Matthaues von Aquasparta. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Verhältnisses zwischen Augustinismus und Aristotelismus im mittelalterlichen Denken* (Vienna, 1906); Johann Auer, *Die Entwicklung der Gnadenlehre in der Hochscholastik mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des Kardinals Matthaues von Aquasparta*, 2 Vols. (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1942-1951); Efrem Bettoni, 'Rapporti dottrinali fra Matteo d'Aquasparta e Giovanni Duns Scoto', *Studi Francescani*, 40 (1943), 113-130; Pasquale Mazzarella, *La dottrina dell'anima e della conoscenza in Matteo d'Aquasparta*, Collana di Studi Filosofici, 17 (Padua, 1969); Roland Hissette, *Enquête sur les 219 articles condamnés à Paris le 7 Mars 1277*, (Louvain: Publications Universitaires, 1977), 34-73; François-Xavier Putallaz, *La connaissance de soi au xiiiè siècle. De Matthieu d'Aquasparta à Thierry de Freiberg*, Études de philosophie médiévale, 67 (Paris, 1991); Convegno Storico Internazionale, *Matteo d'Aquasparta. Franceseano, filosofo, politico*, Atti del XXIX Convegno Storico Internazionale, Todi, 11-14 ottobre 1992 (Spoleto, 1993).

²³ Matthew of Aquasparta. *Quaestiones disputatae de anima XIII*, ed. A.J. Gondras (Paris: Vrin, 1961). Q. X, "Decimo, quaeritur utrum anima, et universaliter substantia spiritualis, sit composita ex vera materia et vera forma." 159-179. See 159, n.a, where the editor remarks: "Cf. praesertim Matthe. ab Aquasp., *Comment. in Sent.*, II, d.3, q.1 (C, fol. 19 b-22 a), ubi aliqua argumenta ad sensum inveniuntur et conclusio diffusius exponitur . . ." See also Matthew's *Quaestiones disputatae de gratia*, ed. P. Victorini Doucet, O.F.M. Florence: Ad Claras Aquas, 1935, Introduction, xci. The editor lists the following questions as being found at the beginning of *In Sent.* II.d.3: "Utr. in angelis sit vera compositio ex materia et forma; Utr. illa materia sit una in spiritualibus et corporalibus et univoce una; Utr. sit una numero vel aliqua alia unitate; Quaeritur qua unitate sit una." Matthew's commentary on the *Sentences* remains in manuscript and I have not consulted it; all indications suggest that its content is consistent with what is presented here.

spiritual substances do not contain matter, from Boethius, Hugh, Dionysius, Aristotle, and Augustine, and nine authorities for the positive position, from Augustine, the pseudo-Boethian *De unitate et uno*, and Aristotle. He brings the number of arguments on the positive side up to twelve with three additional arguments from reason. These are the only ones I will present here.

The first argument asks about the nature of subsistent forms according to those who accept them. If spiritual substances are mere forms, without matter in their composition, what sorts of forms are they? “Either they are [the sorts of] forms which are parts of a composite, which is manifestly false”—since the assumption is that they do *not* enter into composition with matter—“or they are the forms which are called essences or quiddities, and then these substances are beings [*entes*], and essence and being [*ens*] is the same in them, and therefore *quod est* and *quo est*, and supposit and essence, which is false . . .”²⁴ In order to make sense of this argument, I believe, we must recognize that Matthew is employing a very Bonaventuran notion of form, just as, later in the question, he will display a Bonaventuran notion of existence.²⁵ He assumes here that matter and form are complementary principles in a composite substance; if we remove one complement, matter, then we must remove its correlative complement: form. The only sort of form left as an option is form as essence or quiddity, that is, a substance conceived of abstractly rather than concretely.²⁶ If the essence

²⁴ Matthew of Aquasparta, *Qq disputatae de anima X.*, 163: “Item, si substantiae spirituales sunt formae tantum sine materia, aut sunt formae quae sunt partes compositi, quod manifeste falsum est; aut sunt formae quae vocantur essentiae sive quidditates, et tunc istae substantiae sunt entes, [et] idem est in eis essentia et ens, ac per hoc quod est et quo est, et suppositum et essentia, quod est falsum et contra Boethium et Augustinum; ergo etc.”

²⁵ By this here and later I mean simply that Bonaventure is the most prominent and typical thinker to espouse these principles, not, of course, that they originated with him.

²⁶ See the discussion of *quod est* and *quo est* as understood by St. Bonaventure in Chapter 2.

did not enter into composition with matter, there would be no real distinction between the essence and the creature's concretely existing supposit (which is the case only in God).

The second argument states that since spiritual substances are not pure acts, they are composed of potency and act. But potency and act are primary contraries, and contraries cannot exist in one and the same thing in the same respect; there must be different elements or principles in any substance whereby it is respectively in act and in potency. But things are in act from their form, and therefore must be in potency from elsewhere, namely from matter.²⁷ Again, in this argument Matthew relies on notions of form and matter, and their relations as act and potency, which savor strongly of those we have seen in St. Bonaventure, which later in the question are made more explicit and deployed against Thomistic arguments.

The third argument is the familiar one from the ability of spiritual creatures to be defined through their genus and specific differences. The composition of genus and difference presupposes a diversity of natures, which only comes from matter and form, "since the genus in a definition is put in place of matter, difference in place of form; therefore every definable is composed of matter and form . . ."²⁸

The body of the question consists of two major divisions, the first concerned with reasons to reject spiritual matter, the second with reasons to accept it. Matthew begins with

²⁷ Matthew of Aquasparta, *ibid.*, 163-164: "Item, cum substantiae spirituales non sint puri actus, erunt compositae ex potenti et actu, et tunc arguitur sic: secundum Philosophum, prima contrarietas est actus et potentia; sed contraria non possunt esse in eodem et ratione eiusdem; [ergo] aliunde habent [esse] actu, aliunde potentia; sed actu sunt ex forma; ergo oportet quod aliunde sint in potentia, scilicet ex materia; ergo etc."

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 164: "Item, definitio constat ex genere et differentiis; ergo quod vere definitur, participat naturam generis et differentiarum; sed haec praesupponunt diversitatem naturarum quae [non] sunt nisi materia et forma, cum genus ponatur in definitione loco materiae, differentia loco formae; ergo omne definibile est compositum ex materia et forma; sed substantiae spirituales vere sunt definibiles; ergo etc." This is, of course, the argument which Thomistic scholars have always seized on as evidence of their opponents' tendency to confuse the logical and the real orders. Since the presuppositions behind this argument are so closely connected to the issues behind the debate over the plurality of forms, to examine which would take me far beyond the scope of this project, I have not emphasized it much here.

noting five principle reasons that “some posit and assert that no created spiritual substance is composed of matter and form, nor is the *ratio* of matter found in them.”²⁹ 1) The first is from the simplicity of spiritual substances and the corporeity of matter. Opponents of spiritual matter argue that matter is corporeal by nature, and that every matter-form composite can be resolved [*resolubile*] into component parts; since spiritual substances cannot be broken down into parts, they are not composed of matter and form. 2) The second reason comes from Aristotle’s assertion³⁰ that all movement is ultimately reducible to local motion. Since matter receives form by being moved in transmutation, matter is only to be found in those things which are in potency to place and are moved by local motion, which applies only to bodies, which are circumscribed in place. 3) The third, like the first, concerns the incorruptibility of spiritual creatures. Every material composite is corruptible on account of its matter, which is in potency to contraries. Since spiritual things are not in potency to receive contrary forms, they have no matter. 4) The fourth and fifth reasons are from cognition. Forms existing in matter are only potentially intelligible; whatever is intelligible in act—whether an angelic or a human intellect—must therefore be immune from matter. 5) Likewise nothing is intelligible unless abstracted from matter and material conditions, since matter impedes intellection. Since the intellect must be properly proportioned to its intelligible objects, it must necessarily be separate from matter.³¹

²⁹ Ibid., 164: “Quidam ponunt et asserunt quod nulla substantia spiritualis creata composita est ex materia et forma, nec ratio materiae invenitur in eis.”

³⁰ Aristotle, *Physics* VIII, 260a 20 seq.

³¹ Matthew of Aquasparta, *ibid.*, 164-165.

“With these arguments,” Matthew says, “they try to prove that no spiritual substance is composed of matter and form,”³² and then he goes on to mention additional ones related to the soul in particular, namely the problem of how, if the soul is itself a composite of matter and form, it can itself enter into composition with the body as its form. If we posit a form (the form of the soul’s matter-form composite) of a form (the soul itself, the form of the body), we seem to leave open the way to an infinite regress.

Curiously, Matthew makes no attempt to refute any of these arguments raised in the body of the question. Since all but the second (which is never answered) in the initial list are contained in the arguments from authority at the beginning of the question, Matthew considers them answered by the responses to the original objections.³³ The arguments specifically pertaining to the soul are not answered at all.³⁴ At this point, instead of addressing the arguments just raised, he goes on to consider the kinds of composition which the opposing side affirms instead of spiritual matter. “These [thinkers], on the other hand, posit in them [spiritual substances] many kinds of composition, namely of quiddity and being, of *quod est* and *quo est*, of being [*entis*] and essence, of act and potency.”³⁵ He goes on to recite a close approximation of the Thomistic account (without naming Thomas, or anyone else): all creatures have a composition of essence and existence, which is sufficient to give non-corporeal things a composition of potency and act; in addition to this composition, corporeal things alone need the additional composition of matter and form.

³² Ibid., 165: “Iis rationibus nituntur probare quod nulla substantia spiritualis est composita ex materia et forma . . .”

³³ Ibid., 174-179.

³⁴ It’s possible he thought this ground was sufficiently covered in the preceding question. See Matthew of Aquasparta, *ibid.*, 149-158: Q. IX, “Utrum anima intellectiva sit hoc aliquid.”

³⁵ Matthew of Aquasparta, *ibid.*, Q.X, 166: “Ii tamen ponunt in eis multiplicem compositionem, scilicet quidditatis et esse, quod est et quo est, entis [et] essentiae, actus et potentiae.”

Matthew is not, however, impressed with this account as an alternative to spiritual matter, and in fact questions the relevance of essence/existence composition (in the Thomistic sense) to the debate at all. “The present question is not about these compositions, but about whether in spiritual substances there is a composition of true matter and true form.” He objects that the distinction between essence and existence, and hence any composition between them, belongs to the realm “of reason or of consideration or of relation” rather than to the real internal structure of the substance in question. For Matthew any real substantial composition has to be composition *within* the nature or quiddity of a substance, not a composition of this quiddity and existence. Whether or not the act of existence comes from elsewhere, from outside the quiddity, the question of the simplicity or composition of the angelic nature remains to be resolved.³⁶

The elements of which a spiritual substance is composed are either essential or accidental to that substance. Matthew argues that to make the existence of a thing an element in its composition other than and opposed to its essence is to make the very existence of a thing accidental to it, which is false. But if the elements of composition are essential, the only essential component principles are matter and form.³⁷

A quiddity, nature, or essence—for Matthew these are all synonymous—can exist only in a supposit, a concrete individual substance. But a quiddity or essence is identical with

³⁶ Ibid., 167: “Sed ad praesens non quaeritur de istis compositionibus, sed quaeritur utrum in substantiis spiritualibus sit vera compositio ex vera forma [et vera materia]. Huiusmodi enim compositiones magis videntur esse rationis vel considerationis sive relationis quam rei [Note that ‘res’ here has to do with the essence and its composition, rather than that of the complete entity], quia in omni compositione aliquid componitur ex se ipso et suo actu vel sua forma, nec ex quidditate et esse. Praeterea, si ipsum esse est aliunde, et ipsa essentia vel quidditas, igitur adhuc in ipsa quidditate est assignare istam compositionem.” Matthew quickly loses this attitude of indifference, of course, vigorously attacking the Thomistic composition of essence and existence on the next page.

³⁷ Ibid., 167: “Praeterea, ipsa quae ponunt facere compositionem, aut sunt essentialia, aut accidentalia; si accidentalia, ergo ipsum est esse rei accidentale, quod falsum est; si essentialia, essentialia rei componentia non sunt nisi essentialia principia quae sunt materia et forma.”

its supposit only in a unique case, namely in God. In every creature “essence and existence, quiddity and supposit differ, [and] if these differ, there is composition from matter and form.”³⁸ At first this assertion looks very strange, given that Matthew was just arguing that the distinction between essence and existence was only a distinction of reason and irrelevant to the question of real essential composition. It becomes clearer, however, if we distinguish between his discussion of the *Thomistic* distinction a moment ago and the *Bonaventurean* concepts he’s employing here. That “essence and existence differ” is *not* true for Matthew if by “existence” we mean a quasi-accidental principle, a third something other than matter and form which is poured into either a form or a matter-form composite to give it actuality and subsistence. It *is* true for him if by “existence” we mean the concrete presence of the essential form in a grounding or underlying foundation in which it subsists, without which the form would be a mere abstraction.

That Matthew is critiquing the Thomistic position, not from within, but by evaluating it from the perspective of a quite different set of metaphysical principles which he holds in common with St. Bonaventure, is made increasingly plain in the remarks that follow.

“Again, the quiddity or essence is itself that which is, or the being [*ens*]; but every being is a being by essence, as a wise man [is wise] by wisdom; therefore any created being is through itself what it is, which is false.”³⁹ That is, since existence is not a principle extrinsic to the essence, as Thomas claims, to say that the essence is through its existence is tantamount to

³⁸ Ibid., 167: “Adhuc, quidditas dicit ipsam naturam, sive essentiam; naturam impossibile est esse nisi in supposito, secundum Damascenum, ergo illa quidditas sive essentia est in supposito; aut igitur illud suppositum est ipsa essentia et e contrario, quod convenit solum Deo in quo est idem natura et res naturae, essentia et suppositum; aut differt, et sic habeo propositum, scilicet quod differt essentia et esse, quidditas et suppositum, si haec differunt, est compositio ex materia et forma; ergo etc.”

³⁹ Ibid., 168: “Item, quidditas sive essentia est ipsum quod est, sive ens; sed omne ens est ens essentia, sicut sapiens sapientia; ergo aliquod ens creatum est se ipso [quod] est, quod est falsum.”

calling it self-caused or at least *a se*. Again, Matthew claims, when his opponents posit that the nature or substance, which they call the form, is in potency and receives existence, they simultaneously posit the contrary in their very terms, since form insofar as it is form gives, rather than receives, being.⁴⁰

Again, if the form receives an extrinsic “formed existence” [*esse formatum*], it cannot receive it from itself [*a se*]; to be *a se*, and to be whatever one has, belongs only to God. It must therefore receive being from another, but since all being is from form, the being which an essence receives in order to exist is from a form; one must then ask about this second form, and whether it receives being from some third form, leading to an infinite regress. If we accept, therefore, that existence is from form, one must admit a principle in substances which both receives being from form and which is something other than form, namely matter.⁴¹

By now, therefore, it is clear that Matthew’s disagreement with Thomas is over their fundamental presuppositions. Matthew insists that form is not in any way a principle of potency, nor is existence an extrinsic principle of actuality, nor, on the other hand, is form essentially identical with existence itself; existence, rather, is “the impression of form in matter,” the concrete presence of a form in an underlying substrate. Rather than being a principle in addition to matter and form, it is instead a consequent of the real union of matter and form in their composite. If this is true then the Thomistic arguments collapse. For either the form in potentiality to existence receives existence from itself, “which is against all

⁴⁰ Ibid., “Item, cum ponunt naturam vel substantiam, quam vocant formam, esse in potentia et recipere esse, ponunt oppositum in adiecto, quia forma, hoc ipso quod forma, dat esse, non recipit.”

⁴¹ Ibid., “Rursus, si recipit esse formatum: aut a se, quod convenit soli Deo qui se ipso est quicquid habet; aut ab aliquo, et tunc, cum omne esse sit a forma, secundum Boethium, illud esse est a forma, et tunc quaero de illa forma, et sic in infinitum, quod est inconueniens; oportet ergo ponere quod sit aliquid quod recipiat esse, quod non est nisi materia quae recipit esse a forma et differt ab ipsa.”

wisdom,” or else it receives existence by being impressed with another form, “and that which receives existence from form, is nothing other than matter.” The Thomistic position simply turns the essence itself into matter under another name.⁴²

The claim, then, that spiritual substances have a composition of act and potency but not of matter and form “appears improbable.” Act and potency is a fundamental contrariety which is necessarily founded upon diverse principles of nature, namely, matter and form. And the notion that form gives being to matter but itself receives it from an extrinsic principle of existence is contradictory, since it posits form as both an actual and a potential principle in the composite substance, when it is impossible for one and the same thing to be in both act and potency with respect to the same thing. “Therefore, this position does not seem very fitting.”⁴³

Therefore, Matthew writes, “There is another position which is sounder, more true, and more coherent, namely that every created substance, whether corporeal or spiritual, is composed from matter and form.”⁴⁴ At this point he gives two series of positive arguments for this position. First he gives three arguments on the part of the composing principles, that is, arguments which stem from the nature of the principles making up composite substances; then follow six arguments on the part of the properties of the consequent composites.

⁴² Ibid., “Praeterea, forma non est ipsum esse essentialiter, sed est impressio formae in materiam, secundum Boethium [*De unitate et uno* p 3]; aut igitur ipsa forma, quam ponunt recipere et esse in potentia aliquod esse habet esse a se ipso, quod est contra omnem sapientiam, quia nihil dat sibi ipsi esse, nec includit in se ipsum, aut ab alio, et non nisi a forma, et illud quod recipit esse a forma, non est nisi materia; ergo oportet ponere ibi materiam.”

⁴³ Ibid., “Quod etiam dicunt ibi esse compositionem ex actu et potentia, non tamen ex materia et forma, videtur improbabile, cum actus et potentia sit prima contrarietas, quae necesse est fundari super diversis principiis naturis, quae sunt materia et forma, cum impossibile sit idem et secundum idem esse in actu et potentia . . . Propterea, non videtur positio ista multum conveniens.” Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *De spiritualibus creaturis*, I, especially the paragraph quoted above in Chapter 2 n.207, as well as other texts cited throughout the chapter.

⁴⁴ Ibid., “Et ideo est alia postio sanior et verior et convenientior, quod omnis substantia creata, sive corporalis sive spiritualis, composita est ex materia et forma.”

The first of the arguments on the part of the principles of substance emphasizes Matthew's commitment to what he sees as the genuinely Aristotelian notion of substance. Spiritual substances are not the principles of substance, but are themselves substances. But neither matter nor form are substances, especially separately; it belongs to matter and form to enter into composition with each other; they have a mutual appetite and inclination for each other and dependence upon each other. Aristotle divides substance into matter, form, and the composite which they form; if spiritual substances are really substances, therefore, they are composed of both matter and form.⁴⁵ Matthew is committed, then, to a notion of form as inherently correlative with matter, as the two intrinsic principles of any composite substance. The other two arguments in this section expand this point by returning at greater length to the inclusion of all spiritual substances within the genus substance. Neither an individual nor a species within a composite genus can be simple; but it belongs to substance as such to be composite. "If therefore substance is truly predicated of a spiritual substance, it is necessary for a spiritual substance to be composite."⁴⁶

The first of the arguments from the properties of the composites which follow upon the principles of substance concerns accidents. Matter, not form, is the substrate of accidents, and spiritual substances, although they are in a way simple compared to bodies insofar as they lack extension and the properties pertaining to extension, nevertheless have accidents, such as being dim, acute, having particular memories, sadness, joy, etc. They must therefore

⁴⁵ Ibid., 169: "Huiusmodi substantiae spirituales, de quibus loquimur, aut sunt principia, aut principiata; [non sunt principia], quia nec materia nec forma [sunt] substantiae, maximae separatae, in quibus est prima ratio compositionis et mutui appetitus et inclinationis [et] dependentiae, secundum Philosophum, III *Physicorum*, et XI *Metaphysicae*, et II *De anima*, ubi dividit substantiam in materiam, formam, et compositum; ergo sunt compositae ex materia et forma."

⁴⁶ Ibid., "Si igitur substantia vere praedicatur de spirituali substantia, necesse est spiritualement substantiam esse compositam."

have a substrate for these accidents, which can only be matter. To an objector's claim that accidental forms are in the intellect only intentionally and not according to their true natures, Matthew responds that this may be true of abstracted objects, but not of such accidents as the arts, ingenuity, gladness, and things of this sort, "which are real natures; similarly moral goodness is not an intention, but a real thing and a real habit in the soul."⁴⁷

Second, Matthew argues from their alteration according to form and place. Spiritual creatures change from ignorance to knowledge, and from one affection to another; "but every passage and every transmutation from form to form [takes place] upon something unformed [*informe*],"⁴⁸ but this can only be matter. If, as we have seen Thomas claim, a change from choice to choice or from operation to operation does not need a material substrate, there remains the fact that according to many of the saints, "spiritual substances move from place to place and from accidental form to accidental form, and this change necessarily requires a material subject."⁴⁹ This argument is closely related to the third one, in which Matthew argues from the passibility of spiritual creatures.

The fourth argument is from the power of spiritual substances to both be and not be. Being created *ex nihilo*, they have the potency both to exist and not to exist, but it is matter, the medium between being and non-being, the *prope nihil* which is not quite nothing, which gives substances this power. Matter provides a necessary mediation between being and non-

⁴⁷ Ibid., 170: ". . . quae dicunt veras naturas, similiter bonitas moralis [quae] non est intentio, sed res vera et verus habitus in anima."

⁴⁸ Ibid., "omnis autem transitus et omnis transmutatio de forma in formam est super aliquid informe . . . hoc autem non est nisi materia."

⁴⁹ Ibid., 170-171: ". . . substantiae spirituales moventur de loco ad locum et de forma [accidentali] in formam accidentalem, et haec immutatio requirit necessario materiam subiectam."

being for anything which is in itself indeterminate between one or the other.⁵⁰ Consistent with his earlier claims that form cannot be both act and potency, and that if it were to be potency it would simply be matter, Matthew insists that form always bespeaks act; if, therefore, a spiritual substance were pure form, it would also be pure act. That which exists, the being [*ens*], would be simply identical with its existence [*esse*], and it would have no potentiality, especially potentiality for non-being. Only matter is able to give to a substance that distance from pure existence which is necessary in virtue of being a creature.⁵¹

The fifth argument reasons from the univocity of form. Every form simply by being a form needs matter with which to enter into a composite. “Every form, in whatsoever way [the term] is taken, has univocity, and because of this needs the prop of matter.”⁵²

Finally, Matthew’s sixth argument is from “the diversity, numeration, and individuation of forms.” Diversity, numerical distinction, and individuation are all properties given to form by matter. Considering Thomas’ position that angels are numerically distinct only in virtue of being specifically distinct, since each individual angel exhausts the potentiality of an angelic species within its own essence, Matthew replies that this does not evade the fact that a single angelic essence contains composition within itself. Even if there is a single angel to a species, the angel himself, the unique instance of his species, is not an abstract form, but an individually existing supposit; his substantial form still needs the

⁵⁰ Ibid., 172: “cum igitur non sit devenire ab extremo in extremum nisi per medium, impossibile est aliquid perducere de non-esse ad esse, vel reduci de esse in non-esse, nisi mediante materia; si igitur substantiae spirituales sunt de nihilo creatae, sunt etiam reducibiles in non-esse, ergo etc . . .”

⁵¹ Ibid., “si quia igitur est pura forma: non differt in ea ens ab esse; ita habet se per omnimodam unionem quod si simpliciter non esse [et non esse] hoc [potest], non est propter aliud nisi propter materiam, quae est causa faciendi distare ab esse . . .”

⁵² Ibid., “Omnis forma creata vel est forma particularis quae est forma tantum, et sic necessario materia indiget, cum qua vere unum facit, vel est forma quam vocamus naturam vel essentiam, quae est in supposito, differens ab eo, et colligitur ex multis; igitur omnis forma quocumque modo accipitur, univocitatem habet, ac per hoc fulcientis materiae indiget.”

foundation that matter provides, since form needs something to inform. Gabriel is not merely Gabrielity, but *this* angel Gabriel, and “this” always comes from matter. The problem is compounded for human souls, which all certainly belong to the same species. Matthew considers Thomas’ position here, that human souls are individuated by the body, to be proximate to error. The posterior is not the cause of the prior, but the soul is prior to the body. The soul is the reason why this lump of matter is this human body; this corporeal lump is not the reason why the soul is *this* soul, which is created immediately by God. Again, the soul is separable and when separate is a *hoc aliquid* and an individual even without the body. If it were not composed of matter and form even without the body, it would not be separable.⁵³

Matthew concludes the body of the question by repeating that every created substance, corporeal or spiritual, is composed of matter and form. Following Bonaventure, he notes that matter, however, can be distinguished or considered in three ways: in one, as the subject of substantial form; in another, as the subject of both substantial form and quantity; in a third way, as the subject of substantial form, quantity, and contrariety. The first kind

⁵³ Ibid., 172-173: “Sexto, ex formae diversitate, numeratione et individuatione, sic: Forma de se nullam habet diversitatem, et determinationem, et individuationem, et numerationem; habet haec per materiam . . . Si dicatur quod angeli non differunt ab invicem nisi ut penes formas et species, et quod anima individuatur per corpus, et etiam remanet individuata separata a corpore quia quadam natura fixa est . . . dato, secundum eos, quod tot sint species angelorum quot angeli, cum species sit composita ex genere et differentia, quae sunt diversae naturae, ratione quarum conveniunt et differunt, quia non possunt respectu eiusdem, diversae autem naturae non possunt esse nisi materia et forma, quae sunt principia verae compositionis . . . Rursus, si quilibet angelus est una species, certum est quod non est species vel natura speciei abstracta; ergo necessario est in supposito vel atomo, secundum Damascenum, sine quo esse non potest; ergo [si] est hic angelus, et ita compositus ex materia et forma, et suppositum, necesse est illam quidditatem sive naturam esse ex multis compositam.—Quod dicunt animam rationalem per corpus individuari, puto errori propinquum. Cum enim eadem sint principia essendi et individuandi, homo esset [homo] per corpus, quod falsum est. Praeterea, secundum Avicennam, posterius non est causa prioris; [sed] anima prius est quam corpori unitur ordine naturae ita quod a Deo creatur . . . si igitur anima rationalis vere est hoc aliquid et individuum in specie animae, necesse est esse compositam ex materia et forma, alias non esset separabilis.”

belongs to spiritual creatures, the second to the heavenly bodies, the third to changeable, transmutable, and corruptible bodies.⁵⁴

Matthew's treatment of spiritual matter does not make any significant philosophical advances on Bonaventure, whose principles and conclusions he follows very closely. The present question is of interest, however, first for the degree to which Matthew takes care to derive his principles from Aristotle, which he does at every turn (at the same time, the influence and authority of Augustine and other saints is not forgotten), and second for Matthew's concern to contrast his position with that of Thomas Aquinas. The result offers a critique of Thomistic positions on spiritual matter from a rigorously Bonaventurian perspective, something Bonaventure himself does not give us.⁵⁵ While Matthew never criticizes Thomas' fundamental assumptions directly—the extent to which he realizes that Thomas' metaphysics is radically different from his own is not certain in the present question—he states his own explicitly and uses them to show their complete incompatibility with Thomas' arguments and conclusions.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 173-174: "Dicendum igitur omnem substantiam creatam, tam corporalem quam spiritualem, esse compositum ex materia et forma. Ad intelligentiam tamen obiectorum distinguendum [est] de materia, quia triplex est materia vel tripliciter considerari potest: uno modo prout est subiecta formae substantiali, alio modo prout est subiecta formae substantiali et quantitati, tertio modo prout est subiecta formae substantiali et quantitati et contrarietati. Primo modo, est nota materia in substantiis spiritualibus, quia nulla substantia creata, ut probatum est supra, immunis est ab illa. Secundo modo, est materia in aethereis, utpote in corporibus caelestibus. Tertio modo, tantum est materia in corporibus mutabilis, transmutabilis et corruptibilibus, quia materia contrarietati subiecta necessario annexam habet privationem."

⁵⁵ One must admit that if Bonaventure had done so his treatment would doubtlessly have been more clear and elegant than Matthew's, which can be somewhat crabbed at times.

III.1.3. William de la Mare

William de la Mare (d.1298) most likely held the Franciscan chair at Paris in 1273-1276. He is most well known for his *Correctorium*, a “corrective” running commentary on some works of St. Thomas Aquinas, in the form of short articles showing where Thomas diverges from traditional Franciscan doctrine and giving standard arguments against the divergences. The first version of the work was published in 1278, and by 1282 all Franciscans reading the *Summa theologiae* were required to read William’s corrections along with it.⁵⁶ William thus very quickly became a textbook author, whose very lack of originality or ingenuity provided a kind of benefit, and as such had widespread influence among the Franciscan thinkers of the the succeeding generation. Here I give William’s position on spiritual matter in the *Correctorium* before discussing the (almost certainly earlier) parallel treatment in his commentary on the *Sentences*. This is because the *Correctorium* is the more widely-read and influential work, and more relevant for later parts of this study.

⁵⁶ See Putallaz, *Figures Franciscaines*, 42-43; Mahoney, “Reverberations of the condemnation of 1277 in Later Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy,” in *Nach der Verurteilung von 1277* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2001), 902. For more information on William and the *Correctorium* see Ephrem Longpré, *La France Franciscaine*, v.4 (1921), 288-302; Franz Pelster, “Das Ur-Correctorium Wilhelms de la Mare. Eine theologische Zensur zu Lehren des hl. Thomas,” *Gregorianum*, 28 (1947), 22-235; Franz Pelster, “Die Kommentare zum vierten Buch der Sentenzen von Wilhelms von Ware...,” *Scholastik*, 27 (1952), 344-367; Theodore Schneider, *Die Einheit des Menschen. Die anthropologische Formel 'anima forma corporis' on sogenannten Korrektorienstreit und bei Petrus I. Olivi. Ein Beitrag zur Vorgeschichte des Konzils von Vienne* (Münster, 1972), 89-207; Christian Trottmann, “Sulla funzione dell’anima e del corpo nella beatitudine. Elementi di riflessione nella scolastica,” in: *Anima e corpo*, 139-156; Isabel Iribarren, “‘Responsio secundam Thomam’ and the search for an early Thomistic School,” *Vivarium* 39 (2001), 255-296; Louis Jacques Bataillon, “Guillaume de la Mare. Note sur sa regence Parisienne et sa predication”, *AFH* 98 (2005), 367-422; Adriano Oliva, “La deuxième rédaction du ‘Correctorium’ de Guillaume de la Mare: Les Questions concernant la I pars,” *AFH* 98 (2005), 421-464; Sylvain Piron, ‘Franciscan *Quodlibeta* in Southern *Studia* and at Paris, 1280-1300’, in: *Theological Quodlibeta in the Middle Ages. The Thirteenth Century*, ed. Chris Schabel (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2006), 403-438.

The first time William de la Mare addresses the question of spiritual matter in his *Correctorium fratris Thomae*⁵⁷ is in the tenth article, a response to *Prima pars*, Q. 50, Art. 2 of Thomas' *Summa theologiae*. In his presentation of Thomas' position William distinguishes three reasons for Thomas' rejection of matter-form composition in the angels:

- 1) Matter is always accompanied by quantity, and if angels are not subject to quantitative dimension, neither do they have matter.
- 2) A thing's operation is according to the mode of its substance, but angelic intellectual operations are wholly immaterial; so then are the angels themselves.
- 3) Dionysius is reported as saying that they are incorporeal, understood in the sense of being immaterial.⁵⁸

“But from this position,” he writes, “seems to follow something contrary to the faith.” The Christian faith holds that angels can suffer, for instance, from hellfire. “But according to the philosophers and the saints, what is immune from matter is immune from suffering, and so if an angel does not have matter he is unable to suffer.”⁵⁹ More generally, the angels are mutable, and mutability depends on matter. For instance, “the faith holds that an angel was created neither blessed nor wicked, but capable of either blessedness or wretchedness, just as [he was created capable] of vice and of virtue and of accidents of this kind.”⁶⁰ In order to become either blessed or wicked, virtuous or vicious, the angel must undergo accidental change, and come to be the subject of accidents. Just as matter is the subject of change, it is

⁵⁷ William de la Mare, “Correctorium fratris Thomae”, ed. P. Glorieux, in “*Les premiers polémiques thomistes: I. Le Correctorium Corruptorii ‘Quare’*” coll. “Bibliothèque thomiste” 9, Kain, Vrin, 1927.

⁵⁸ William's presentation of Thomas is not quite accurate here. The citation of Dionysius comes in Thomas' *sed contra*, while the third argument in Thomas' *corpus*, objecting that not everything which is distinct to the intellect is necessarily distinct in things, is overlooked here.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 49: “Ex hac positione videtur sequi aliquid fidei contrarium; primo, quia fides ponit angelos pati: Matt. XXV: ite maledicti, etc. Secundum philosophos autem et sanctos, quod est immune a materia est immune a passione, et ita si angelus non habet materiam non potest pati.”

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 50: “fides tenet quod angelus nec beatus nec malus creatus fuit, sed beatitudinis et miseriae capax, sicut vitii et virtutis et huiusmodi accidentium.”

also the subject of accidents. Form (according to the now-familiar Boethian formulation) cannot be a subject. If certain forms are the subjects of accidents, for instance, humanity, this is by reason of their matter; a man does not receive accidents in his humanity proper, rather it is the matter which is the subject for his humanity which also receives additional accidental forms. Form without matter is not a subject. If, therefore, an angel were a subsistent form without any matter, it could neither be the subject of beatitude, nor of damnation, nor of any spiritual illumination.⁶¹

William concludes, therefore, that angels are composed of matter and form, and cites standard authorities to that effect. To Thomas' contention that angels are composed, not of matter and form, but of potency and act, he replies that potency is always accompanied by matter, citing Aristotle, Averroes, and Maimonides in support of this principle.⁶² Rather surprisingly, William makes no attempt to address Thomas' arguments for a composition of *esse* and *essentia* here. Instead, he simply claims that if sometimes angels were said (by authoritative thinkers, presumably) not to have matter, this is either because the matter of angels is not similar to the more accustomed corporeal matter, or because the entirety of angel's matter is penetrated and quieted by its spiritual form, or because the union of form and matter in an angel is so close that he seems to be pure form, or else because angelic operations are so unimpeded by the angel's matter that it seems not to be there.⁶³

⁶¹ Ibid., "Nam quod certae formae sunt subiectae accidentibus, ut humanitas, hoc est ratione materiae; non enim illa accidentia suscipit in eo quod est, sed in eo quod materia ei subiecta est; dum enim materia subiecta humanitati suscipit quodlibet accidens, ipsa humanitas suscipere videtur. Forma vero sine materia non est subiectum. Ergo si angelus est forma sine materia nec est subiectum beatitudinis, nec damnationis, nec illuminationis alicuius."

⁶² Ibid., 51: "Quod autem dicunt aliqui quod angelus non est compositus ex materia et forma sed ex potentia et actu vel forma, hoc non refert . . . potentia inseparabiliter concomitatur materiam."

⁶³ Ibid., "Ergo si angelus habet potentiam, habet et materiam. Dicitur autem aliquando non habere materiam tum quia eius materia non est similis materiae corporali magis usitatae, tum quia tota penetrata est et quietata per suam formam spiritualem, sibi in hoc consimilem, tum quia tantum convenit in unum cum sua forma quod

Next William responds to Thomas' three reasons for rejecting spiritual matter. To the argument that matter is always distinguished by quantity, but that angels have no quantitative dimensions, William responds that in a way spiritual creatures are distinguished by quantity; not, however, by dimensive quantity, but by numerical quantity, just as two points without dimensions are nevertheless numerically distinct. Matter is not absolutely one in spiritual and corporeal things; rather, when it is in corporeal things it is one way, i.e. corporeal, and when it is in spiritual things it is another way, i.e. spiritual.⁶⁴ One might take this to mean that matter is determined to corporeality or spirituality by the form which it underlies, and thus that it is generically one, although William is not quite so explicit here. As we shall see, in his *Sentences* commentary William affirms an analogical unity of matter.

To the Thomistic objection about the immaterial nature of cognition, William responds with a counterexample. If the intellect receives the forms of intelligible things without receiving their matter, so too does the sensitive power and the imagination. The sense and the imagination may not receive species abstracted from their "material conditions," as the intellect receives universals, but it certainly receives them without their own matter; "nevertheless the sensitive soul and all its powers are bound to matter and are not abstracted from matter as are the species which they receive."⁶⁵ This argument recalls the image given by Bonaventure (and Avicenna) in which the mirror receives images of things

angelus non reputatur nisi pura forma, tum quia operatio angeli per huiusmodi materiam sic a forma absorptam non impeditur."

⁶⁴ Ibid., "Ad primum dicendum quod materia angeli cum sit spiritualis distinguitur non dimensione sed numero, sicut quando unus punctus fit duo. Nec dicimus unam materiam esse spiritualium et corporalium, sed aliam quia corporalium est corporalis et spiritualium est spiritualis."

⁶⁵ Ibid., 52: "Videmus enim quod anima sensitiva, secundum Philosophum, per omnes sensus exteriores et per imaginationem interius recipit species rerum materialium sine materia; licet enim recipiat per sensus praesente materia, et per imaginationem cum aliquibus conditionibus materiae, tamen semper sine materia; sensitiva tamen anima et omnes eius virtutes sunt alligatae materiae et non abstractae a materia sicut species quas recipiunt."

without receiving their matter, and yet has matter as well as form in its composition. It has the advantage, however, of using non-intellectual powers of the intellective soul itself to dispute Thomas' principle that a substance's mode of operation determines its mode of existence. I do not receive the matter of a stone into my eye when I see it any more than into my mind when I understand it, but this does not make my sensitive power separate even from its corporeal organ, much less from all matter whatsoever.

Along similar lines, William points out that, although the intellect receives universal forms, it is not itself a universal: it is a singular object. If Thomas' rule were valid, only an intellect which was itself a universal could understand a universal form! The rule, then, is not universally true. Both the intellectual and the sensitive powers can receive the "intentions" of material things without receiving their matter, but in neither case does this imply the immateriality of the sensing or understanding substance.⁶⁶

Finally, to Thomas' citation of Dionysius, William points to John Damascene's statement that, while angels are called immaterial compared to us, they are not immaterial simply.⁶⁷

The article we have just examined, Article X of William's response to the first part of the *Summa theologiae*, may be taken as representative of William's position and procedure in his *Correctorium*. Although the question of spiritual matter is treated in several other

⁶⁶ Ibid., "Item in operatione intellectivae fallit illa regula; nam anima intellectiva per intellectum recipit species quae sunt universales in comparatione ad singularia quae considerantur in illis; et tamen certum est quod anima intellectiva nullo modo potest dici res universalis sed singularis. Unde regula est falsa si universaliter intelligatur. . . . Et ideo nullum inconveniens est si res immaterialis in materia spirituali recipiatur, quae est anima intellectiva."

⁶⁷ See John Damascene, *De fide orthodoxa*, 1. II, c.2. We have already seen this text in relation to Robert Grosseteste: see Chapter 2, page 46, n.33.

articles,⁶⁸ the material in them is by and large very similar to that in Article X, repeating many arguments and authoritative references nearly verbatim. William's method is the same in each case: he rehearses Thomas' position, gives both philosophical principles and authoritative references for his own position, and responds briefly to Thomas' arguments. As should be clear, William does not give or attempt to give a comprehensive treatment of the problem of spiritual matter; he makes no philosophical advances. For authoritative precedent he relies heavily on Augustine; his philosophical arguments rely heavily on the interdependence of matter and form and the equivalence of matter and passive potency. It seems clear that the value of William's treatment of the subject in the *Correctorium* is to provide readers with a handy set of arguments and a wide range of references to be used against the Thomistic position, rather than to contribute something genuinely new to the debate. If anything is remarkable here it is William's complete disregard of Thomas' alternative to spiritual matter: he does not even mention, much less refute, Thomas' arguments for a composition of essence and existence instead of a composition of matter and form. The closest he comes is to mention that Thomas admits a composition of potency and act but not of matter and form, without looking into the matter further. One must admit that this omission is rather odd. On the other hand, William is particularly interested in refuting Thomas' argument from the immateriality of cognition, and gives an unusual argument against it by comparing intellection with the (similarly immaterial) reception of sensible forms in the sensitive power.

⁶⁸ In *Primam Partem* Art. XXVIII, responding to *Sum.* I. Q. 75 Art. 5; In *Quaes. De anima* Art. VI, responding to Q. 14; In *Quaest. De potentia* Art. IV, responding to Q. 42; In *In Sentent.* Art. IV, responding to Lib. II. Dist. VIII. Q. 5 Art. 2.

William's treatment of the question in his own commentary on the *Sentences* is similar in content to that in the *Correctorium*. He cites standard quotations from John Damascene, Augustine, and Boethius, but also cites Averroes for principles which imply the materiality of angels, namely that whatever is one in species and plural in number has matter, and that whatever acts and suffers is composed of matter and form.⁶⁹

The body of the question is interesting, not because it proposes new arguments, but for the way it highlights the prominence of the positions like that of Thomas in William's day: "Some celebrated and great [thinkers] have said that neither the angels nor souls are composed from matter and form, but only from *quo est* and *quod est*. Howsoever [*Quicquid*] these may philosophize, the saints and philosophers say the contrary . . ." ⁷⁰ William goes on to further cite Isidore, Averroes, and Themistius in his favor. It seems noteworthy, however, that although he mentions composition from *quo est* and *quod est* as the favored alternative to matter and form for his opponents, William again makes no attempt to further describe this position or refute it. Instead he focuses his brief response on explaining how different ways of conceiving matter give rise to different positions. In one sense matter means the subject of generation and corruption; in this sense, according to Aristotle, even the heavens lack matter. In another sense matter is "the primordial principle or the potential principle by which a thing is in potency, and this is not subject to generation or corruption," and taken in this sense according to Aristotle the heavens have matter.⁷¹ Aristotle himself therefore seems to

⁶⁹ William de la Mare. *Scriptum in Secundum Librum Sententiarum*, ed. H. Kraml. München: Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1995. Dist. 3, Q.1: "Utrum angelus sit compositus ex materia et forma," 47.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 48: "Respondeo: Aliqui celebres et magni dixerunt quod nec angelus nec anima sunt compositi ex materia et forma, sed solum ex quo est et quod est. Quicquid isti philosophentur, sancti et philosophi dicunt contrarium. . . ."

⁷¹ Ibid., 48: "Ideo dicendum quod angelus et anima materiam habent. Distinguendum tamen est de materia quia quaedam est generationis et corruptionis subiectum, et sic sumendo materiam frequenter dicitur a Philosopho

distinguish between different senses of matter which are not coextensive. It is not necessary, then, that what has matter whereby it is extended in place must also have matter in the sense of being generable and corruptible. Similarly, the angels have matter without being either subject to generation and corruption or being extended in place; “on account of the power [*virtuositatem*] and purity of the angelic form, and also of the rational soul, the form penetrates the parts of this matter and melds [*in unum coit*] with it so perfectly that it appears that angels and souls have no matter.”⁷²

In the following question⁷³ William considers whether matter is essentially the same in corporeal and spiritual things, and gives an ambivalent response. Providing arguments for both the positive and negative positions, he also provides responses to either position. In the body of the question he first seems to affirm that matter is the same for all creatures, before immediately admitting that the opposite could be held as well. The matter of a corporeal form cannot receive a spiritual form: a body could not come to be a spirit the way air can come to be from fire and fire from air, and, if we admit that matter is called “the same” when it receives contrary forms indifferently, this seems to imply that the matter of spiritual and corporeal things is not the same. Similarly, when one body acts on another the agent is also acted upon by the patient, but this is not the case when a spirit acts upon a body. “Perhaps then it could be said that [the matter of each] is not the same according to essence.”⁷⁴ This

quod caelum non habet materiam. Alio modo dicitur materia principium primordiale vel principium potentiale per quod res est in potentia, et ista non est subiecta corruptioni et generationi, et sic sumendo materiam dicit Philosophus quod caelum habet materiam.” The editor refers the reader to *De caelo* 1, c.9 278a12-b9.

⁷² Ibid., “Non est necesse ut id quod habet materiam localem habeat materiam quae generetur et corrumpatur. Isto ultimo modo est materia in angelis. Tamen propter simplicitatem talis materiae cum non sit extensa, et propter virtuositatem et puritatem formae angelicae et etiam animae rationalis, adeo penetrat perfecte forma partes ipsius materiae et in unum coit cum ea quod apparet quod angelus et anima materiam non habeant.”

⁷³ Ibid., 50-52: “Utrum sit eadem materia per essentiam in spiritualibus et in corporalibus.”

⁷⁴ Ibid., 51: “Ergo secundum hoc materia formae corporalis non potest recipere formam spiritualem. Hoc enim esset ex corpore fieri spiritum sicut ex igne aerem vel ex aere ignem, ergo non est eadem materia per essentiam.

question does not give a definite resolution to the problem. The following question,⁷⁵ however, seems to indicate that William finally leaned towards admitting that matter is not univocally the same for all creatures: “Whence I say that in spiritual and in corporeal things there is not the same matter according to essence nor according to number.”⁷⁶ In a response to one of the opening arguments, which asked whether matter was said of corporeal and spiritual things, univocally, equivocally, or analogically, William chooses the third option: “When matter is said of the matter of an angel, of a man, and of a stone, it is said according to analogy. But if it were said ‘the matter of air is matter’ and ‘the matter of fire is matter,’ then it would be said univocally.”⁷⁷

III.1.4. Nicholas of Ockham

I noted in the last section that William de la Mare’s *Correctorium* became an official Franciscan textbook soon after its publication. As such it could hardly fail to influence the thinking of the succeeding generation of Franciscans on the issue of spiritual matter among others, especially among those less inclined to originality. This influence is clearly seen in

Eadem enim dicitur materia quae indifferenter recipit contraria. Praeterea quando spiritus agit in corpus, non patitur a corpore vice versa, sed quorum materia est eadem, agunt passibiliter secundum Philosophum [*De generatione* 1, c.7 324a34], ideo forte potest dici quod non est eadem secundum essentiam.”

⁷⁵ Ibid., 53-56: “Quaestio 3. Utrum sit materia eadem secundum numerum in quibus est eadem secundum essentiam.”

⁷⁶ Ibid., 54: “Unde dico quod in spiritualibus et in corporalibus non est eadem materia per essentiam nec secundum numerum.”

⁷⁷ Ibid., 56: “Ad aliud dicendum quod quando materia dicitur de materia angeli, hominis et lapidis, dicitur secundum analogiam. Sed si diceretur ‘materia aeris est materia’ et ‘materia ignis est materia’, tunc diceretur univoce.”

Nicholas of Ockham's treatment, which for the most part follows the *Correctorium* closely, as the following examination will make clear. Nicholas was an English friar and theologian who read the *Sentences* in Oxford about 1282, i.e. right when the *Correctorium* was achieving widespread circulation. He succeeded Alanus of Wakefield as lector and *magister regens*. He has been little studied, and for our purposes serves only to show the degree of William de la Mare's influence.⁷⁸

The second book of Nicholas of Ockham's commentary on the *Sentences* begins with three questions about spiritual matter.⁷⁹ The first asks whether in the angels there is a composition of matter and form; the second whether the matter of corporeal and spiritual things is one; the third elaborates on the question of the unity of matter. Nicholas is neither particularly original in his thinking nor extraordinary in his presentation on this issue, which is compressed and somewhat hasty. Most of his arguments are both familiar and very abbreviated. Where he primarily differs from the Franciscan thinkers we have seen so far is in his reluctance to admit that matter is univocally the same in corporeal and spiritual substances.

The first question in Nicholas' short series on spiritual matter asks whether angels are composed of matter and form. I will pass over the brief arguments for and against spiritual matter Nicholas offers from authoritative sources, and only mention the one (by no means

⁷⁸ For Nicholas of Ockham see A.G. Little, *The franciscan school at Oxford in the thirteenth century* (Florenz, 1926), 828, 857 f.; A.G. Little & F. Pelster, *Oxford Theology and Theologians* (Oxford, 1934), 88f, 124f; A. Emmen, *Franz. Stud.*, 39 (1957), 113ff, 131f.; C. Saco Alarcón, "Nicolás de Ockham OFM (d. 1320), Vida y Obras," *Antoniano*, 53 (1978), 493-573; L. Sileo & F. Zanatta, "I maestri di teologia della seconda metà del Duecento," in: *Storia della teologia nel medioevo. III, La teologia delle scuole*, ed. G. d'Onofrio (Casale Monferrato, 1996), esp. 40-42, 138-9; Putallaz, *Figures Franciscaines*, p. 166; V. Doucet, *Commentaires sur les sentences. Supplement au répertoire de M. Frédéric Stegmüller* (Florenz, 1954), 146 ff.

⁷⁹ Nicholas of Ockham, In Sent. d.3 (Civitas Vaticana, Bibliotheca Ottobiana, MS 623, f. 50rb et sq.) P.I q. 1-3 (Transcription by Dr. Timothy Noone): "Circa istam partem primo quaeritur de angelorum simplicitate . . . Circa primum quaeritur primo an in illis sit compositio materiae et formae; secundo an materia corporalium et spiritualium sit una; tertio data quod non sit una unitate numerali, an sit una unitate univocationis."

uncommon) argument which he offers from reason. This is as follows: In passing from simple non-being to actual being there must be a medium in potency, according to the philosophers and the saints, and this can only be matter. Since an angel is able to pass from simple non-being to actual being (i.e., in being created), an angel too must have potential being or the being of matter [*esse materiae*]. Everything which comes to be must have matter.⁸⁰

In the body of the question Nicholas considers several objections to spiritual matter. Some say that in the angels there is composition only from quiddity and being, or, what is the same thing, from potency and act, and not from matter and form. For this they give three reasons: 1) Matter is always accompanied by quantity, but angels lack quantity. 2) The argument from the immateriality of intellection. 3) On the authority of Dionysius, who in *De divinis nominibus* states that spiritual creatures are immaterial.⁸¹ These objections, of course, are those given by Thomas in the *Summa theologiae*.

To these, later in the question, Nicholas gives three corresponding responses. 1) Angels lack the quantity of continuity, but spiritual matter is divided among spiritual substances not by quantitative, but by numerical division. Only *corporeal* matter is always accompanied by quantity in the relevant sense.⁸² 2) Nicholas dismisses the argument from the immateriality of intellection by counterexamples. It is false that, if the intellect has an

⁸⁰ Ibid., “Contra: inter simpliciter nihil et esse actuale, necessario cadit medium, scilicet, esse posse, secundum philosophos et sanctos, sive esse materiae. Ergo cum potest angelus transire a non esse simpliciter ad esse actuale, necessario cadit medium, scilicet esse potentiale sive esse materiae. Ergo non potest angelus transire a non esse simpliciter ad esse actuale nisi per materiam.”

⁸¹ Ibid., “Ad primam quaestionem dicendum secundum aliquos quod in angelis est compositio tantum ex quidditate et esse, sive, quod idem est, ex potentia et actu, et non ex materia et forma, Et istius positionis sunt tres rationes . . .”

⁸² Ibid., “Ad primum argumentum quod adducitur pro confirmatione primae opinionis, dico quod materia angeli, cum sit spiritualis, non dividitur divisione quantitativa sed numerali . . . unde argumentum procedit tantum de materia corporalium.”

immaterial operation, it must be altogether immaterial itself. The sense receives its species without matter despite being bound to its corporeal organ. The intellect receives universals despite being itself a singular substance. If singularity does not impede the presence of universals in the mind, neither does materiality impede the reception of immaterial species.⁸³

3) To the authority of Dionysius and others, Nicholas suggests that angels can be called immaterial in comparison to us, even if not absolutely.⁸⁴ Note that these three replies are extremely similar to those given by William in the *Correctorium*.

Against those who reject spiritual matter Nicholas cites an array of familiar authoritative texts from Augustine's *Confessiones* and *Super Genesim ad litteram*, Boethius' *De Trinitate*, and the pseudo-Boethian *De unitate et uno*; he also cites *Matthew 24*, which speaks of the wicked angels suffering from hellfire. Angels are subject to motion and passion, which require matter. "Therefore it seems to me that it must be said that an angel is composed from spiritual form and matter."⁸⁵ Note that William de la Mare had specifically mentioned hellfire in proving the passability of angels.

Nicholas is aware, however, that in addition to such texts which imply the existence of spiritual matter, there are authorities implying or stating the opposite. He recognizes four reasons why the saints sometimes said that spiritual things lack matter: 1) Spiritual matter is dissimilar to corporeal matter, and they meant that spiritual things were immaterial in lacking the latter. 2) The whole of spiritual matter in a creature is perfectly penetrated and quieted by

⁸³ Ibid., "Ad secundum dico quod si intelligatur quod omnis modum operationis sit in substantia operante, constat quod hoc est falsum. Et hoc patet manifest in anima sensitiva quia sensus est susceptivus specierum sensibilium sine materia et tamen omnis virtus eius et substantia ipsa est alligata materiae. Item intellectiva recipit formas quae sunt universales . . . et tamen anima intellectiva ipsa est singularis . . . materia spiritualis non impedit receptionem specierum immaterialium et incorporalium."

⁸⁴ Ibid., "Ad secundum [*sic*] dico quod Hugo et Dionysius et Magister loquuntur per comparationem ad nos . . ."

⁸⁵ Ibid., "Ideo videtur mihi dicendum quod angelus est compositum ex materia et forma spirituali."

the spiritual form, unlike in corporeal things. 3) Spiritual matter and spiritual form are so perfectly united that it can seem that the angel is pure form. 4) Unlike with bodies, an angel's operation is not impeded by his matter. Furthermore, Nicholas quickly dismisses the notion that angels could have merely a composition of quiddity and being or of potency and act: matter exists wherever potency does.⁸⁶ Note, again, that these same four points, in the same order, were made by William de la Mare in order to account for difficult authorities.

With the exception of some of his authorities, then, it appears that Nicholas is dependent on William's *Correctorium* for nearly every one of his arguments and positions in this question.

In the following question Nicholas asks about the unity of corporeal and spiritual matter. About this he notes that there are two possible opinions. The first opinion distinguishes between prime matter, matter as pure or denuded of all form, and proximate matter, matter as immediately disposed to receive some form. Proximate matter is not identical for everything, but differs for different things, as the proximate matter of a wooden house and a stone sculpture differ. Furthermore, one can distinguish between levels of proximate matter: common matter, which is the matter of all the elements and whatever can be made from them; proper matter, which is the elements themselves as disposed to receive the form of a mixture; and most proper matter, which is immediately disposed to receive a given substantial form. Prime matter on the other hand lacks any dispositive properties, is

⁸⁶ Ibid., "Verumtamen notandum quod, licet angelus habeat materiam, dicitur tamen aliquando non habere materiam et a sanctis propter quattuor causas: tum quia materia eius non est similis materiae corporali; tum quia tota penetra [sic; penetrata?] est et quietata per formam spiritualem sibi omnino conformem; tum quia in tantum convenit et coit in unum cum forma quod videtur esse pura forma; tum etiam quia sua operatio angeli per talem materiam non impeditur. Nec refert dicere eos compositos esse ex materia et forma vel ex quidditate et esse sive ex potentia et actu. Quia secundum Commentatorem super XI potentia inseparabiliter sequitur materiam. . . ."

indifferent with respect to any form whatsoever, and is simple and the same in all material substances. Nicholas attributes this distinction to Aristotle and to many and great thinkers.⁸⁷ This first opinion, then, would claim that prime matter is the same in spiritual and corporeal things, but that their proximate matter is diverse, being already disposed to receive their respective forms.

The second opinion is that corporeal and spiritual matter are simply diverse. Nicholas attributes it to Augustine and to the Commentator. The text seems somewhat confused here, but it appears that Nicholas appeals to the lack of potentiality in spiritual things for corporeal forms, and vice versa. The potencies of generable and corruptible things, celestial things, and spiritual things all differ. Since their matters, then, are not in potency with respect to the same forms, Nicholas concludes that they are not essentially the same except analogously or equivocally, “as will be clear in the following question.”⁸⁸

The third question simply reiterates this point. Spiritual and corporeal matter are only equivocally or analogously the same. One cannot appeal to their univocal substantiality to

⁸⁷ Ibid., “Ad secundum quaestionem duae sunt opiniones. Una quae dicit quod duplex est materia: prima et propinqua; vel, sub aliis verbis, nuda et disposita. Materia vero propinqua et disposita non est una omnium, sicut dicunt, sed diversa diversorum. Haec autem dicitur tripliciter: communis, proprie, et proprissime. Communiter dicitur materia disposita quaecumque habent rationem seminalem seu potentiam activam aliquo modo ad formam cuiuslibet rei fiendae, sive sit forma educibilis per unum agens immediate sive per plura successive agentia. Et isto modo dicuntur elementa esse materia disposita omnium elementatorum. Proprie dicitur materia quae per unum agens educitur immediate et sic quattuor elementa dicuntur materia disposita respectu mixti. Proprissime dicitur materia quae iam est in via ad actum completum alicuius formae, quando scilicet virtute agentis principalis excitatur potentia ut exeat in actum. Materia autem nuda habet potentiam respectu cuiuslibet formae indifferenter et illa est tota et simplex in diversis. Sed est tamen per esse diversa, licet sit una per essentiam. Et hoc est verum secundum Philosophum XI *Metaphysicae* et multi dicunt ita et magni.”

⁸⁸ Ibid., “Verumtamen Augustinus et Commentator etiam videtur velle contrarium, quod alia est materia corporum et spiritalium et una est corporalis et alia spiritalis. . . . Et hoc potest sic declarari . . . Sicut igitur alia est potentia qua materia est transmutabilem ut est in generibus; et qua est in potentia ad formam secundum situm . . . ut est in corporibus caelestibus . . . sic dico quod non est eadem materia per essentiam nisi analogice vel aequivoce, sicut patebit in sequenti quaestione.”

conclude that their matters are identical. “Substance” is predicated of corporeal and incorporeal substances by a logical unity alone.⁸⁹

Nicholas’ treatment of spiritual matter is brief and pedestrian, but its undistinguished character has the advantage of providing an example of what was likely a common way of approaching the issue among Franciscans in his day who were uninclined to think about the topic in an original manner. That this is the case is seen in its similarity to that of the “textbook” author William de la Mare. His first question, on whether spiritual matter exists at all, is almost wholly dependent on William’s *Correctorium*, as comparison makes amply clear. There is a great deal of overlap between the two, both regarding the arguments they include and those they leave out. For instance, each offers an unusual argument, not found in earlier treatments I have examined, that intellectual species may be immaterial without the intellect itself being immaterial, by appealing to sensible species and sense organs. Again, in speaking of the angels’ passability, each mentions the angel’s specific capacity to suffer from hellfire. On the other hand, neither is concerned to refute alternative accounts of spiritual composition.

In the second two questions in the series, Nicholas is not as dependent on William, since William did not deal explicitly with the homogeneity of corporeal and spiritual matter in the *Correctorium*. Where, in his own *Sentences* commentary, William gives an ambivalent response to the question of the unity of matter, Nicholas clearly states in his own treatment that spiritual and corporeal matter are only equivocally or analogously the same. However, it is notable that neither straightforwardly embrace the Bonaventuran unity of matter. An

⁸⁹ Ibid., “Ad tertiam quaestionem dico quod inter materiam corporalium et materiam spiritualium non est unitas univocis, sed tantum aequivocis vel analogice . . . dico quod substantia praedicatur univoce de substantia corporea et incorporea unitate logica in qua attenditur ratio praedicandi tantum . . .”

alternative option, positing two essentially distinct kinds of matter, was obviously becoming more acceptable in Franciscan circles at the end of the thirteenth century, as the example of Richard of Middleton will also show in the next section.

III.1.5. Richard of Middleton

Richard of Middleton (c.1249-1302) studied in Paris under both Matthew of Aquasparta and William de la Mare. He lectured on the *Sentences* in 1280/1281, and as a Bachelor served as a member of the committee that judged the works of Peter Olivi in 1283. Outside the University itself Richard held forth as regent master of the Parisian Franciscan *studium* in 1284-1287, as well as being made Provincial minister of France in 1295. His thought is authentically Franciscan but “eclectic”, influenced by outsiders such as St. Thomas Aquinas and Henry of Ghent. During his academic career he was heavily involved in debates with Henry of Ghent, Giles of Rome, and Godfrey of Fontaines.⁹⁰

In the first article of the third distinction of the second book of his commentary on Peter Lombard’s *Sentences*, Richard asks two questions about the composition of angels; first, whether in the angels there is a real composition of essence and existence; second, whether in the angelic essence there is a composition of matter and form. The first question

⁹⁰ For scholarship on Richard of Middleton see Edgar Hocedez, *Richard de Middleton: sa vie, ses oeuvres, sa doctrine*, (Louvain, 1925); P.P. Rucker, *Der Ursprung unserer Begriffe nach Richard von Mediavilla: Ein Beitrag zur Erkenntnislehre des Doctor Solidus, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters* 31-1 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1925); Palémon Glorieux, “Richard de Mediavilla. Sa patrie, ses dernières années,” *La France Franciscaine* 19 (1936), 97-113; Franz Pelster, “Das Heimatland des Richard von Mediavilla,” *Scholastik* 13 (1938), 399-406; Roberto Zavalloni, *Richard de Mediavilla et la controverse sur la pluralité des formes*. (Louvain, 1951); Johannes Beumer, “Die Theologiebegriff des Richard von Mediavilla O.F.M.,” *Franziskanische Studien* 40 (1958), 20-29; Francis Cunningham, “Richard of Middleton, O.F.M. on esse and essence,” *Franciscan Studies* 30 (1970), 49-76; Sylvain Piron, ‘Richard of Mediavilla’, in *Encyclopedia of British Philosophy* v.3, ed. A. Grayling, A. Pyle & N. Goulder (Thoemmes: Continuum, 2006).

of the second article goes on to ask whether the matter of the angels is of the same kind as the matter of corporeal things.

In the question on composition of essence and existence Richard argues that there can be such a composition only to the extent that the essence of an angel and his being differ. There are some who say that that an angel's being differs from his essence only notionally, and therefore affirm only a notional composition of the two. Richard thinks this inadequate, because if the two differed only notionally, each could be predicated of the other. But it is false to say that the essence of an angel is his existence. Furthermore, according to Hugh of St. Victor, only in God are essence and existence the same.⁹¹

Another position is to identify essence and existence with potency and act in a substance in the following sense: An angel is composed of potential and actual elements; that which is actual in the essence of an angel is its actual being. While an angel's essence is nothing other than what actually exists in the angel, as an essence it can be understood without considering his existence. On this account the existence of an angel is not predicated of his essence, as a part is not predicated of the whole.⁹² That is, since it is not the same thing to understand an angel as actually existing and to understand him merely quidditatively, the

⁹¹ Richard of Middleton, *Commentarium super secundum Sententiarum* (Venice: Bonetus Locatellus, 1499). II. *Sent.* Dist. III. Art. 1 Q.1, fo. 15: "Respondeo quod eo modo quo essentia angeli et suum esse differunt, est ibi compositio ex essentia et esse. Dicunt autem quidam quod esse angeli non differt a sua essentia, nisi secundum rationem, et ideo in angelo non est compositio ex essentia et esse nisi secundum rationem. Sed haec opinio stare non potest, quia ea qui sola ratione differunt, unum predicatur de alio . . . sed haec predicatio est falsa: essentia angeli est suum esse. Praeterea, Hugo i. Didascalio c.6 in solo deo idem est esse et illud quod est." Here, as well as in other quotations from Renaissance-era printed editions in this chapter, I have on occasion ventured to alter the punctuation for the sake of intelligibility or clarity.

⁹² *Ibid.*, "Alii dicunt quod cum essentia angeli sit composita ex actuali et potenciali, illud quod est actuale in eius essentia est esse actuale eius . . . essentia angeli intelligi non potest nisi intellecta re quod est actualis eius existentia, quamvis non sub ratione actualis existentiae . . . Et ita patet secundum istos quod esse angeli non praedicatur de eius essentia, sicut nec pars de toto."

essence and the existence of the essence are not so identical as to be mutually predicable of one another.

Richard rightly regards this account as insufficiently clear. What does it mean to posit potentiality in the angel's essence? He recognizes three ways in which this might be understood: 1) Potency is in the angelic essence in the sense that it lacks the perfection of actuality [*carentiam perfectionis actualitatis*]; 2) the essence is or contains some intelligible matter, that is, a nature which is not potential simply but with respect to the form of the angel; 3) the essence has some purely potential nature [*aliquam naturam pure potentialem*]. These somewhat obscure formulations become clearer as Richard responds to them.

The first option, that the essence is in potency insofar as it lacks actual perfection, Richard regards as insufficient, since it does not bespeak anything really positive [*non dicat aliquid reale positivum*]. Existence could not enter into composition with a lack of perfection, and a privation or a negation is neither an essence nor a part of an essence. "From this it follows that the actual being [*esse*] of the essence of the angel would be really the same as its essence, differing from it by nothing positive, whether absolute or relative; and so it would not be a part of the essence, but the whole essence."⁹³

The second option, according to Richard, also fails to find potency in the essence of the angel itself; if some "intelligible matter" were in potency to the actuality of the angelic form, that form itself remains nothing but actuality. As the possibility for form is not an essence, so neither is the possibility of matter, but only that which is constituted by the actuality of matter and the actuality of form in the complete substance. What follows this,

⁹³ Ibid., "Sequitur quod esse actuale essentiae angeli realiter esset idem quod eius essentia, non differens ab ea secundum aliquid positivum absolutum seu relativum, et sic non esset essentiae pars, sed essentia tota."

then, is that the actual existence of the angel remains really the same as its essence, and not a part of it.⁹⁴ This remark seems to me to betray traces of “Bonaventurean” thinking on the nature of existence, according to which existence is the actual union of matter and form, the essential elements of substance. Richard seems here to conceive of the essence as an “intelligible matter” to be brought to actual existence by the *informing* action of existence. But, he reasons, it is not the case that the essence of something is like matter and its existence like form, even if by the “matter” of the essence we mean both its matter and its form together, in potentiality to the actualization of the principle of existence. For the essence of something is just *what* it is, and this is what is constituted from matter and form, and the existence of the essence is just the constitution of a thing from matter and form. If existence is just the actuality of the essence, the essence is just the actual union of matter and form in a composite.

The third option, which posits some nature which is purely potential in the angelic essence, Richard would find more probable, except for the fact that he rejects one of its key premises. This option agrees with what he identifies as the Boethian notion that something is said to exist according to its form. In other words, if we posit in angels an element of pure potency—matter in the Aristotelian sense—then the actuality of the composite will be a result of the impression of form into it. While this notion clearly does posit potentiality in the angelic essence, in the sense that it posits a composition from a potential and from an actual principle, it is not at all clear that it posits a real composition of essence and existence in the angel. It seems that this is in fact just the Bonaventurean position. Richard does not accept it,

⁹⁴ Ibid., “Si secundo modo adhuc nihil esset de essentia angeli nisi actualitas: quia sicut possibilitas formae non esse eius essentia, sic nec possibilitas materiae, sed tantummodo constitutum ex actualitate materiae in completa, et actualitate formae completae, et sic ad hoc sequeretur quod actuale esse angeli esset realiter idem quod eius essentia, non pars eius.”

however, since he rejects the identification of what “is in the place of matter in an angel” with the pure potency of corporeal matter, as will become plain later.⁹⁵

Rather than attempt to find composition within the essence, others say that the existence of an angel adds some further “absolute thing” to the essence. According to this position, “existence is the very act of the essence, nor is it an accident, but rather something nobler than the essence.”⁹⁶ Strangely, however, Richard claims that all those holding this position agree that the existence of the essence [*esse essentiae*] does not really differ, at least in absolute reality [*saltem in re absoluta*], from the essence itself. It is not clear to me how this is consistent with the claim that they add some further absolute thing to the essence. Richard may have in mind here the position of Giles of Rome, who regards *esse* as some kind of *res*. But since Giles’ position on essence and existence does not particularly concern us here—as we shall see in a later section, he makes little use of it in opposing spiritual matter—I will leave this possibility unexplored.

In any case, for Richard existence cannot be an accident. It is in the nature of substance to exist [*existere*] in itself, while it is in the nature of an accident to exist in another without being a part of it; it cannot exist in itself except miraculously. But if actual being [*esse actuale*] were some absolute thing in addition to the essence, given that it is not in its nature to exist in itself, but in the essence (as the being *of* the essence), it would be a certain accident of the essence. But since the existence of the essence should be more actual than the essence taken by itself, a certain accident would be more actual than the essence, and this

⁹⁵ Ibid., “Si tertio modo probabilis esset opinio, supposito quod in natura angeli posset esse aliqua natura pure potentialis de eius essentia, et apparenter concordaret illi verbo Boetii i.lib. de trini. cap. 3. ubi dicit quod nihil secundum materiam esse dicitur, sed secundum propriam formam. Sed sicut patebit inferius illud quod est loco materiae in angelo non est natura pure potentialis, et ideo illi opinioni non consentio.”

⁹⁶ Ibid., “Alii dicunt quod esse angeli ultra suam essentiam addit rem aliquam absolutam. Unde esse est actus ipsius essentiae, nec est accidens, immo est quid nobilius quam essentia. . .”

seems incoherent. Furthermore, a substance does not have its being from an accident; what it receives from accidents is to be such-and-such (*esse tale*), that is, an accident modifies the being of the substance in which it inheres. If being itself were an accident, then, it would not explain the existence of the angel's essence, and would be superfluous.⁹⁷

Richard's own position, therefore, is that existence cannot add something positive onto the essence any more than it can simply be a part of the existing essence. His conclusion is that existence is "only a real relation to the giver of being itself," a "relation to God, insofar as he is the giver of being itself."⁹⁸ Because the essence bespeaks something absolute, while existence bespeaks a relation, one cannot say that the existence of a creature is its essence. Just as "running" [*currere*] is not the same thing as "a run" [*cursus*], since "a run" is something absolute, an action, while "running" is understood in relation to a runner [*currentem*], so the essence—i.e. the quiddity, "what" exists—is not the same thing as its being, the act of existing; not, however, because the act of being [*esse*] is said in relation to the thing which is [*ens*], but because, according to Richard, it implicitly connotes the relation of the essence to God. If someone should object that I can understand an angel's actual existence without understanding his relation to God, since I need not understand him under the aspect of creation, Richard insists that the understanding of the actual existence of any

⁹⁷ Ibid., "substantia nata est existere in se. Accidens autem dicitur quod natum est existere in alio non sicut pars, nec posset existere in se, nisi miraculose. Si ergo esse actuale esset aliqua res absoluta ultra essentiam ipsius angeli, cum non sit natum existere in se, sed in essentia, esset quoddam accidens ipsius essentiae: quod est inconueniens, quia cum esse sit quod actualius quam essentia. Accidens plus haberet de actualitate quam subiectum; quod inconueniens est . . . substantia non habeat esse simpliciter per aliquod accidens, sed esse tale . . . essentia angeli per suum esse non haberet esse simpliciter, eo esse quo simpliciter competit creaturae."

⁹⁸ Ibid., "Alii dicunt quibus magis consentio quod esse actuale nihil absolutum dicit super essentiam ipsius angeli, sed tantummodo realem relationem ad datorem ipsius esse. . . . Restat ergo quod ultra essentiam ipsius angeli esse non addit nisi relationem ad deum, in quantum est dator ipsius esse."

creature always includes, at least implicitly and in general, the notion of a creator to which the creature is related.⁹⁹

Consequently, “It is to be conceded that in an angel and in every created substance there is some real composition from essence and existence.”¹⁰⁰ This is not, however, a composition constituting a composite substance from two positive and absolute elements, but a composition of an absolute element and a relative one, namely the essence of the angelic substance and a relation of that essence to the angel’s cause of existence. However we ought to understand this rather odd kind of composition, it seems clear that it does not give to the angel the kind of real internal composition of disparate elements sufficient to account for the various properties accounted for by composition from matter and form. Although there is a sense in which Richard admits that an angel is composed of essence and existence, he does not understand it in a way that precludes or renders unnecessary any further composition. The following question, therefore, asks whether the essence itself of the angel is composed from matter and form.¹⁰¹

Richard takes note of four arguments against positing matter in the angels. The first is the well-known argument from the immateriality of cognition. If an angel were composed of matter and form, he could not understand a form abstracted from matter, which is false.

Richard replies that while angels do understand forms abstracted from matter, this is not

⁹⁹ Ibid., “Et si dicatur contra predictam opinionem quod possumus intelligere angeli actualem existentiam, non intelligendo eius relationem ad creatorem, quia possumus intelligere actualem eius existentiam non intelligendo eum sub ratione qua est creatus; dico quod eo modo quo intelligo angeli actualem existentiam, intelligo relationem eius ad datorem sui esse. Si enim intelligo actualem eius existentiam in generali, seu in quodam communi, intelligo relationem eius ad datorem sui esse implicite et in generali. Si aut intelligo actualem eius existentiam distincte et in speciali, intelligo relationem eius ad datorem sui esse distincte et in speciali.”

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., “Concedendum est quod in angelo et in omni creata substantia est aliqua realis compositio ex essentia et esse.” For the sake of brevity, and because they veer into territory well removed from our topic, I omit discussion of the objections and responses in this question.

¹⁰¹ Richard of Middleton, II. Sent. Dist. III. Art. 1 Q.2, fo.15-16: “Secundo quaeritur utrum angelorum essentia sit compositum ex materia et forma.”

prevented by their having their own matter. Although an abstracted form is received in a subject having matter—the angel—it doesn't follow that the abstracted form is in the angelic intellect materially, since the abstracted species is an accidental form of the intellect (one might say, though Richard does not, that this is like the way an image is reflected in a material mirror without itself being material). The angel “understands something composed of matter and form through a similitude of the composite which is not itself composed of matter and form.”¹⁰²

The second argument is again from the nature of intellection, and indeed is almost an expansion of the first; so the reply is in a way an extension of the first reply. The objection claims that a form exists more truly in an intellect than in external reality (*in re extra*). But a form existing in external reality gives its properties to its subject: the form of heat makes a thing hot and the form of blackness makes a thing black. If an intellect had matter just as the extramental thing does, it too would take on the properties of the forms it understood, so that an angel understanding heat would himself become hot.¹⁰³ Richard responds to this by denying the premise. Forms in the intellect do *not* exist more truly there than in external reality. “The form of heat is not more truly in the angelic intellect than in fire, for it is in fire according to the truth of its essence, but in the intellect by its similitude.” An angel does not become a man by understanding humanity, because in a man humanity is really his essence, while in the angelic intellect humanity is simply an accident informing his intellect; and so with all other forms. When a form is received into an intellect, its “reality”—its own proper

¹⁰² Ibid., “Sed intelligit compositum ex materia et forma per illius compositi similitudinem, quae ex materia et forma non est composita.”

¹⁰³ One might note that as it stands this argument does not explain how immateriality avoids the problem. If hotness is more truly in the intellect than in extramental reality, why would an immaterial angel not equally become hot by understanding heat?

and essential operation—is not also received. Richard explains this in terms of a “proportionality” between a form’s activity in reality and in an intellect: “As fire is hot by the reality of heat, so proportionally an intellect is similar to heat by a similitude of heat. But as a similitude of heat is not heat, so to be similar to heat—not by a univocal similitude, but by a similitude not representing [its object] univocally—is not to be hot.”¹⁰⁴

The third objection claims that an angel is created by one creation. But two things are not created by one passive creation—only one is. Therefore the essence of an angel is not composed of two things.¹⁰⁵ Richard makes short work of this by replying that two things, matter and form, are indeed created in the creation of one angel, but since these two constitute a single essence, they are only potentially two, being actually one.¹⁰⁶

The fourth objection argues from the fact that angels are not in potency to substantial change. One need only posit matter where there something has a possibility for being something else. But angels are both created *ex nihilo* and have no preexisting subject, and now have no component which has a possibility to be something else. Richard’s reply to this is again brief. That angels have no preexisting subject is as irrelevant as the fact that the corporeal world had no preexisting subject from which it was created; before anything is created the potentiality for its existence is in God alone. The fact that angels are not in potency to substantial change Richard also dismisses as irrelevant; matter is necessary for

¹⁰⁴ Richard of Middleton, *ibid.*, “Ad secundum dicendum quod forma caliditatis non est verius intellectu angelico quam in igne, quia in igne est secundum veritatem suae essentiae; in intellectu autem per suam similitudinem . . . et sicut ignis est calidus per realitatem caliditatis, ita proportionaliter intellectus est similis calido per similitudinem caliditatis. Sed sicut similitudo caliditatis non est caliditas, ita esse similem calido non similitudine univoca, sed per similitudine non univoce representantem, non est esse calidum.”

¹⁰⁵ It is again unclear why this argument would not apply to corporeal things. Couldn’t one argue that the Sun was created by one creation, ergo, etc.?

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, “Dico quod . . . materia et forma duo sunt constituentes unam essentiam: non sunt due res in actu sed in potentia.”

things to be what they are (perhaps because their forms require a foundation in which to subsist) and in order for them to be mutable.¹⁰⁷

Before the body of the question Richard now gives three arguments in defense of spiritual matter. 1) There is some accident in an angel, as in a subject, and therefore there is matter in the angel. 2) Since form is act, something that is pure form would be pure act. Since it is not true that an angel is pure act, he cannot be pure form. 3) An angel is both active and passive, even with respect to itself: for instance, the agent intellect acts upon the passive intellect. Therefore the angel must have a superior part which acts and an inferior part which is acted upon. “Therefore it is composed of two natures, of which one is superior and actual, and the other inferior and possible with respect to the other.”¹⁰⁸

These arguments are not, however, sufficient to establish hylomorphic composition in angels. They prove that the essence of an angel is composed from two natures or essential parts, of which one is in potency to the other, but seem not to prove that these two natures are matter and form. Furthermore, he denies the cogency of the second argument altogether. Even if an angel were a subsistent form, merely in virtue of being a creature he would lack the fulness of perfection and actuality, and so could not be called a “pure” form or act.¹⁰⁹

In the body of the question, therefore, Richard asks whether the composition of essence and existence that he recognized in the last question is sufficient to dispense with the need to posit a composition of matter and form in the angelic essence. We can exclude

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., “Dico quod falsum est loquendo de esse substantiali et possibilitate que durationem precedit illud . . . quia antequam esset tota potentia suae factibilitatis erat ex parte dei tantum. Est tamen necessaria materia ad hoc quod ille res sint id quod sunt et ut sint mutabiles a se, vel ab aliquo inferiori se.”

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., “Ergo compositum est ex duabus naturis, quarum una superior et actualis, alia inferior et possibilis respectu alterius.”

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., “Argumenta ad partem oppositam non plus concludit nisi quod essentia angeli composita est ex duabus naturis, quarum una respectu alterius est potentialis. . . . Unde si essentia angeli non esset composita ex duabus naturis, tamen eo ipso quod non haberet omnem actualitatis perfectionem cum adhuc esset creatura, non esset pura forma nec purus actus.”

matter—whether understood as homogeneous with corporeal matter or not—from an angel without being forced to think of it as purely actual. It is possible in some way, because every created form, insofar as it comes from God, is both dependent upon him and possible with respect to him.¹¹⁰

After quoting a few of the standard authorities against spiritual matter which supposedly support this position, Richard states that this attempt to dispense with matter in angels rests on a false foundation. Here he realizes a crucial point often overlooked in discussions of spiritual matter from the thirteenth century to our own day: the reason for positing matter in something is not in order that it may be possible with respect to God, the first cause, but in order that it may be possible with respect to itself, or something inferior to itself. Spiritual matter is not merely a way to distinguish creature from creator by adding a level of composition to the creature sufficient to remove it from the simplicity of the creator—in such a case any composition would do. It is *also*, and perhaps more importantly, a way to explain a spiritual creature's *internal* potentiality, its capacity for action, reception, and motion, whatever its relation to God. The angel, when it moves from one will to another will (*de uno velle ad aliud velle*), and from one thought-process (*cogitatione*) to another, and even from one place to another, is possible in a certain way with respect to itself, since to be moved is as such to be possible with respect to the mover.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Ibid., “Ad istam questionem dicunt aliqui quod essentia angeli non est composita ex materia et forma, sive loquimur de materia unigena cum materia corporalium sive non, et tamen est essentia non pure actualis, sed aliquo modo possibilis . . . quia omnis forma creata in quantum est a deo est dependens ab eo et possibilis est.”

¹¹¹ Ibid., “Sed isti innituntur falso fundamento: non enim dicitur necessarium esse materiam ad hoc ut res sit possibilis respectu causae primae, sed ad hoc ut sit possibilis respectu sui ipsius, vel alterius inferioris se. Angelus autem cum moveat semetipsum de uno velle ad aliud velle, et de una cogitatione ad aliam, et etiam de uno loco ad alium locum, quamvis non commensurando se loco, ut in primo libro habitum est: possibilis est aliquo modo respectu sui ipsius, quia esse motum in quantum tale possibile est respectu motoris.”

Apparent authorities to the contrary, as when Boethius and Dionysius seem to say explicitly that spiritual creatures are immaterial, must be understood as denying that angels are composed from the matter of corporeal things, not as denying that they have any matter whatsoever. Since, as we will see shortly, Richard denies that spiritual and corporeal matter are homogeneous, this assertion is particularly easy for him to make. Given that the usual sense of matter is corporeal matter, it is not unreasonable to deny matter in the angels. It is only when matter is taken in its extended sense, the sense Richard will explain shortly, that we must reconsider this denial. Nor should those denying spiritual matter rely on the authority of Aristotle, Avicenna, or the author of the *Liber de causis*, for these thought that the intelligences never began to be, and that they had in them no possibility, except with respect to the first cause, and that they were wholly immutable (*nullo modo mutabiles*). It's no wonder then if, remaining in this error, they denied matter in the angels. This is another very important point which is frequently overlooked: the Aristotelian and Neoplatonic conceptions of "separated substances" are *not* simply equivalent to the Christian conception of the angels. Authors like St. Thomas assume that they are identical, and that what applies to the "Intelligences" of pagan philosophy also applies to Christian angels. But angels have many properties which the pagan separate substances do not (just as the human soul as understood by Christians has properties overlooked by pagan conceptions of it). If the philosophers had believed that the intelligences began to be, and were mutable, and could move themselves, they would have, without a doubt, admitted that there was matter in them.¹¹²

¹¹² Ibid., "Auctoritates etiam Boetii et Dionysii intelligende sunt de materia unigena cum materia corporalium, cuiusmodi materia non est in angelis ponenda, ut inferius ostenditur. Non debent etiam inniti auctoritati Avicenna, quia ipse et Aristoteles et auctor de causis senserunt intelligentias nunquam incepisse, nec eas esse

According to Richard, therefore, we ought to admit that the angelic essence is composed of matter and form, extending the name of matter to every possible nature from which, together with another and more actual nature, something essentially one is constituted. For one and the same thing cannot be both agent and patient with respect to the same thing. An agent acts insofar as it is in act, not insofar as it is in potency; and a patient receives (*patitur*) insofar as it is in potency, not insofar as it is in act. Otherwise one and the same thing would be simultaneously in act and not in act, in potency and not in potency, and contradictories would be true. But to move is to act and to be moved is to receive (*pati*). Something therefore cannot be both moving and moved with respect to one and the same thing. But given that an angel moves from one will to another, and from one thought-process to another, and from one place to another, if he were a simple immaterial form he would be both moving and moved with respect to the same thing. Therefore, there is in his essence one thing through which he moves himself, and another thing through which he is moved; the first thing we call form, and the second matter, understood as just explained.¹¹³

This explanation, however, raises a slight difficulty. Here Richard “extends” the notion of matter to include every possible nature which can enter into composition with some

possibiles, nisi respectu causae primae, et nullo modo mutabiles. Et ideo non fuit mirum si, in hoc errore permanentes, in eis negaverunt materiam. Si enim credidisset Avicenna eas incepisse et esse mutabiles, in eis materiam posuisset, cum ipse dicat . . .”

¹¹³ Ibid., “Videtur igitur mihi dicendum quod essentia angeli composita est ex materia et forma, extendendo [nomen?] materiae ad omnem naturam possibilem ex qua et alia natura magis actuali consuitur unum per essentia. Et hoc declaro sic: Idem respectu eiusdem non est agens et patiens simul respectu eiusdem rei: quia cum agens agit in quantum est in actu, et non in quantum est in potentia; et patiens patitur in quantum est in potentia, et non in quantum est in actu. Si idem respectu eiusdem et ratione rei eiusdem simul esset agens et patiens, sequeretur quod idem respectu eiusdem simul esset in actu et non in actu, et in potentia et non in potentia, quae contradictoria sunt . . . Sed movere est agere et moveri pati. Ergo idem respectu eiusdem non est movens et motum simul ratione eiusdem rei. Cum ergo angelus moveat seipsum de uno velle ad aliud velle, et de una cogitatione ad aliam, et de uno loco ad alium . . . in eius essentia est una res per quam ipse se movet, et alia res per quam ipse movetur; et primam rem dicimus formam, secundam dicimus materiam, accipiendo materiam secundum quod in principio huius opinionis expositum est.”

more actual nature to constitute an essential unity. But in responding to the opening arguments, as we have seen, Richard says that they conclude “no more than that the essence of an angel is composed from two natures, of which one is potential with respect to the other,” as though they were, consequently, insufficient to establish a genuine matter-form composition without the additional discussion in the body of the question. There seems to be no difference between the two descriptions of the “different natures” of which angelic essences are composed; why then does Richard speak in the body of the question as though they can be taken unproblematically as matter and form, while in the responses he seems to indicate that they cannot?

It seems to me that two explanations are possible. Either, in light of the remarks in the body of the question, the “*non plus concludit nisi*” in the responses should not be taken as strongly as I took them above, although this seems to be the natural reading; or else Richard is speaking somewhat hesitantly because of his views on the non-homogeneity of matter. This seems to agree with his remarks on the authorities against spiritual matter. If “matter” is taken in its ordinary sense, as the matter of corporeal things, then it is *not* sufficient to call “matter” any potential nature whatsoever which can be compounded with another, more actual nature; but if the term “matter” be “extended” beyond corporeal matter, one can do so.

In the first question of the next article¹¹⁴ Richard asks whether the matter of the angels is homogeneous with the matter of corporeal things. He formulates this question in a manner which strongly calls to mind that of Bonaventure: are the two matters homogeneous with the kind of similitude whereby we can say that several gold rings have a homogeneous

¹¹⁴ Richard of Middleton, II. Sent. Dist. III Art. 2 Q.1, fo.16: “Utrum materia angelorum sit unigena cum materia corporalium.”

matter? Among the arguments Richard gives for the affirmative is one from the univocity of number. It is especially through matter that things can be numbered. Two gold rings are *two*, not by the similarity of their form, but by the numerical diversity of their matter. But spiritual and corporeal things are numbered in a univocal manner, for when I say that there are two angels and two rings I do not mean something different by “two” in each case.¹¹⁵ Note the similarity of this argument with one given by Bonaventure in his question on this subject.¹¹⁶

Richard does not, however, find the arguments for the homogeneity of matter to be compelling, and it seems to him that that matter of the angels is not homogeneous with the matter of corporeal things. One reason for this, as I have noted above, is the fact that some authoritative writers have denied matter in spiritual creatures; this becomes intelligible if we reflect that they were denying that spiritual creatures had matter of the same sort as corporeal things, without necessarily meaning that they were without any matter whatsoever. But another reason arises from considering the role that matter plays in corporeal substances. Matter is the reason that extension exists in substances, but there is no extension to be found in spiritual substances; it is clear, therefore, that the matter of each kind of substance is not called matter univocally. Furthermore, matter is related to form according to the pattern (*ad similitudinem*) whereby more generally passive potency is related to its act, so that differences between potencies can be ascertained by considering the differences of their respective acts. Whence if we see specifically differing acts, each with its own potency determined by and proportioned to it in such a manner that neither potency is able to receive

¹¹⁵ Richard of Middleton, *ibid.*, “Respondeo quod secundum quosdam materia angelorum est unigena cum materia corporealium: ad similitudine qua diceremus plures anulos de auro habere materia unigenam similem in substantialitate . . . numerus est in rebus maxime per materiam. Sed univoce invenitur numerus in substantiis spiritualibus et corporalibus. Ergo materia univoce in eis est.”

¹¹⁶ Bonaventure, II Sent. Dist. III. Pars. I Art. I Q. 2, argument 3.

the determinate act of the other, then the two potencies are also specifically different. But if different potencies are indifferently capable of receiving these specifically differing acts, then we judge that they have the same kind of nature. We say, therefore, that all corporeal matter is homogeneous, since the matter of any element is in potency to the form of any other element: elements and corporeal forms are transmutable. But since the matter of the angels is determinate and proportioned to a spiritual form and cannot receive any corporeal form; and conversely the matter of corporeal substances is proportioned to corporeal forms, they cannot be the same kind of matter.¹¹⁷

We may recall that for Bonaventure the homogeneity of matter was assured by (so to speak) its absolute blankness. Since matter by nature was in privation to every act, receiving all actual being and every property from its form, aside from its formal properties there was nothing whatsoever whereby one material subject could be differentiated from another. For Bonaventure spiritual matter was only “spiritual” because it happened to be informed by a spiritual form; in its own essence it was indifferently disposed to receive any form whatsoever. As the above remarks may show, Richard rejects the homogeneity of matter primarily because he rejects this premise. If spiritual matter is intrinsically determined by

¹¹⁷ Richard of Middleton, *ibid.*, “Sed rationes quibus innitur ista opinio non multum cogunt, ut patebit in solutione argumentorum . . . Unde mihi videtur sine prejudicio dicendum quod materia angelorum non est unigena cum materia corporalium. Hoc est dictu quod in illis non est univoce materia, quod declarent rationibus et auctoritatibus. Extensio enim est in substantiis maxime per naturam materiae. Cum ergo extensio in substantiis spiritualibus inveniri non possit, patet quod de materia ipsorum et de materia corporealium non dicitur materia univoce. Preaterea materia se habet ad formam ad similitudinem qua potentia passiva se habet ad actum. Differentiam autem potentialium iudicamus aspiciendo ad differentiam actuum. Unde si videmus actus differentes specie et unam potentiam esse determinatam ad unum actum, et proportionatam illi, aliam autem potentiam ad alium actum determinatam et illi proportionatam, ita quod neutra illarum habet rationem potentiae respectu speciei in qua est actus alterius, dicemus illas potentias differre specie. Si autem quelibet respicit utrumque actum indifferenter, tunc iudicamus eas esse unigena naturae. Unde quia materia cuiuslibet elementi est in potentia ad formam cuiuslibet elementi, dicimus quod in eis est materia univoce. Cum ergo materia angelorum sit determinata ad formam spiritualem, et illi sit proportionata, et non sic in potentia ad aliquam corporalem formam; et materia ipsorum corporum sit proportionata formae corporali, ita ut non sit in potentia ad angelicam formam . . .”

and proportioned to the spiritual form to which it is in potency, and similarly for corporeal matter, then there is already in matter some inherent property whereby different kinds of matter may be differentiated.

This is confirmed by one of the responses at the end of the question. Unlike Bonaventure, Richard denies that matter is “a potential nature which has no proper actuality whatsoever, as some say.” Rather, corporeal matter, the matter of generable and corruptible things, holds the lowest grade of actuality. It is a thing [*rem*] in potency to substantial form. But the substantial form to which corporeal matter is in potency has less actuality than an angelic form. Correspondingly, angelic matter has a grade of its own actuality higher than that of corporeal matter in proportion to the greater degree of actuality of the angelic form in comparison with the small degree of actuality of corporeal forms. Even if it were not the case, however, that matter had its own low degree of actuality, still it would be the case that the matter of corporeal things is not in potency to spiritual forms, and conversely. Even if matter were pure potency, it would not be univocal: one kind of matter could be pure potency, but only with respect to corporeal forms, and another kind could be pure potency, but only with respect to spiritual forms.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ Ibid., “Ad secundum dicendum quod materia non ideo dicitur natura potentialis quod nullam penitus habeat actualitatem propriam, ut dicunt quidam, sed quia materia generabilium et corruptibilium tenet infimum actualitatis gradum, *rem* in potentia ad substantialem formam. Unde non est inconueniens dicere quod materia angelorum plus habeat de propria actualitate quam materia corporum, quamvis ita sit potentialis, respectu magnae actualitatis formae angelicae: sicut materia corporum, respectu paruae actualitatis formae corporeae. Preterea, si omnis materia diceret nullam pure potentiale, adhuc non oporteret quod univoce reperiretur in omnibus, quia sicut inferius ostenditur, est aliqua possibilitas ad unam formam, que non est ad aliam. Unde principium pure potentiale materiae generabilium et corruptibilium concreatum, quod est transmutabile in formam substantialem, non est transmutabile in formam accidentalem, nec econverso . . .”

III.1.6. Peter John Olivi

Peter John Olivi (c.1248-1298) was born in the Languedoc area and studied in Paris 1267-1272. Both during his life and after his death he was revered for his ascetical and pious lifestyle, but his writings and his connection to the spirituals also inspired controversy and suspicion. He was suppressed by his own Franciscan order in 1283, rehabilitated by Matthew of Aquasparta in 1287, and twenty years after his death his tomb was destroyed and his remains removed. His *Lectura super Apocalypsim* was condemned by Pope John XXII in 1326. Olivi's stances on poverty and philosophy place him at the center of Franciscan controversies during this period, and he has been of great interest to scholars entirely apart from the metaphysical questions which concern us.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ For a relevant selection of the extensive literature on Olivi, see Bernhard Jansen, "Die Seelenlehre Olivis und ihre Verurteilung auf dem Vienger Konzil", *Franziskanische Studien* 21 (1934), 297-314; Virgilius Biasiol, *De creatione secundum P.J. Olivi* (Vicenza: Tipografia commerciale, 1948); Feliciano Simoncioli, "Il vero fondamento metafisico del dinamismo Oliviano," *Studi francescani* 51 (1954), 127-139; Efreim Bettoni, *Le dottrine filosofiche di Pier di Giovanni Olivi*. (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1955); O. Bettoni, "Olivi di fronte ad Aristotele," *Studi Francescani* 55 (1958), 176-197; Carter Partee, "Peter John Olivi: Historical and Doctrinal Study," *Franciscan Studies* 20 (1960), 215-260; Ernst Stadter, "Das problem der Theologie bei Petrus Johannes Olivi OFM: auf Grund gedruckter und ungedruckter Quellen dargestellt," *Franziskanische Studien*, 43 (1961), 113-170; W. Hoeres, "Der Unterschied von Wesenheit und Individuation bei Olivi," *Scholastik* 38 (1963), 54-61; Servus Gieben, "Bibliographia oliviana (1885-1967)," *Collectanea Franciscana* 38 (1968), 167-195; David Burr, "Petrus Joannis Olivi and the Philosophers," *Franciscan Studies* 31 (1971), 41-71; Ernst Stadter, *Psychologie und Metaphysik der menschlichen Freiheit. Die Ideengeschichtliche Entwicklung zwischen Bonaventura und Duns Scotus*, Veröffentlichungen des Grabmann-Institutes, Neue Folge 12 (Munich-Paderborn-Vienna, 1971); Paolo Vian, *Pietro di Giovanni Olivi, Scritti scelti* (Rome: Citta Nuova, 1989); Ivo Tonna, "La 'pars intellectiva' dell'anima rationale non é la forma del corpo (Dottrina di Pierre Jean Olivi sull'unione tra anima e corpo)," *Antonianum* 65 (1990), 277-289; Udo Reinhold Jeck, *Aristoteles contra Augustinum. Zur Frage nach dem Verhältnis von Zeit und Seele bei den antiken Aristoteleskommentatoren, im arabischen Aristotelismus und im 13. Jahrhundert*, (Amsterdam Philadelphia, B.R. Grilner, 1994); Stephen Dumont, "The Origin of Scotus's Theory of Synchronic Contingency," *Modern Schoolman* 72 (1995), 149-167; Olivier Boulnois, "Vouloir, voeu et noblesse de la volonté selon Olivi," *Cahiers du Centre de Recherches Historiques* 16 (1996), 57-64; Robert Pasnau, "Olivi on the Metaphysics of Soul," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 6 (1997), 109-132; Alain Boureau and Sylvain Piron, eds., *Pierre de Jean Olivi (1248-1298), Pensée scolastique, dissidence spirituelle et société* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1999); Jordi Gayà, "Informe Olivi sobre una teoría acerca de las razones reales esenciales," *Studia lulliana* 39:95 (1999), 3-23; Ivan Colin, "Pierre de Jean Olivi: un penseur franciscain méconnu [† 1298]," *Heresis* 32 (2000), 97-122; Richard Cross, "Absolute time: Peter John Olivi and the Bonaventuran Tradition," *Medioevo* 27 (2002), 261-300; Tiziana Suarez-Nani, "Pierre de Jean Olivi et la subjectivité angélique," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* 70 (2003),

Peter Olivi's discussion of spiritual matter in his *Quaestiones in secundum librum Sententiarum*¹²⁰ is the longest treatment of the subject examined in this study, and one of the most interesting. Olivi uses the question of spiritual matter as an occasion to produce what amounts almost to a small treatise on the nature of matter itself as a principle of substance, and covers an usually wide range of objections and arguments. He considers different ways of conceiving of matter, why matter is a necessary element of metaphysics at all, and the properties of substances which require matter to be explained. He gives his opinions on how much respect should be given to pagan authorities in such matters (the answer is: not much) and why their arguments are insufficient. The following brief outline, using the page numbers of the printed text, indicates something of the scope of this ambitious question:

Page 291: "Primo quaeritur an in angelis et in omnibus substantiis intellectualibus sit compositio materiae et formae. Et quod non videtur."

291-299: 8 arguments "per vias communes omnibus entibus creatis."

299-303: 14 arguments "per vias proprias substantiis intellectualibus."

303-304: 6 arguments Contra [for spiritual matter].

304-330: "Respondeo."

330-355: "Solutio Obiectorum."

As can be seen, Olivi provides a total of twenty-two objections to spiritual matter; these range from such basic issues of metaphysics as why any substance at all needs any kind of matter, to arguments based on the properties specific to intellectual substances. Most of these objections are not the standard brief recitations of contrary authorities but complex and fully worked-out arguments. After a smaller series of arguments for his own position, which Olivi

233-316; Sylvain Piron, "L'expérience subjective chez Pierre de Jean Olivi," in: *Généalogies du sujet. De saint Anselme à Malebranche*, ed. Olivier Boulnois (Paris: Vrin, 2007), 43-54; Mikko Yrjönsuuri, "The Soul as an Entity, Dante, Aquinas, and Olivi," in H. Lagerlund (ed.), *Forming the Mind. Essays on the Internal Senses and the Mind/Body Problem from Avicenna to the Medical Enlightenment*, (Springer Netherlands, 2007), 59-92.

¹²⁰ Peter John Olivi. *Quaestiones in secundum librum Sententiarum*, ed. B. Jansen (Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi 4-6), 3 vol. Quaracchi: Ad Claras Aquas, 1922, 1924, 1926. v. 1, Quaestio XVI. "Primo quaeritur an in angelis et in omnibus substantiis intellectualibus sit compositio materiae et formae," 291-355.

refuses to endorse, the body of his question is an impressive twenty-five pages in the Quaracchi edition, and the answers to the objections take up another twenty-five. It should not cause surprise, therefore, to say that Olivi's treatment includes a great many good and interesting arguments treated at length which there is no space to consider here. Indeed, his question seems to me to fully deserve a more thorough study of its own, but I can only consider the most salient points. In light of this I will examine Olivi's doctrine as more systematically laid out in the body of the question first, before turning to a mere few of the objections and responses.

The body of the question opens as follows:

Although some have held and do hold that there is no matter, nor a composition of matter and form, in intellectual substances, nevertheless I believe according to the more common opinion that there is a composition of matter with form in them, and I believe that this is safer and more secure according to the Faith, and that the other [position] approaches the error of the infidelity of the pagans and philosophers.¹²¹

This opening remark presents several important aspects of Olivi's view on this matter. First, it is noteworthy that even in his own day Olivi can speak of spiritual matter as being the "more common opinion," calling into question the widespread assumption among modern scholars that after St. Thomas its proponents were fighting a rearguard action. Second, Olivi believes that orthodox Christian teaching requires the doctrine of spiritual matter. We cannot conceive of angels and intellective souls as immaterial and still attribute to them all the properties which Christian doctrine requires. Third, however, is that the denial of spiritual matter is philosophically as well as theologically erroneous. Despite his negative attitude towards the pagan philosophers, Olivi's justification for spiritual matter is thoroughly

¹²¹ Olivi, *ibid.*, 304: "Ad quaestionem dicendum quod licet aliqui tenuerint et teneant in substantiis intellectualibus non esse materiam nec compositionem materiae cum forma, credo tamen iuxta communiorem opinionem in eis esse compositionem materiae cum forma et credo quod haec secundum fidem sit sanior et securior et quod altera multum appropinquet errori philosophicae et paganicae infidelitatis."

philosophical, as he sees the danger to Christian doctrine as stemming from philosophical errors which can be refuted aside from theological considerations.

For a fuller understanding of the subject, then, Olivi proposes that four subsidiary problems need to be solved: 1) What is the meaning of the term “matter” about which the question is asking? 2) How is matter a necessary element in the constitution of beings? 3) Is the nature of matter compatible with the properties of an angelic nature? 4) Can the angelic nature, and the natures of other intellectual substances, exist without matter?¹²²

First Olivi looks at the different ways of conceiving matter insofar as it bears on this question. He notices that there are two primary ways of conceiving of matter. According to the first, matter is pure potency, having no act or actuality of its own. This can be gleaned, according to him, from Aristotle, “who everywhere defines it by saying that it is a being in potency, and that it is a medium between being and non-being [*ens et non ens*], and that nothing in it is distinct, and that of itself it is infinite and indeterminate, and [who] always distinguishes it from form as potency from act.”¹²³ Those who hold this position also have arguments for it, stemming especially from the notion that form and act are the same [*forma et actus idem sint*]: therefore actuality always comes from the form, and matter distinguished against form necessarily has no actuality of its own.

¹²² Olivi, *ibid.*, 304-305: “Ad huius autem plenioris intelligentiam quatuor sunt notanda; quorum duo sunt communia omnibus substantiis intellectualibus propria; oportet enim [1] primo videre quae sit ratio materiae quam per suum nomen directe significare intendimus; [2] secundo autem quae sit eius necessitas ad constitutionem entium; [3] tertio oportet videre an ratio et natura materiae cum proprietatibus naturae angelicae possit se compati; [4] quarto an natura angelica et aliarum substantiarum intellectualium possit sine materia salvari in complemento suae existientiae et speciei.”

¹²³ Olivi, *ibid.*, 305: “Quantum ad primum sciendum quod quidam dixerunt materia esse puram potentiam seu purum possibile, ita quod in sua essentia nihil esset secundum se actus seu actualitatis. –Et nisi sunt hoc trahere ab Aristotele qui ubique definit eam dicendo quod est ens in potentia et quod est medium inter ens et non ens et quod nihil in ea est distinctum et quod est de se infinita et indeterminata semperque distinguit eam a forma tanquam potentiam ab actu . . .”

The other way of conceiving matter, which is Olivi's own, is that "matter according to its essence bespeaks some act or actuality, yet sufficiently distinct from [that] act which is the same as form . . . taking the term 'act' to mean whatever is positively real and whatever [is] a real entity."¹²⁴ Matter has its own essence apart from form, and essence is the act or actuality of a being [*essentia enim est actus seu actualitas entis*], not partially, as a form is, but rather completely, because the essence itself is properly that through which a being is a being. To the extent, therefore, that a being has essence, it also has actuality. Matter is not *potentially* matter; it is *actually* matter, aside from any form to which it is in potency. If matter is to be a foundation in which form may exist, it must be *something that is*. "Nothing can be actually founded and established in that which has no actuality of itself; therefore neither passive potency nor any form could be founded in matter, if it had no *per se* actuality."¹²⁵ Matter, then, cannot be a principle which receives all its being from form, or else it could not perform its own function of underlying that form as its substrate.

Furthermore, matter has its own properties besides those of form; for instance, corporeal matter has bulk or mass, movability, and diversity of parts, which it has prior to receiving a corporeal form and which are in fact preconditions for doing so. But these properties are some real positive characteristics indicating some degree of actuality. "It would be amazing if they [Olivi's "Aristotelian" opponents] were willing [to say] that this [matter] was nothing but pure potency, when these [properties] do not seem to be attributable

¹²⁴ Olivi, *ibid.*, 305-306: "Alii autem dixerunt et, ut credo, verius et rationabilius quod materia secundum suam essentiam dicit aliquem actum seu actualitatem, distinctam tamen sufficienter ab actu qui est idem quod forma; hoc autem dicunt, sumendo nomine actus quodcunque positivum reale et quamcunque realem entitatem."

¹²⁵ Olivi, *ibid.*, 306: "Praeterea, nihil potest fundari et stabiliri actualiter in eo quod de se nihil habet actualitas; ergo nec potentia passiva nec forma aliqua poterit fundari in materia, si ipsa per se nihil habet actualitas."

to pure potency.”¹²⁶ Pure potency could not be the foundation of everything in a substance: rather it would be more reasonable to think that pure potency would itself need to be founded in something. We ought to hold, therefore, that matter is not mere potency, but that besides its potency it is something solid, having in addition to its own actuality the potentiality to receive other forms.¹²⁷

However, if both matter and form are principles or elements having their own actuality and their own properties, the question arises of what distinguishes them. Olivi replies that they are not the same kind of being [*ens*]. Matter is in itself an indeterminate being, and its own actuality and its being [*esse*] and its unity are indeterminate and determinable by various forms, whereas form is determinate and not determinable by something else except accidentally. Form is not in potency to form, and is not actualized by either form or matter, whereas matter is in potency to form and its own actuality is apt to be perfected and brought to complete actuality by form. The actuality of matter is in itself defective, needing the actuality of form for its perfection, while form is itself the terminus of actuality and is not determinable by another.¹²⁸ As he says later on, although matter bespeaks both act and essence, these are essentially different from the act and essence of form; the act and essence of matter essentially includes within itself the privation of “informedness”

¹²⁶ Olivi, *ibid.*, 307: “. . . mirabile esset, si voluissent cum hoc ipsam non esse aliud quam puram potentiam, cum ista non videantur posse attribui purae potentiae.”

¹²⁷ Olivi, *ibid.*, 307: “Tenendum est igitur, ut credo, quod materia non sit solum potentia, sed praeter hoc quiddam solidum habens in se rationem non solum unius potentiae, sed etiam plurium, sicut ipsemet Aristoteles vult. . .”

¹²⁸ Olivi, *ibid.*, 308: “Distinguunt autem eam isti a forma hoc modo. Dicunt enim quod materia dicitur ens indeterminatum, ita quod eius actualitas et eius esse et eius unitas est omnino de se indeterminata ac per hoc determinabilis per varias formas. Formam autem dicunt esse autem determinatum non determinabilem per aliquid aliud nisi per accidens. Licet igitur materia aliquo modo sit actus, sufficienter tamen distinguitur a forma per hoc quod actualitas huius est per suam essentiam indeterminata et determinabilis; et ita per suam essentiam est in potentia ad alia tanquam per suam essentiam possibilis determinari per ea. Forma vero seu actus formalis est per suam essentiam determinatus seu potius terminus et terminatio et ab alio non determinabilis.”

[*informitatem*] and the determination of being [*essendi*]; it contains potentiality and perfectibility, as well as “something more absolute in itself which we cannot well explain in words; whereas form includes in itself the opposite of these.”¹²⁹

Olivi asserts that when Aristotle called matter being in potency he didn’t necessarily mean that matter was pure potency, but rather that it was in potency to being distinguished and unified and perfected by form. From all this it follows that form and act are *not* simply equivalent. Form does not have the same extension as act, rather to call something a form is to add a further, more specific determination onto the general term “act”. Not any act whatsoever is a form, but only an act which is determinative (of matter) and indeterminable by something else; since this kind of act has no potentiality, as the act of matter has, we distinguish the act of form from the act of matter as act from potency. Again, this is not to imply that matter is *merely* its potency, but only to point out the different natures of the actuality belonging to form and that belonging to matter. Matter, in addition to its own actuality, is *also* in potency to being informed by form, whereas form is not. But matter, although it is incomplete without being perfected by some form, still cannot be understood without some actuality of its own which is already simultaneously in potency to that form.

Matter still needs form in order to exist. Since it is inherently indeterminate, in order to have determinate existence—and nothing actually exists indeterminately—it needs the determination of form and cannot “stand” without it. Matter always has some form or other. It is for this reason that matter is said to receive all its being from form, not because it

¹²⁹ Olivi, *ibid.*, ad 3, 333: “Ad tertium patet ex iis quae dicta sunt in principio responsionis principalis. Licet enim materia dicat actum et essentiam, tamen essentialiter differentem ab actu et essentia formali; quoniam actus et essentia materialis includit in se essentialiter privationem informitatis et determinationem essendi et ordinem potentialitatis et perfectibilitatis et aliquid magis sibi absolutum quod nobis non est bene explicabile verbo; forma vero includit in se eorum opposita. . . .”

receives all actuality from it, but because without form matter cannot actually exist.¹³⁰

Although matter is able to lack this form or that, and so can exist prior to any given form which it receives, it cannot exist *simpliciter* without any form whatsoever. While, therefore, it can exist prior to *any* given form, it cannot exist prior to *all* form; matter and form must always exist simultaneously and are by nature correlative principles.¹³¹

Having established the nature of matter according to his own position and contrasted it with that of the competition,¹³² Olivi goes on to consider how matter is necessary for the constitution of beings. In order to see why creatures cannot exist without matter, three things must be considered: 1) How possibility or passive potency belongs to all created substances; 2) In what way this potency is substantial; 3) How this potency must be essentially and really distinct from the formal act, that is, from form. These three points will make it plain that some possible principle, essentially distinct both from form and from the substance itself,

¹³⁰ Olivi, *ibid.*, 309-310: “Quod autem dicitur eam non posse distingui a forma secundum hunc modum, quia forma et actus idem sunt: sciendum quod si actus sumatur generaliter secundum quod est analogum ad essentiam materiae, formae et compositi et ad essentias accidentium, sic forma non est ita commune sicut actus, immo addit aliquam specialem rationem ad ipsum. Forma enim non est actus qualiscunque, sed solum actus determinativus et indeterminabilis; et quia huiusmodi actus nullam habet in se potentialitatem, sicut habet actus materiae: ideo illum actum distinguimus ab isto sicut actum a potentia, non intendentes per hoc quin in potentia tali implicetur aliquis actus, sed intendentes per hoc significare differentiam seu rationem differentialem per quam actus materialis distinguitur a formali; quia scilicet iste est de se possibilis et informabilis, ille autem nullo modo.” This passage, it seems to me, reveals how close Olivi is to St. Bonaventure’s position, despite some important verbal differences. Olivi has abandoned Bonaventure’s distinction between the stability of existence, belonging to matter, and the act of being, belonging to form, in favor of a distinction between the modes of actuality belonging to each; nevertheless the roles each principle play in the constitution of the composite substance seem extremely similar.

¹³¹ Olivi, *ibid.*, ad 4, 334: “licet enim possit aliquando esse sine hac vel sine illa et pro tanto possit esse prius naturaliter hac forma vel illa, non tamen simpliciter potest esse sine forma. Et ideo nec simpliciter et absolute et universaliter est prior omni forma, immo sic materia et forma sunt simul natura tanquam correlativa . . .” See also the illuminating remark in ad 5, 335-336: “Dico igitur quod materia uniri formae non est aliud quam eam per modum possibilis et informabilis esse praesentem formae; et formam uniri non est aliud quam eam per modum actus et informantis esse praesentem materiae.”

¹³² Of course, neither St. Thomas nor anyone else of the “pure potency” school is named.

but belonging to their totality (i.e., the complete *ens*), must exist in every creature. “And so we will have in every being the full definition or meaning of matter.”¹³³

First, it is necessary for every creature whatsoever to contain within itself a passive potency whereby it may be perfected. Without passive potency a creature would be completely self-inclosed and unable to reach its proper completion, either with respect to God or with respect to the other members of the created universe. All creatures have an end to which they are directed, and must progress towards this end (for instance, spiritual creatures are *capax Dei*, capable of knowing and loving God, but only by receiving various perfections from him). Therefore all creatures have a capacity for action, motion, and change, spiritual creatures not excepted, and this implies passive potency.¹³⁴

This point leads to the second, namely that passive potency in a creature must be substantial. If a substance has accidents, these accidents must inhere in some substantial principle. Now, a capacity for accidents is intrinsic to the idea of a substance. That a substance has accidents is not itself accidental. Even the *name* of substance implies a supposit or foundation for accidents to inhere in. Further, that in which forms are primarily received [*primum recipiens*] cannot itself be received in another, and this (what cannot be received in another) is what is substantial in something. Therefore, besides the formal essence of a thing (humanity, angelity), *to be a subject for accidents* is intrinsic to the substance of anything whatsoever. Again, it is not in the formal actuality of its essence that

¹³³ Olivi, *ibid.*, 311: “Secundum autem est videndum quae sit necessitas materiae ad constitutionem entium, hoc est, propter quam causam et rationem nec necessario exigitur quod sine ea esse non possint. Ad quod plenius intuendum tria sunt per ordinem consideranda: primo videlicet quomodo possibilitas seu potentia passiva sit de complemento omnis substantiae creatae; secundo autem quomodo oporteat huiusmodi potentiam esse substantialem; tertio vero quomodo oporteat ipsam esse essentialiter et realiter distinctam ab actu formali seu a forma. Iis enim visis et probatis patens erit quod in omni substantia est aliquid possibile essentialiter distinctum a forma et entibus substantiale et de complemento ipsorum, et sic habebimus in omni ente plenam definitionem seu rationem materiae.”

¹³⁴ Cf. Olivi 311-313.

anything has a capacity for accidental change, for I *qua* man do not change in my humanity, and yet it is essential to me as a man that I can change. In virtue of my humanity I can be either virtuous or vicious and change from one state to another, but my humanity does not determine which of the two I am, nor does my virtue or vice inhere in my humanity. As a form humanity is already determinate and incapable of being determined by another. Rather, any accidents of my humanity must inhere in some indeterminate principle, capable of receiving any and all possible accidents (successively, in the case of contraries), and which is *not* a form. “It is clear therefore that by its indetermination [matter] manifestly proclaims itself to be substantial, just as it also proclaimed this before, by its irreducibility [*primitate*] and its capacity.”¹³⁵

The third point is that the passive potency in all creatures is really distinct from its form. Some might attempt to say that a form might be an act with respect to itself, if it is a substantial form, or an act with respect to a substantial form, if it is an accidental form, but in potency with respect to some other form.¹³⁶ So, for instance, my humanity may be in act *qua* humanity but in potency with respect to knowledge. But, Olivi objects, this is to imply that the form is at one and the same time determinate and indeterminate, a perfection and completion and something needed to be perfected and completed. Passive potency is by nature indeterminate and determinable by another, while the essence of form or the formal act is that “it has nothing indeterminate or determinable in itself, but rather is a pure terminus.” For one and the same essence to be both wholly determinate (e.g. as humanity)

¹³⁵ Olivi, *ibid.*, 315: “Patet igitur quod sua indeterminatione evidenter clamat se esse substantialem, sicut et in praecedenti sua primitate suaque capacitate hoc clamabat.”

¹³⁶ Olivi, *ibid.*, 316: “Tertio etiam est sciendum quod oportet eam esse essentialiter et realiter distinctum a forma. Posset enim forte aliquis dicere quod forma sit actus respectu sui, si est prima forma, vel respectu alicuius alterius formae prioris si est secunda forma, et quod sit in potentia respectu formae sequentis.”

and wholly indeterminate (e.g. with respect to knowledge and error), is for it to be essentially and at once both a pure act and a passive potency, in such a way that one and the same form (e.g. humanity) is both an essence (of the man) and not an essence but a subject (of knowledge and error), “which imagination is altogether ridiculous.”¹³⁷ A position like the Thomistic one, for Olivi, can succeed only by assuming that a form is simultaneously a form and not a form, an essence and not an essence, essentially determinate and essentially indeterminate, something which actively gives being and something which passively receives it; it succeeds, in other words, by assuming a host of absurdities.

The very nature of the form of the composite implies a privation of all the composite’s possible accidents. Humanity considered in itself is necessarily in privation to both knowledge and error. With respect to the form of humanity I am essentially determinate, while with respect to knowledge and error I, *qua* man, am essentially indeterminate. If I could become determinate with respect to knowledge and error—i.e., learn something—by virtue of actualizing a latent potency in my humanity itself, in my essential form, then the form of knowledge would be already embedded in my humanity, and I would not, as a man, be actually indeterminate with respect to the knowledge and its contrary error. A form is not in potency to and indeterminate towards contrary forms: a form is simply its determinate self. “For a figure is not figurable by another figuration, nor is heat illuminable nor can music be informed by the grammatic art or by any other science, so that it can become and be called

¹³⁷ Olivi, *ibid.*, 316-317: “Non enim solum ipsa ratione potentiae, sed etiam essentia ipsius possibilis seu potentia tota, in quantum talis, est indeterminata et tota ab alio determinabilis; essentia vero formae seu actus formalis, in quantum talis, nihil habet in se indeterminatum nec determinabile, immo est purus terminus. Impossibile autem est quod eadem essentia sit secundum se totam indeterminata, ita quod nihil in ea sit quin sit totum determinabile et quod cum hoc secundum se totam sit purus terminus et pura determinatio et uod nihil in ea sit quod sit determinabile. Haec autem contingent, si aliqua una essentia sit aliquo modo simul potentia et actus; unde qui hoc imaginatur videtur imaginari quod ipsa ratio potentiae subiciatur formis et recipiat esse ab eis, ita quod non eius, et eodem modo quod ipsa ratio formae seu actus sic sit forma quod tamen non haec sit eius essentia; quae imaginatio est omnino ridiculosa.”

grammatical music;”¹³⁸ rather both musical and grammatic arts must inhere in something indeterminate to each and to the contrary of each, i.e. some passive potency separate from the determinate forms of grammar or music—or humanity. Thomas’ example, then, according to which if transparency were a subsistent form then illumination could inhere directly in it,¹³⁹ is for Olivi simply an illustration of the absurdity of Thomas’ position.

These kinds of argument are how everyone—Augustine as well as Aristotle and his followers—show that matter exists in corporeal things. There is no other way to prove that there is matter in corporeal things than by showing that in every motion, and under the contrary terms [i.e. underlying the *terminus a quo* and *terminus ad quem*] of every motion, one must posit one common mobile and mutable subject, and by proving that this is necessarily matter and not form. If, on the other hand, form could be the subject of such transformations, if form could be the subject underlying the contrary termini of motion, through some intrinsic potency, then every argument of natural philosophy proving the existence of matter in the corporeal world would be “wholly insufficient and useless.”¹⁴⁰ But if this is the case, then just the same kinds of arguments that natural philosophers apply to the corporeal world can be applied to spiritual things as well. Aristotle says explicitly,¹⁴¹ as do both Augustine and Boethius, “that there is no form of a form, which would in no way be

¹³⁸ Olivi, *ibid.*, 318: “Non enim figura est alia figuracione figurabilis nec calor est illuminabilis nec musica potest informari arte grammaticae vel quacunq[ue] alia scientia, ita quod possit fieri et dici musica grammaticalis . . .”

¹³⁹ See St. Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de anima*, Q. 6, ad 3.

¹⁴⁰ Olivi, *ibid.*, 318-319: “Iis autem attestantur Augustinus et Aristoteles et omnes eius sequaces, quoniam non per aliam viam nec per aliam rationem probaverunt materiam esse in rebus corporalibus nisi per hoc quod in toto motu et sub contrariis terminis eius oportebat dare unum commune subiectum mobile et mutabile, hoc autem necessario ponunt esse materiam et nullo modo formam; et tamen si forma poterat istis esse subiecta per aliquam potentiam quam in se haberet, tunc omnino insufficiens et inefficax esset ratio eorum.”

¹⁴¹ Aristotle, *Physics* V.2, 226a 10 sq.; V, 1, 224b 11 sq.

true if potency and the essence in which it is found were not essentially other than the essence of form.”¹⁴²

An angel’s substantial form, then, cannot be the subject of his accidents. Gabriel’s knowledge or virtue cannot be something inhering in his angelity or Gabrielity. Olivi gives many additional arguments to prove this crucial point, among which I will take up only this one, since it sums up the thrust of much of his insight on this subject: If form can be a subject, the form itself can be informed. If a form is informed by some further form, either its actuality is informed or not. If it is, then the actuality of a form *qua* actuality is informed and informable, and therefore actuality insofar as it is actuality is potential or potentiality, which is a contradiction. If the actuality of a the form is not itself informed, then the informing form is not received in the actuality of the form which it informs, and since the actuality of this form is its whole entity, then nothing of its whole entity is informed. Therefore the informing form does not inform—which is also a contradiction.¹⁴³

Olivi argues at length that without the properties of passive potency which only matter provides, a substance would be absolute, simple, and “universal” or unlimited in a way that belongs to God alone. He briefly considers the notion that composition of essence and existence could give a creature sufficient composition and distance from God so as to make matter unnecessary, and takes as his starting point a remark made by Dionysius indicating that in every creature that which is beautiful [*pulchrum*] must be distinguished

¹⁴² Olivi, *ibid.*, 319: “. . . quod formae non est forma, quod tamen nullo modo esset verum, si potentia et essentia in qua fundatur non esset essentialiter alia ab essentia formae.”

¹⁴³ Olivi, *ibid.*, 320: “Praeterea, si forma informatur, aut sua actualitas informatur aut non. Si sic: ergo actualitas formae, in quantum actualitas, informatur et est informabilis; ergo, in quantum actualitas, est potentialis seu potentialitas. Si non: ergo suum informans non recipitur in actualitate formae quam informat; cum etiam actualitas eius sit tota entitas sua: ergo nihil de tota sua entitate informatur.”

from the beauty [*pulchritudinem*] in which it participates.¹⁴⁴ In God these differ only by reason, but in creatures they differ really, requiring a real composition within the creature. This may be true, but one cannot say that Dionysius means to say that the participating subject is the essence itself, and existence itself what is participated, as some say. For beauty and intelligible light are formal properties rather than being itself, or existence [*ipsum esse seu existere*], and it is formal properties that the Fathers meant when they spoke of participations and things participated in by creatures. The beautiful object which they call the participating subject [*participans*] means the matter, or whatever is informed, rather than the quiddity of some form.¹⁴⁵ Thus the kind of *quo est* and *quod est* distinction which some rely on to evade spiritual matter does not prove what they intend, for a spiritual creature which has any property not identical with its own essential form must have a composition *prior* to any consideration of its act of existence.

The same thing is implied by Boethius¹⁴⁶ when he says that the divine substance is form without matter, and that therefore God is one and is that which he is, i.e. is identical to his essence. Nothing else is identical to its essence [*quod est*], for anything else has its being from the parts of which it is composed, and is both this and that, i.e. is the sum of its conjoined parts, and not any one of its parts taken one by one. Olivi takes this remark of Boethius to say explicitly that only the quiddity of God, his *quod est*, is not composed of parts, and that every other thing whatsoever is composed of parts. He continues:

¹⁴⁴ See Pseudo-Dionysius, *De divinis nominibus*, ed. Beate Regina Suchla, in *Corpus Dionysiacum* v.1. Patristische Texte und Studien (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1990), c.4.7, 150-151.

¹⁴⁵ Olivi, *ibid.*, 325: “Non etiam potest dici quod velit dicere quod participans sit ipsa essentia, participatum vero ipsum esse, sicut quidam dicunt; quoniam pulchritudo et intelligibile lumen potius dicunt rationes formales quam solum ipsum esse seu existere; et tamen has vocat participationes et participata. Ipsum etiam pulchrum quod vocat participans potius dicit materiam vel aliquid quodcunque informatum quam quidditatem alicuius formae.”

¹⁴⁶ Boethius, *De Trinitate*, c.2., 170.

Whence those who posit in the angels a composition only from essence and existence or from subject and accidents expressly contradict these [authorities], because such compositions [i.e. of essence and existence and of subject and accidents] are not compositions of the essence itself, or of that which is, nor are they compositions as from parts constituting some whole.¹⁴⁷

Having shown what matter is and what role it plays in the constitution of beings, Olivi's remaining goals are to show that matter is not incompatible with the angelic essence, and that angels in fact cannot exist without matter. To a large extent, of course, many of the issues specifically concerning the constitution of the angels were already dealt with in the sections examining matter as common to all substances, and so Olivi spends much less time on these latter issues in themselves. In fact, he relegates the question of whether matter is incompatible with the angelic essence entirely to the objections and replies, which we will glance at shortly. Moving directly to the final point, he means to show that intellectual substances cannot "be saved in the full complement of their existence and species" without matter as defined by him above. Although one could take this as sufficiently established by the more general considerations of the first two sections, since he has shown that matter is necessary for all creatures, nevertheless he means to show it of spiritual creatures specifically in order to make his claims more abundantly evident.¹⁴⁸

Without the substantial composition of matter and form, therefore, the angels would be unable to support any accidents not included in their nature, nor could they receive influences from God. Not only would they be unable to receive illumination or beatitude or

¹⁴⁷ Olivi, *ibid.*, 326-327: "Unde illi qui ponunt esse in angelis compositionem solum ex essentia et esse vel ex subiecto et accidentibus expresse iis contradicunt, quia tales compositiones non sunt compositiones ipsius essentiae seu ipsius quod est nec sunt compositiones tanquam ex partibus aliquod totum constituentibus."

¹⁴⁸ Olivi, *ibid.*, 327: "Ultimum autem, quod scilicet sine materia secundum modum praedefinita non possint substantiae intellectuales in complemento suae existantiae et speciei salvari, licet ex superioribus iam sufficienter possit colligi, quoniam generaliter hoc de omnibus entibus est ostensum: nihilominus tamen ad abundantiorum huius evidentiam praedicta ad propositum applicemus."

punishment from God, but God would be unable to personally unite himself to an angelic supposit, which theology supposes that He can do; indeed the absence of matter seems to make the Incarnation impossible. Those who deny all matter in the angels are forced to posit “that their intellects are altogether inerrant and unchanging, that their freedom is altogether impeccable and immutable, impassible and unpunishable and unbeatifiable, and entirely removed from all passivity or reception, from every determinate inclination and consideration, indeed from every accident.”¹⁴⁹

The same thing would have to be true of the human soul as well, and what is more, the absence of matter in the soul would seem to make its union with the body impossible. I give Olivi’s argument for this in full:

And from this it follows that the rational soul would be so absolutely and perfectly stable [*manens*] in itself that it could in no way be substantially united with a body or with anything else, and especially as a participated [form] in a participating [subject], and as a received in a receiver. For if by reason of its simplicity and intellectuality it is altogether unable to be in some way received and participated in some matter [which is] spiritual and simple and as it were *sui generis*,¹⁵⁰ much less, for the same reasons, could it be capable of being received and participated in corporeal matter. And if, because its essence is stable in itself—being as it were sufficient for its own existence and as it were imparticipable—it is in no way able to be in spiritual matter, for the same reasons it follows that neither [can it be] in corporeal matter.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ Olivi, *ibid.*, 328: “Ponit igitur haec positio Deum non posse angelum nec aliquam substantiam intellectualem sibi personaliter unire. Ponit etiam eorum intellectum omnino inerrabilem et invariabilem et eorum libertatem omnino impeccabilem et immutabilem, impassibilem et impunibilem et imbeatificabilem et penitus ab omni passione seu receptione et ab omni determinata inclinatione et aspectu, etiam ab omni accidente penitus elongatam.”

¹⁵⁰ Olivi does not address the problem of the homogeneity of spiritual and corporeal matter at any length in this Question. However, this remark, as well as one or two others, suggest that Olivi might be closer to Richard of Middleton than to Bonaventure on this issue.

¹⁵¹ Olivi, *ibid.*, 328-329: “Et ex ea sequitur quod anima rationalis sit ita absolute et perfecte in se ipsa manens quod nullo modo possit corpori aut alicui alteri substantialiter uniri et maxime tanquam participatum in participante et sicut receptum in recipiente. Si enim ratione suae simplicitatis et intellectualitatis nullo modo potest sibi competere quod sit aliquo modo recepta et participata in aliqua materia spirituali et simplici et quasi sui generis: multo minus ex eisdem causis poterit sibi competere quod sit recepta et participata in materia corporali. Si etiam ex eo, quod eius essentia est manens in se ipsa tanquam sibi ad esse sufficiens et tanquam imparticipabilis, nullo modo potest esse in materia spirituali: eisdem causis sequitur quod nec in materia corporali.”

Finally Olivi gives familiar texts from Augustine to show that the latter held to spiritual matter. He also cites *De unitate*, in such a way as to show that he is aware of the doubt over the work's authorship. "But what the pagan philosophers thought about this is dealt with in the response to the arguments."¹⁵²

Olivi does indeed have some things to say about the opinions of the pagan philosophers in the replies. This is also the place where he shows that neither the incorruptibility or simplicity nor the intellectuality nor the liberty of the angels made them incompatible with matter (which is why he didn't show this in the body of the question).¹⁵³

The eleventh through fifteenth objections argue along well-established lines that if angels had matter they would be corruptible and dissoluble. The twelfth objection adds a helpful clarification: "By matter we mean to signify properly that possible which is in potency to substantial form and which is constituted through it, and such a possible is not univocal with that possible which is only in potency to accidental forms . . ." ¹⁵⁴ For instance, on the Thomistic view, matter is in potency to substantial form, while substantial form may itself be in potency to accidental forms; and matter and substantial forms are certainly not called "possibles" univocally. The implication is, of course, that angels may be composed of potency and act without having any potency to substantial form, and therefore without having matter properly so-called.

¹⁵² Olivi, *ibid.*, 330: "Boethius etiam, libro *De unitate*, si tamen suus est liber . . . Quid autem super hoc senserunt philosophi pagani in responsione argumentorum tangetur."

¹⁵³ Olivi, *ibid.*, 327: "Et primum quidem, quod scilicet possint se compati, plene patebit ostenso quod materia in eis posita non repugnat eorum incorruptibilitati aut simplicitati nec eorum intellectualitati nec libertati. Quia autem hoc ex responsione argumentorum quae huius contrarium directe concludunt sufficienter patebit, idcirco usque tunc differatur."

¹⁵⁴ Olivi, *ibid.*, 300-301: "Per materiam intendimus proprie significare illud possibile quod est in potentia ad formam substantialem et quod constituitur per eam; et tale possibile non est univocum cum illo possibile quod solum est in potentia ad formas accidentales . . ."

Olivi admits that in spiritual creatures there is in a certain sense no potency to substantial form, i.e. in the sense that no created agent could dissolve a spirit into its parts, making them apt to receive a new substantial form. No created agent could, for instance, make a spirit from a body (or vice versa). This does not, however, imply that spirits are not in potency to being and non-being, just as bodies are, or that God could not separate spiritual form from spiritual matter (absolutely speaking spiritual creatures are *not* indissoluble. But such a thing could not happen naturally).¹⁵⁵ But in another sense there *is* in the angels a potency to substantial form. There is no potency for substantial *transformation*: spiritual matter has no appetite for an absent form, for a form to which it might be led through motion; but it is in potency to the form which is presently received in it, by which it is always informed.¹⁵⁶ Recall that for Olivi form is a complete and determinate actuality, while matter, although it has its own indeterminate kind of actuality, also has a potency for being further actualized, completed, and perfected by the determining actuality of form. Both matter and form are substantial principles, so that the potency of matter is a substantial potency for being determined and perfected by substantial form. Olivi therefore defines potency in such a way that it need not be potency for substantial *change*¹⁵⁷ while remaining potency for substantial *form*. Of course, spiritual matter does include potency for accidental change. The angels are *not* the static Intelligences of pagan philosophy, but the thinking, willing, acting, suffering, wicked or blessed persons of revelation. To say that “in the angels there is no potency to an accidental form which can be educed and corrupted through motion, is against the doctrine of

¹⁵⁵ See Olivi, *ibid.*, ad 11, 343-344.

¹⁵⁶ Olivi, *ibid.*, ad 12, 345: “Est enim in angelis potentia ad formam substantialem . . . sed non est ibi velut ad absentem aut velut ad talem ad quam per motum possit duci, sed solum velut ad praesentem et semper veraciter in se receptam, tanquam ab ea semper informata.”

¹⁵⁷ Just as he defines actuality in such a way that, while actuality *may be* form, it *need not* be form, refusing to simply identify form and act.

the Saints and against reason and experience and, I believe, against the Catholic faith.”¹⁵⁸ We experience mental and volitional changes in ourselves. To say that our spiritual faculties are not themselves the subjects of motion, we would have to claim that their operations—which certainly appear to alter—come entirely from motions made in the sensitive parts and the corporeal organs. But this is not only absurd, but simply heretical, since it would destroy the freedom of the will and make every human operation subject to natural forces.¹⁵⁹

Again, a simple argument from incorruptibility falls apart if it is the case that a corruptible material thing can become an incorruptible material thing, as the faith teaches happens with some bodies. If this is true, then corruptible and incorruptible things need not be specifically different, but may be only numerically different: for Christians believe that corruptible human bodies will become incorruptible after the resurrection of the dead, on account of a change in their substantial form, namely the rational soul. This shows that matter is not the whole cause of either corruptibility or incorruptibility, but that the greater and more powerful reason for having either property is on the part of the form: if a form has no contraries, one contrary cannot drive out another and cause substantial change; whereas all bodies, being composed of contraries, can be transformed into other bodies, this is not so with spirits. Nor, for the same reason, can a natural agent by natural motion move matter to generate or corrupt a spiritual form.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Olivi, *ibid.*: “Quod etiam dicitur, quod scilicet in angelis non est potentia ad formam accidentalem quae per motum possit educi et corrumpi: est contra Sanctorum doctrinam et contra rationem et experientiam et, ut credo, contra fidem catholicam.”

¹⁵⁹ Olivi, *ibid.*, 347: “Dicere autem quod motus factus in sensitiva parte et in organis eius sit causa effectiva et totaliter ipsarum virtutum non solum est multipliciter absurdum, sed etiam simpliciter haereticum; destruit enim totaliter arbitrii libertatem et virtutum et meriti nobilitatem et multa alia quae suo loco habent magis tangi.”

¹⁶⁰ Olivi, *ibid.*, ad 13, 349: “. . . nec etiam credo quod semper oporteat corruptibile et incorruptibile secundum speciem differe, immo nec semper numero. Credo enim quod corpora humana fient vere incorruptibilia post resurrectionem per suam formam substantialem quae est rationalis anima . . . non semper materia est tota causa corruptibilitatis aut incorruptibilitatis, immo semper maior et potior ratio est ex parte formae . . .” Note that,

The fact that angels and rational souls cannot be generated or corrupted, constructed or destroyed, by a created agent should not be taken as proof that they are simple or indissoluble *simpliciter*. Intellectual substances are indeed dissoluble through a pure annihilation of their principles, i.e. of either their matter or their form, and God could certainly do this, or instantly and without motion convert them into something else, just as he changes bread into the body of Christ in the Eucharist; it is even within the divine power to inform the matter of one angel with the form of another, and so forth. (Such a change would be supernatural rather than natural, and so it remains the case there is no *natural* potency to substantial change in the angels.) These sorts of possibilities prove that spiritual creatures do not have the kind of simplicity and immutability which God has, although they are not repugnant to the (natural) incorruptibility which Christian tradition posits in the angels.¹⁶¹

The nineteenth objection presents the familiar objection that the immateriality of intellection and volition requires the immateriality of intellectual agents. Olivi, however, disputes the theory of intellection upon which such an objection must be based. The material conditions of the object understood by the intellect do not impede intellectual or volitional acts, but are rather presupposed in them; otherwise material things and their conditions could not be understood or loved by any intellect, including the divine intellect. When a man

although this is similar to the position Gonsalvus of Spain will later take, later in this response Olivi will deny the unicity of matter, which Gonsalvus will affirm. 350: “Ex nullo autem istorum trium modum potest concludi materiam non esse in rebus incorruptibilibus aut non esse unam genere in omnibus, quamvis ex primo modo sequatur quod non sit eiusdem speciei in intellectualibus et corporalibus; quod in alia quaestione de materia est concessum.”

¹⁶¹ Olivi, *ibid.*, ad 15, 350: “Ad decimum quintum dicendum quod aliud est esse dissolubile simpliciter, aliud esse dissolubile tali vel tali modo, utpote per modum aut per actionem agentis creati aut aliquo consimili modo. Substantiae igitur intellectuales sunt dissolubiles per puram annihilationem principiorum, ita quod dissolutio nihil aliud significet quam annihilationem compositi vel compositionis earum. Sunt etiam dissolubiles, quia Deus posset absque motu eas in aliud quodcunque convertere, sicut convertit panem in corpus Christi, aut materiam earum sub forma intellectuali constituere et formam earum in alia materia intellectuali ponere. Ista enim non repugnant incorruptibilitati quam ponimus in angelis.”

understands something he does *not* abstract it from its material conditions, unless the object has none, in other words when he understands a spiritual or insensible or incorporeal object. Man is *able* to lift his mental gaze above corporeal objects and the species which represent corporeal objects (that is, the species of the imagination), but when he understands corporeal objects he understands them *in* their material conditions, not as lifted out of them.¹⁶² Neither the materiality of the objects of intellection and volition nor the of the intellective and volitional agent, therefore, impede spiritual operations.

The six arguments for spiritual matter before the *respondeo* each attempt to show that spiritual matter follows from Aristotelian principles, citing Aristotle himself, Boethius, and Averroes to the effect that matter is required for motion, individuation, substantiality, and so forth. Without examining these in detail, Olivi's attitude towards them is noteworthy. The reasoning of such arguments may be valid, but it is certain that the followers of Aristotle, at least, did not posit matter in intellectual beings. "Although I do not care what they may have thought on the subject, still it seems to me rather that they did not posit matter, in the sense previously defined, in [intellectual things]."¹⁶³ Olivi expresses this sentiment more than once: "Aristotle does not seem to think this here, although it makes no difference to me what he may have thought here or elsewhere, whose authority, as that of any infidel and idolator, is

¹⁶² Olivi, *ibid.*, ad 19, 351-352: "Ad undevicesimum dicendum quod conditiones materiales ex parte obiecti acceptae non impediunt actum intellectus et voluntatis; alias, res materiales et conditiones earum non possent intelligi aut diligi ab aliquo intellectu, etiam ab intellectu divino . . .—Quod autem dicitur quod quando homo aliquid vult pure intelligere, abstrahit se pro viribus a conditionibus materialibus; dico quod hoc non est verum nisi sub hoc intellectu quod quando homo vult intelligere aliquid spirituale et insensibile seu incorporeum, elevat aspectum suum ab obiectis corporalibus seu a speciebus representatibus corporalia, quales sunt species imaginationis; . . ."

¹⁶³ Olivi, *ibid.*, 353: "Ad argumenta in contrarium quae de dictis philosophorum sumuntur respondent illi qui credunt philosophis, saltem Aristotelis sequaces in intellectualibus materiam non posuisse; et quamvis mihi non sit curae quid ipsi inde senserint, magis tamen mihi videtur eos materiam iuxta modum praedefinitam acceptam in eis non posuisse."

nothing to me, and especially in those [matters] which concern the Christian faith or are closely neighboring on them.”¹⁶⁴

It should be clear that the reason for this attitude of disdain toward what the pagan philosophers thought on the subject does not stem from a disdain of philosophical (i.e. rational) argument as such, since Olivi’s massive question is full of it. The problem is rather that the philosophers reasoned from incorrect premises about the spiritual world. Olivi’s opinion on this matter is in fact identical to Richard of Middleton’s. Given that spiritual substances are subject to motion, are individual substances, and so forth, even as defined by Aristotle, it does indeed follow that they have a hylomorphic composition. Aristotle, however, did not think that spiritual things did in fact fall under the genus of substance, nor that they were moved, nor that they were individuals in the strict sense.¹⁶⁵ The Intelligences and gods of Aristotle are not the angels of Christian theology, and what he thought about the former should in no way dictate what we think of the latter. Clearly Olivi’s own position and the reasoning by which he defends it are possible only because of Aristotle, for he is as dependent on Aristotle for his terminology, fundamental conceptions, and forms of argument as any other scholastic of his day. He is acutely aware, nevertheless, that his philosophy is not that of Aristotle, since it is built upon different premises. He makes no attempt to claim Aristotle’s authority for his own conclusions, or to mangle Aristotle’s texts in an attempt to make them mean something Christian. On the contrary, he uses the “Aristotelianism” of his

¹⁶⁴ Olivi, *ibid.*, ad 6, 336: “Aristoteles etiam non hic videtur ibi sentire, licet mihi non sit cura quid hic vel alibi senserit; cuius enim auctoritas et cuiuslibet infidelis et idolatrae mihi est nulla, et maxime in iis quae sunt fidei christianae aut multum ei propinquam.”

¹⁶⁵ Olivi, *ibid.*, 353-354: “. . . Aristoteles non creditur voluisse substantias intellectuales esse in praedicamento substantiae, quoniam illas posuit tanquam quosdam deos et totam naturam suae speciei intra se habentes et magis extra genus quam in genere existentes . . . Aristoteles non creditur posuisse motum in substantiis separatis . . . nec mirum, quia nec in anima rationali ponit motum . . . Et ideo licet ponat motum non posse esse sine materia, non propter hoc sequitur quod posuerit materiam in eis, quia non posuit motum in eis . . .”

own arguments in conscious opposition to the philosophy of Aristotle himself and of those who follow him as an authority: “I have served up these [arguments] knowingly in order that the vain and deceptive philosophy of Aristotle and his followers may be avoided, in these and other matters.”¹⁶⁶

III.2. Non-Franciscans

III.2.1. Henry of Ghent

Henry of Ghent (d.1293) was the most important and significant secular master at the University of Paris in the last quarter of the thirteenth century. He was *magister regens* for an impressive length of time (1276-1292/3), wrote prolifically—his most significant works are his *Summa quaestionum ordinariarum* and his quodlibetal disputes—and took part in many of the most significant debates of the day. His thought is discursive and diffuse, traditional and conservative, laced with references and quotations to venerated authorities, but also creative and innovative. He was extremely influential, both positively and negatively, on the generation of thinkers succeeding him, especially John Duns Scotus, who very frequently uses Henry’s positions as a foil against which to develop his own thought.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ Olivi, *ibid.*, 355: “. . . ut tamen inanis et fallax philosophia Aristotelis et sequacium eius in iis et in aliis erroneis evitetur, scienter ista apposui.”

¹⁶⁷ For a relevant sample of the copious literature on Henry, see Jean Paulus, *Henri de Gand. Essai sur les tendances de sa métaphysique* (Paris: Vrin, 1938); Jean Paulus, “Les disputes d’Henri de Gand et de Gilles de Rome sur la distinction de l’essence et de l’existence,” *Archives d’histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge* 13 (1940-1942), 323-358; Paul Bayerschmidt, *Die Seins- und Formmetaphysik des Heinrich von Gent in ihrer Anwendung auf die Christologie. Eine philosophie- und dogmengeschichtliche Studie.* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1941); José Gómez Caffarena, “Cronología de la Suma de Enrique de Gante por relación a sus *Quodlibetos*,” *Gregorianum*, 38 (1957), 116-133; Ludwig Hödl, “Neue Begriffe und neue Wege der Seinerkenntnis im Schul- und Einflussbereich des Heinrich von Gent,” in P. Wilpert, ed. (with the cooperation of W.P. Eckert), *Die*

Henry of Ghent discusses the possibility of spiritual matter in his fourth *Quodlibet*, question 16, where he asks whether an angel is composed from matter and form.¹⁶⁸

Eschewing lengthy lists of authorities or arguments for either side, he gives only a single *pro* argument and a single *contra* argument. Both are familiar and brief. The *pro* argument is from the inclusion of angels in the genus of substance, all members of which are composed of matter and form; the *contra* argument is from the principle that matter is the principle of transformation, while angels cannot be transformed into anything else.¹⁶⁹ Here Henry merely sets the stage, reserving the work for the body of the question.

Metaphysik im Mittelalter. Ihr Ursprung und ihre Bedeutung. Vorträge des II. Internationalen Kongresses für Mittelalterliche Philosophie, Köln 31 August-6 September 1961. Im Auftrage der S.I.E.P.M. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1963), 607-615; Wilhelm Hoeres, "Wesen und Dasein bei Heinrich von Gent und Duns Scotus," *Franziskanische Studien*, 47 (1965), 121-186; Gianfranco Fioravanti, "Forma ed esse in Enrico di Gand: preoccupazioni teologiche ed elaborazione filosofica," *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa (Classe di Lettere, Storia e Filosofia)*, 5 (1975), 985-1031; Raymond Macken, "La volonté humaine, faculté plus élevée que l'intelligence selon Henri de Gand," *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 42 (1975), 5-51; Raymond Macken, "Les diverses applications de la distinction intentionnelle chez Henri de Gand," in W. Kluxen et al., eds., *Sprache und Erkenntnis im Mittelalter*. Akten des VI. Internationalen Kongresses für Mittelalterliche Philosophie der Société Internationale pour l'Étude de la Philosophie Médiévale, 29 August-3 September 1977 in Bonn. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1981), 769-776; John Wippel, "The Relationship between Essence and Existence in Late Thirteenth-Century Thought: Giles of Rome, Henry of Ghent, Godfrey of Fontaines, James of Viterbo," in P. Morewedge, ed., *Philosophies of Existence: Ancient and Medieval*. New York: Fordham University Press, (1982), 131-164; W. Vanhamel, ed., *Henry of Ghent. Proceedings of the International Colloquium on the Occasion of the 700th Anniversary of His Death (1293)*. (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996); M.A. Santiago de Carvalho, *A Novidade do Mundo: Henrique de Gand e a Metafísica da Temporalidade no Século XIII*. (Coimbra: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian — Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, 2001); Emery, Kent Jr. (2001). "The Image of God Deep in the Mind: The Continuity of Cognition according to Henry of Ghent," in J. A. Aertsen, K. Emery, Jr., A. Speer, eds., *Nach der Verurteilung von 1277. Philosophie und Theologie an der Universität von Paris im letzten Viertel des 13. Jahrhunderts. Studien und Texte / After the Condemnation of 1277. Philosophy and Theology at the University of Paris in the Last Quarter of the Thirteenth Century. Studies and Texts*. (Berlin-New York: de Gruyter 2001), 59-124; Pasquale Porro, "Universaux et esse essentialia: Avicenne, Henri de Gand et le 'Troisième Reich'," in *Le réalisme des universaux. Philosophie analytique et philosophie médiévale. Cahiers de Philosophie de l'Université de Caen*, 38-39 (2002), 9-51; Guy Guldentops and Carlos Steel, eds., *Henry of Ghent and the Transformation of Scholastic Thought. Studies in Memory of Jos Decorte*. (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003).

¹⁶⁸ Henry of Ghent. *Quodlibeta Magistri Henrici Goethals a Gandavo, doctoris Solemnis, Socii Sorbonici, et archidiaconi Tornacensis, cum duplici tabella. Venundantur ab Iodoco Badio Ascensio, sub gratia et privilegio ad finem explicandis*, 2 vol., Paris, 1518. Reprinted 1961, Heverlee (Louvain): Biliotheque SJ. Vol. I, Quod. 4. q. 16., Fo. 130r-131v.

¹⁶⁹ Henry of Ghent, *ibid.*, "Circa primum arguitur: quod in angelo sit materia: et quod est compositus ex materia et forma: quia est in praedicamento substantiae: et substantia que est pradicamentum secundum Boetium super praedicamenta Aristotelis, est substantia composita ex materia et forma. Contra, tunc angelus esset naturaliter

Right away Henry's position and general orientation on this subject is revealed by the fact that, in the first sentence of the body of the question, he refers to the position affirming spiritual matter as "the opinion which Avicbron held in the book *Fons vitae*." As should be clear by now, the defenders of spiritual matter in the later thirteenth century do not receive this position from Avicbron in any direct or immediate way, and rarely or never mention him, while the opponents of the position regularly attribute it to him and regard his authorship as a key fact about it. Henry's remark associating the position with Avicbron, therefore, signals his opposition to the so-called "Augustinians" on this point.

He begins his evaluation of the question by noting three reasons that some give for accepting a matter-form composition in the angels. 1) The argument from the nature of the genus of substance, just mentioned. 2) The argument from the angelic propensity to receive accidents. Form cannot be the subject of form, but an angel is the subject of accidental forms, etc. 3) The argument from the specific composition of angels. Angels are similar to one another by some indeterminate substantial property and different from one another by some determinate property; but indeterminateness is from matter and determinateness is from form.¹⁷⁰ These are, of course, versions of arguments which are indeed more or less standard by now among Franciscans.

transmutabilis circa materiam secundum suam formam. Quia materia secundum philosophum, est principium omnis transmutationis."

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., "Aliquorum erat opinio quam tenet Avicbron in libro fontis vitae, quod omnia citra primum, cuiusmodi sunt omnia creata, habent materiam. Cuius ratio una est ex natura generis iam posita. Et alia erat proprietas subiecti et recipientis: que non est nisi a materia quia secundum Boetium de trini. Forma simplex subiectum esse non potest. Angelus autem receptivus est multarum dispositionum ut subiectum. Et tertia ratio erat quod unus angelus convenit cum alio angelo secundum rationem esse substantialis indeterminati: et differt ab eo secundum rationem proprii esse determinati. Ratio autem indeterminati sicut et ratio infiniti non est nisi a materia: quemadmodum ratio determinationis et finiti est a forma."

Furthermore, Henry notes that there is some variation in what thinkers have said about matter. 1) Some have posited a single kind of matter in all substances, among whom he names, again, only Avicbron. 2) Others posited matter in bodies alone; among these some said that there was only one kind of matter for all bodies, since matter is pure potency and has no differentiations of its own, while 3) still others posited that there were different kinds of matter for different kinds of bodies. The position—seen in Richard of Middleton—affirming matter in all substances, including spiritual ones, but denying its homogeneity, is not mentioned at this point. According to Henry, neither the first nor the second of the opinions given can be accepted. His governing principle is that matter is indicated by transformation; there is a uniform extension (*ratio*) of matter and of transformation. Matter, as it occurs in the elements and things composed from the elements (*elementaribus*), is transformable by natural generation, so that one kind of thing can be changed into another. A material thing which is in act according to one of its possible forms is in potency to all the others. If there were a single kind of matter for all substances, therefore, one material thing could be transformed from an “elemental” (sublunar) form to a celestial or angelic form, which is plainly false. None of these three kinds of things can be transformed into any of the others; therefore the matter “underneath” the form of the elements cannot be of the same kind as that which is underneath the form of the heavenly bodies, nor can either of these be of the same kind as the matter underneath the form of an angel (should the angel have any matter at all). The only alternative is to insist that all matter really is in potency to every form. “But you will say: in fact the matter of any of these is in potency to any [form] whatsoever: but there is no natural agent which could educe the form.” That is, e.g., one might claim that the

matter underlying a corporeal form is in potency to receive a spiritual form in itself, but there is no natural agent capable of effecting such a transformation.¹⁷¹

Henry's objection to this claim is teleological. Potencies lying latent in matter but which could never be actualized would exist there in vain; the lack of an agent to actualize them would detract from the perfection of the universe, which demands that for every passive potency there is some corresponding active principle. If, therefore, all substances do indeed have matter, there must be different kinds of matter corresponding to the different kinds of substantial potency. In other words, among the different theories of spiritual matter Henry finds one like Richard of Middleton's to be the most plausible. "According to the diversity of transformation the diversity of matter can be judged. Because of this those things which are not transformed according to substance and substantial forms, such as angels and the heavenly bodies, do not have the kind of matter that the elements and elemental things have."¹⁷²

If, therefore, an incorruptible body is composed from matter and form, its matter is only equivocally the same as the matter of generable and corruptible things, although, since it

¹⁷¹ Ibid., "Sciendum est ergo: quod quidam ponebant materiam in omnibus: et dicebant eam unius rationis: de quorum numero videtur esse Avicebra; quod patet ex rationibus que uniformiter omnia complectunt. . . . Sed quod nec prima opinio nec secunda potest stare, declaratur per hoc quod dicit Commentator super finem primi physicorum, secundum mentem philosophi: quod transmutatio docuit materiam. . . . est ergo uniformis ratio materiae, et transmutationis. Cum ergo materia in elementis et elementaribus sit transmutabilis per naturalem generationem secundum formas ab una in alteram: et cum est actu sub una est in potentia ad omnes alias: eadem ergo materia transmutabilis esset a forma elementi in formam caeli aut angeli et e converso: quod aperte falsum est, ergo etc. Ergo cum a nulla harum formarum fiat transmutatio ad alteram: non est ergo materia sub forma elementi eiusdem rationis cuius est illa quae est sub forma caeli: neque aliqua istarum est eiusdem rationis cum illa quae est sub forma angeli. Sed dices: revera materia cuiuslibet horum est in potentia ad quodlibet: sed deficit agens naturale quod potest formam educere."

¹⁷² Ibid., "Contra: tunc invanum et frustra esset ibi potentia: vel deficeret aliqua vis activa naturalis quae esset de perfectione universi: cum de perfectione universi sit ut cuilibet passivo respondeat proprium activum. . . . Si ergo in illis omnibus sit materia, necessario oportet quod sit rationis diversae non unius. . . . Ita secundum diversitatem transmutationis oportet iudicari diversitatem materiae. Propter hoc ergo illa quae non transmutantur secundum substantiam et formas substantiales, non habent materiam qualem habent elementa et elementaria: ut angelis et corpora caelestia. . . ."

is in potency to change of place, it is not wrong to attribute some matter to a heavenly body.

Angels, on the other hand, are not subject either to substantial change, nor even to change of place,¹⁷³ and so can have neither the matter belonging to the elements nor celestial matter.¹⁷⁴

If the angels have matter then it must be of a different sort than any corporeal matter.¹⁷⁵

However, if we are to admit that angels do have matter, then, according to what has been said, some transformation must be found to occur in them. That there is in fact change in the angels was perhaps implied, although not directly stated, in the second argument rehearsed by Henry above, whereby angels receive accidental forms as a subject. If we can recognize matter in the heavenly bodies because they are subject to accidental local change, perhaps we can recognize matter in spiritual creatures through their propensity to accidental (though non-local) change as well.

Henry rejects this line of argument. The only kind of transformation or reception of forms which we are able to recognize in angels is according to the intellect and will. Since Henry denies that the reception of forms by the intellect—and consequently the dispositions towards the objects of the intellect on the part of the will—are really changes or transformations, he denies that there is any need to posit matter in spiritual creatures.¹⁷⁶ What

¹⁷³ Not, at least, in the sense that bodies are. A little later Henry states that angels are in place “through limitation, which is posited in the angels regardless of whether they are pure forms or material.” “. . . illa [transmutatio] quae est secundum locum ponitur propter limitationem: quae indifferenter in angelis ponitur sive sint formae purae sive materiales.”

¹⁷⁴ Henry of Ghent, *ibid.*, “Si corpus incorruptibile est compositum ex materia et forma, dicetur aequivoce cum materia et forma generabilis et corruptibilis. Et propter idem cum angeli non transmutant motu locali secundum ubi, quemadmodum caelestia corpora . . . non habent talem materiam quale habent corpora caelestia. . . .”

¹⁷⁵ Note the strange order of Henry’s procedure, a curious reversal of the one we have by now become used to, in which the homogeneity of matter is introduced, if at all, only *after* its presence (or absence) in the spiritual world has been determined.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, “Dicunt ergo alii quod angelis habent unam propriam rationem materiae. Quod si rationabiliter dicant: oportet quod secundum iam dicta super hoc nos doceat aliqua transmutatio. Transmutatio autem quam ratione convicere possumus in angelis: propter quam ratione receptionis ponere possumus materiam in eis propriam: illa non est nisi secundum intellectum et voluntatem . . . Sed hoc non potest docere nos aliqua transmutatio

follows, therefore, is Henry's version of the argument against spiritual matter from the immateriality of cognition. Although the question concerns the angels, Henry does not hesitate to argue from what we know of the human intellect to establish the immateriality of angelic cognition. If the operation of our own intellect is immaterial, much more will be that of the angels. "Since the angels are superior in the order of nature [*gradu naturae*] and are more separate than our intellect, they are necessarily more simple and immaterial."¹⁷⁷

Our intellect, then, is passive only in this respect, that it receives the form which it apprehends and is in potency to it. But this reception of form is not *transformation* in the sense that would bespeak some kind of matter. In such a transformation one form is replaced by another, thereby transforming the subject. In the sense powers, for instance, one sensation drives out another; but it is not the same with the understanding, "because it is not material, nor a body, nor a power in a body."¹⁷⁸ It is intrinsic to the nature of intellectual activity that no such transformation take place, because the whole notion of understanding requires that the intellectual agent remains itself while receiving the form of something else in its own intellectual mode. But if the form of an intellectual substance were a material form, it would be wholly replaced by the new form being received into its matter. It would, in fact, have the same kind of nature as other material forms, and would be unable to receive them in the act of understanding, just as no other material form can receive another while remaining itself. "The receiving ought not to be of the [same] nature as the received: otherwise it could

secundum intellectum: quare neque secundum voluntatem: cum actio intellectus magis consistit in recipiendo quam voluntatis. Cuius probatio est sumpta ex ratione operationis intellectualis. . . ."

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., Fol. 130v-131r: "Cum enim angeli sunt superiores in gradu naturae et magis separati quam intellectus nostri: oportet quod sint maioris simplicitatis et immaterialitatis."

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., Fol. 131r: ". . . non habet de intentione passionis nisi hoc tantum: scilicet quod recipit formam quam apprehendit: et est in potentia ad eam: nec transmutatur a forma quam apprehendit, quemadmodum sensus: quia non est materialis, nec corpus, nec virtus in corpore." This last remark seems to me oddly circular.

receive itself, and would be moving and moved at once according to itself, which is impossible, as it is impossible for something colored to receive color.”¹⁷⁹

It is impossible, therefore, that the intellect in whole or in part should be a material form. The way the intellect receives forms is entirely different from the way forms are received in a material subject. The intellect receives forms simply and insofar as they are forms; it receives them as universals, and not insofar as they are something in their own right (*hoc aliquid*). In other words, the mode in which the form of a material thing exists in the intellect is entirely other than the mode in which it exists in matter. In the intellect the received form is not a substantial principle, not a cause of being or substantiality or determination for its subject, but merely a universal. In a material subject, on the other other hand, a form is received only precisely insofar as it is a given something [*hoc aliquid*] and a particular. In this state a form is intelligible only in potency, not in act (presumably precisely because of its status as a concrete particular). A material subject receiving a form in such a way, therefore, cannot understand or comprehend it, whether that form is corporeal or spiritual, for the point is not whether the received form is a corporeal or spiritual form, but whether it is universal or singular; something is understood only as a universal or by means of a mediary universal.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., “Quoniam si esset forma materialis: ut tota per essentiam suam esset educta de potentia materiae: vel in essentia sua esset pars quae esset materia, et pars quae esset forma: et sic vel tota essentia sua: vel pars essentiae suae esset forma immersa essentialiter materiae: tunc esset eiusdem naturae cum aliis formis materialibus: et nullam earum posset recipere; quia recipiens non debet esse de natura recepti: aliter enim reciperet seipsam: et esset movens et motum simul secundum seipsam: quod est impossibile. Quemadmodum impossibile est quod coloratum recipiat colorem.”

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., “Impossibile ergo est quod intellectus sit totus forma materialis vel pars eius. Et est huius rationis pertractatio talis, ut determinat Commentator: quod intellectus ut intelligat oportet quod recipiat formas simpliciter secundum quod sunt formae: et universales, non secundum quod sunt hoc aliquid. Materia autem et omnis forma materialis maxime de cuius essentia est materia non recipit formas nisi ut hoc aliquid et particulare: que sunt solum potentia intelligibiles, non in actu. Et ideo sub tali esse recipiens formas, non est cognoscens eas neque comprehendens: et hoc sive sit forma corporalis sive spiritualis; nulla enim in hoc est

Because form is received in matter as a singular and in the intellect as a universal, the intellect cannot itself be material. Matter in the intellect would impede the intellectual act itself, which is to bring the potentially intelligible singular form to actuality by making it universal. A material intellect could in consequence never be actually intellecting, could never be an intellect in act, whereas we see that in fact the intellect does understand, and it understands more the further it abstracts its object from matter and from the body (note the conjunction of these two terms). “Since, therefore, the angels are the highest intellectual substances, they should be altogether separate from matter, and matter especially should be no part of their essence.”¹⁸¹

In the second reply to the objections at the end of the question, Henry elaborates on the differences between spiritual and material reception of form. An angel does receive forms, but not in the same way that matter does, namely, under the character [*ratione*] of a particular here and now; it receives them rather under the character of simple universality. Again, an intellect receives a form *objectively*, as an object of thought, but not *subjectively*, as a modification of its own subject (i.e. for Henry as for Thomas, accidents are not univocally accidents in corporeal and spiritual substances). As Boethius says,¹⁸² form cannot be the subject of form; therefore spiritual forms are not the subjects of the forms which they receive in cognition the way bodies are the subjects of their accidental forms.¹⁸³

differentia: quia universale semper primo intelligitur obiective, et non singulare: nisi per ratione universalis ut per medium intelligendi: quod non pertinet ad propositam quaestionem.”

¹⁸¹ Ibid., “Si ergo tota anima intellectiva vels pars eius ponatur forma materialis sicut forma corporalis aliqua: qualiscumque materia ibi ponatur: impediret ne possit esse actu intelligens aut actu intellectum. Cuius signum est quod intellectus coniunctus quanto magis se abstrahit a materia et corpore, tanto magis intelligit: et quanto magis vult intelligere, tanto magis nititur se abstrahere a corpore et materia. Cum ergo angeli sint substantiae summe intellectuales: omnino debent esse separatae a materia: maxime ne sit materia pars essentiae suae.”

¹⁸² Notice how Henry appropriates this familiar statement for his own use!

¹⁸³ Henry of Ghent, *ibid.*, “Ad rationem secundam adductam in solvendo quod receptio non est nisi materiae . . . Dicendum ergo: quod licet angelus recipit, non tamen modo quo materia recipit: scilicet formas sub ratione

For Henry, then, the argument from the immateriality of intellectual activity is the true way [*vera via*] of proving the immateriality of an intellectual nature. Intellectual creatures are still subject to some sort of composition, insofar as they fall short of the divine simplicity, but not a composition of matter and form. Rather spiritual creatures must be composed of principles serving in the way that matter and form do in sensible creatures. “Just as sensible being is divided into matter and form, so intelligible being must be divided into [something] similar to these two [principles], namely into something similar to form, and into something similar to matter.”¹⁸⁴ But what are these two things which intellectual natures must be composed of, corresponding to matter and form in bodies? Henry’s remarks here are obscure. He says that spiritual creatures are composed “of quiddity and essence, or of *quod* and *quo est*; calling the quiddity *quo est*, and the essence *quod est*.” The distinction between *quo est* and *quod est* as an alternative to a distinction of matter and form is one with which we are well familiar by now; but what does Henry mean by asserting that they correspond to quiddity and essence? He does not explain further, asserting only that he has explained this distinction in his questions on the simplicity of God, where he has identified the essence with the nature or supposit.¹⁸⁵

particularis hic et nunc: et recipit formas sub ratione qua formae sunt simpliciter in universali; et hoc obiective in cognoscendo: non autem subiective. Non sunt enim formae universales in intellectuali natura nisi sicut in cognoscente; siqua autem subiective sunt in eo, ut habitus scientiarum et virtutum: cum illis ipsa quiditas eorum compositum quiddam constituit, et recedit a simplicitate formae divinae; de qua dicit Boetius, quod subiectum esse non possunt: ut scilicet componatur cum alio; quantum enim ei repugnat componi cum aliis, tantum ei repugnat componi cum alio . . . Et sic essentia angelorum ratione qua creata est in seipsa, quasi materia est ad talia recipienda: non requirit materiam aliam. . . .”

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., “Haec est ergo vera via probandi immaterialitatem naturae intellectualis; unde etiam si composito in ea inveniatur, illa non est ex materia et forma: sed ex aliquo se habente ad modum materiae, et aliquo se habente ad modum formae: in quantum omnis creatura deficit a divina simplicitate . . . Quemadmodum sensibile esse dividitur in materiam et formam: sic intelligibile esse oportet dividi in consimilia his duobus, scilicet in aliquod formae simile, et in aliquid simile materiae.”

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., “Aliae autem formae [quam primam] diversificantur in quiditatem et essentiam quoquomodo; hoc est habet compositum ex quiditate et essentia sive ex quod et quo est: appellando quiditatem quo est, et essentiam quod est, quam in quaestionibus dictis de simplicitate dei, appellavimus naturam sive suppositum.”

I turn now, therefore, to Henry's *Summa Quaestionum Ordinarium*¹⁸⁶ in hopes of illuminating this distinction. Article XXVIII is about the divine simplicity, and the fifth question concerns whether in God there is a composition of nature and supposit. While it seems clear that this is the question Henry is referring to here in *Quodlibet* IV.16, it does not explain the distinctions made in the latter. He does *not* here posit a distinction between quiddity and essence, nor an absolute identity of nature, essence, and supposit. Frankly, the distinctions made in *Summa* XXVIII.5 are rather more intelligible than that. That question does contain much useful information about Henry's conception of creaturely distinctions and compositions, and is more clear about how he understands *quo est* and *quod est*. It also requires a more lengthy digression than Henry's reference initially seems to demand, since the contents of question 5 need to be considered in the light of questions 4 and 6 of article XXVIII before his doctrine can be properly clarified.

In order to determine whether in God there is a composition from nature and supposit, Henry must first explain what he means by nature, supposit, and the composition from each; in the process he says much about how these appear in creatures as well.¹⁸⁷ Right at the beginning he *identifies*, rather than distinguishes, the terms "essence", "nature", and "quiddity". Each of these terms refers to that which gives the being of the thing which the definition signifies, meaning both the form and, in a general sense, the matter; e.g. "humanity" includes both a rational soul and flesh and bones. In itself this essence, nature, or quiddity is neither universal nor particular, common or singular, but prescind from all consideration of subsisting or not subsisting or any other factor which might determine it.

¹⁸⁶ *Summae Quaestionum Ordinarium Theologi recepto praeconio Solennis Henrici a Gandavo, cum duplici reportorio, Tomos Prior/Posterior. Venundantur in aedibus Iodoci Badii Ascensii, cum Priuilegio Regio ad calcem explicando*, 2 vol., Paris, 1520. Reprinted 1953, New York: Franciscan Institute.

¹⁸⁷ For Henry on nature and supposit, see Paulus, *Henri de Gand*, 361-367.

“Humanity,” e.g., in itself includes neither singularity, being determined in a given man, nor universality, but is rather what is common to both the universal concept and the concrete individual.¹⁸⁸

Henry uses “nature”, “quiddity”, and “essence” synonymously, therefore, to refer to the same principle understood as “simple and naked and absolute” apart from any determination by an extrinsic factor, “considered in itself, namely, inasmuch as it is essentially what it is, [and] not through some participation, as are [for instance] humanity, asinity [or] . . . angelity.”¹⁸⁹ “Supposit”, on the other hand, refers to the thing, the subject of the nature or essence in which it participates. Henry’s description of how the two enter into composition with each other is rather confusing:

Composition from nature and a supposit of this sort is understood in the way that we understand a man to be composed of flesh and bones and a rational soul, as of something participating in humanity, and from the humanity itself participated by it [i.e. by the collection, flesh+bones+soul], and this not because nature and supposit are taken separately as parts which concur in the constitution of some third thing out of them, but because the nature, as it falls in the supposit, receives in it composition with the reality [*cum re ipsa*] of the supposit inasmuch as it is a supposit, by which it is determined as a subsistent or defined [object], in which it has the character [*rationem*] of an individual or particular . . .¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, Art. XXVIII, Q. v. fol. 168v-169v: “Hic primo est advertendum quid appellemus naturam: et quid suppositum: et quid compositionum ex utroque. Dicendum igitur quod naturam hic appellamus essentiam et quidditatem dictam nomine absoluto, quae dat esse rei quam significat definitio [e.g. the essence of man is not his form but form + matter] . . . qualis quidem natura significatur hoc nomine humanitas, quae de essentia hominis simplicem intellectum format et absolutum ab omni ratione subsistendi, vel non subsistendi, universalis vel particularis, communis vel singularis, et cuiuslibet alterius intentionis possibilis intelligi circa ipsam. Definitio enim humanitatis est praeter definitionem universalitatis et singularitatis, et est cui accidit utrumque. . . .”

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., “Et sic natura hic appellatur simplex et nuda et absoluta quidditas sive essentia rei abque omni determinatione cuiuscumque extrinseci conceptus intellecta, in quantum sc. in se considerata est id quod est per essentiam, non per participationem aliquam, ut sunt humanitas, asinitas, . . . angelitas . . .”

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., “Compositio vero ex natura et huiusmodi supposito intelligitur quemadmodum intelligimus hominem esse compositum ex carnibus et ossibus et anima rationali, tamquam ex participante humanitatem, et ex ipsa humanitate participata ab illo, et hoc non quia natura et suppositum seorsum accepta ut partes concurrunt in constitutionem alicuius tertii ex ipsis sed quia natura ut cadit in supposito recepit in eo compositionem cum re ipsa suppositi in quantum suppositum est, qua determinatur ut sub subsistens in supposito vel definito, in quo habet rationem individui seu particularis . . .”

The constitutive parts of a substance do not enter into composition with the essence of a substance, it is clear: a man is not composed of flesh, bones, soul, and humanity. While this denial is unproblematic, what is less clear is just what sort of composition Henry is affirming. Again, it is clear that a “simple and naked and absolute” nature, considered precisely as prescinding from existence or non-existence, from singularity or commonality, does not exist in reality without existing in a supposit, in a concrete thing. The nature must be determined by something other than itself to particularity and concrete individuality. But it does not seem clear how this nature is understood to enter into *composition* with the *reality* of the supposit, especially when Henry denies in the same breath that the elements of this composition constitute some further composite.

In fact, although he calls the relation of the nature to the supposit “composition,” it seems impossible to understand this relation as a real composition in any ordinary or accepted sense. The nature is altogether unable “to be in existence” outside the intellect without the “reality” of the supposit, and in fact the nature and the supposit—that is, the reality of the nature—do not really differ in creatures, but only intentionally.¹⁹¹ Since they are neither really distinct elements or parts, nor do they constitute something together, it seems strange to speak of them as being *composed*. A little later Henry states that the quiddity of a man *is* the man in one sense, and in another sense it is not. That is, the quiddity of man is the form of man, and *not* the concrete man who is composed of matter and form.¹⁹² This statement, however, seems to involve Henry in additional difficulties, since he has already claimed that the nature or quiddity includes—though not concretely—matter *and*

¹⁹¹ Ibid., “Esse tamen in existentia extra intellectum non habebat sine re illa . . . Unde natura et suppositum sive res naturae in creaturis non differunt re, sed sola intentione . . .”

¹⁹² Ibid., Fol. 169r: “Quidditas hominis est homo uno modo, et non est homo alio modo, id est, est forma hominis, et non est homo qui est compositus ex materia et forma.”

form, flesh and bones *and* the rational soul. Surely Henry is not now identifying the nature or quiddity or essence with form and the supposit with matter. I think one must admit that Henry is simply not as precise as one would like here.

Henry's next remark helps somewhat to orient the reader:

And this composition is much less than the preceding one, which is from essence and being [*esse*], because the essence cannot be understood to exist unless it is determined in a supposit. And yet it is greater than the following [composition] from act and potency: because this one includes that one. For the essence does not receive composition with its determination in the supposit unless because that [i.e. the supposit] which is in act according to it [i.e. the essence] is in potency to it.¹⁹³

Henry here alludes to the sequence of questions in Article XXVIII, the whole of which concerns the simplicity of God. Question 4 concerns composition from essence and the act of being, or existence; the present Question 5 composition from nature and supposit, and Question 6 composition from potency and act. In the course of denying all three types of composition (among others) in God, he affirms all three in creatures. Here, then, he indicates that composition from essence and existence is a "greater" kind of composition than that of nature and supposit, and that composition from nature and supposit is "greater" than composition from potency and act.

Let us briefly pause to take stock. In *Quod*. IV.16, Henry denied the existence of spiritual matter, chiefly on the grounds of the immateriality of cognition. Instead of matter and form, there is to be found in spiritual creatures something similar to matter and similar to form, which produce a composition of *quo est* and *quod est*. We came to Henry's *Summa* in

¹⁹³ Ibid., "Et est haec compositio multo minor quam precedens quae est ex essentia et esse: quia non potest intelligi essentia existere nisi determinata in supposito. Est tamen maior quam sequens ex actu et potentia: quia haec includit illam. Essentia enim non recipit compositionem cum determinatione in supposito, nisi quia id quod ipsa secundum se est in actu, est in potentia ad illam. Qualiter igitur ista compositio contingat in omni creatura, et contrario removeatur a deo, considerandum." My concern here, of course, is only with the presence of this composition in creatures, not with its absence in God.

hopes of clarifying the manner of spiritual composition and Henry's understanding of the *quod est/quod est* distinction. In the passage just quoted, however, we find that Henry posits at least *three* compositions in spiritual creatures, of essence and existence, nature and supposit, and potency and act, listed in descending order of (apparently) ontological priority or reality. Each of these, it seems, will have to be taken into account in order to fully understand how Henry provides for the composition of spiritual creatures without having to posit in them matter and form. At this point it remains unclear what in an angel or a rational soul is "similar" to matter and to form and plays the corresponding roles. Despite Henry's cryptic remarks in *Quod*. IV.16, he does not appear to posit a distinction between quiddity and essence, and the present distinction under examination, that between essence, quiddity, or nature and supposit, does not seem to be of a sort sufficient to substitute for or render unnecessary a hylomorphic composition. Before making a final judgment, however, we must examine the rest of Henry's remarks on essence/supposit composition, as well as those on essence/existence composition and potency/act composition in the preceding and succeeding questions.

Henry continues the present question, then, by distinguishing between various kinds of creaturely essences and showing that each is subject to entering into a composition of essence and supposit. Whether the essence comprehends both matter and form, as in material creatures, or genus and difference, as in immaterial ones—if genus in the immaterial realm can be accepted—or even if some essence is only a simple form, being distinguished only according to the rank of dignity and the order of nature, as some philosophers conceived of the "separate substances," nevertheless in all these it is necessary to posit a composition of essence and supposit. As we have seen, every essence as such is indeterminate and is

determined in a supposit by that supposit which participates it. So in every creature one must distinguish between something indeterminate, on the part of the essence, and something in which it is determined, on the part of the supposit. Because of this there is said to be a composition of essence and supposit, although the supposit as such includes the nature within itself. The reason for positing such a composition is that the *intention* of the supposit *qua* supposit and of the nature *qua* nature are two different things, even though the supposit adds nothing real over and above the nature, whether in things composed of matter and form or in “simple” things. Essence or nature and supposit always signify the very same thing: as do, for instance, humanity and man. They differ only according to the mode of signifying or of understanding according to abstract or concrete, or according to determinate and indeterminate. To this Henry adds, “On account of such a diversity of nature and supposit came about the commonplace expression, that in every creature is to be found composition from *quod est* and from *quo est*.”¹⁹⁴

Henry’s distinction between nature and supposit, and between *quo est* and *quod est*, finally appears to be just the same as St. Bonaventure’s, a distinction between one and the same thing as conceived of concretely and as conceived of abstractly, in short, less than a real

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., “Est igitur sciendum quod qualiscumque essentia intelligatur in creaturis: sive comprehendens materia et formam, ut in materialibus, sive genus et differentiam, ut etiam in immaterialibus, si genus in eis accipi possit, sive formam tantum simplicem, qualis est in substantiis separatis secundum illos philosophos qui ponunt quod non sit in eis distinctio nisi secundum gradus dignitatis et ordinis naturae: In omnibus tamen necesse est ponere compositionem ex essentia et supposito: quia semper in creaturis intentio naturae sive essentiae ut essentia est, essentia tamen est, ut dictum est: et ideo de se est indeterminatum, quod determinatur in supposito per id quod participat ea: ut sic in quolibet supposito per id quod participat ea: ut sic in quolibet supposito creaturae sit concipere rationem indeterminati ex parte essentiae, et eius in quo determinatur ex parte suppositi. Propter quod in omni creatura dicitur esse compositio ex essentia et supposito: quamvis suppositum ipsum ut suppositum est, includat in se naturam: quia in eis per se semper est alia intentio suppositi qua suppositum est: alia vero intentio naturae qua natura est: licet nihil rei addat suppositum super naturam, tam in compositis ex materia et forma, quam in simplicibus. Semper enim idipsum re significant essentia sive natura, et suppositum: ut humanitas et homo. Differunt autem solum penes modum significandi et intelligendi secundum abstractum et concretum, sive secundum determinatum et indeterminatum, ut dictum est . . . Propter tale ergo diversitatem naturae et suppositi contingit vulgare dictum: quod in omni creatura est reperire compositione ex quod est et ex quo est.”

distinction. There seems to be nothing here “similar to matter and similar to form,” and nothing to substitute for hylomorphic composition. The compositions of essence and existence and of potency and act remain to be examined, and perhaps a solution will be found in one or both. Henry’s remark, however, that the composition from nature and supposit is *greater* than that of potency and act while *less great* than that of essence and existence ought to forewarn us that his solution will not be one like that of St. Thomas, in which essence and existence are really different principles within the creature *corresponding* to potency and act and serving as the elements of a real composition.

We need not present all of Henry’s *Summa* XXVIII.4 in detail in order to make this clear. In delineating the different varieties of distinction Henry recognizes one kind which arises wholly on the side of the reasoning intellect and has no corresponding difference in the thing, while a second kind of distinction arises partly from the side of the intellect and partly from the thing. About this second variety he writes:

In the second way the intellect distinguishes in its concept the diversity of those which are undivided in the thing composed from them, but divided from each other; and this [obtains] either in the nature and essence, as it happens in the diversity of matter and form in [what is] composed from both, and therefore such a diversity is said to be according to reality [*rem*] and nature; or [the elements of composition] are undivided in reality [*re*] and in nature, but not in intention, as it happens in the diversity of genus and difference in a species, and [in the diversity] of essence from supposit, and of essence from being [*esse*].¹⁹⁵

Here again Henry appears to conceive of the distinction which gives rise to composition as an *intentional* distinction, not one which distinguishes between really different compositional

¹⁹⁵ Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, Art. XXVIII, Q.4, fo. 167-168: “Secundo autem modo distinguit intellectus suo conceptu diversitatem eorum quae sunt indivisa in re composita ex eis, sed inter se divisa: et hoc vel in natura et essentia: ut contingit in diversitate materiae et forma in composito ex utroque: et ideo talis diversitas dicitur esse secundum rem et naturam: vel sunt indivisa re et natura, sed non intentione, ut contingit in diversitate generis et differentiae in specie, et essentiae a supposito, et essentiae ab esse.”

elements. He places the diversity of essence and being alongside that of essence and supposit as being distinguished by the same sort of distinction, over *against* the kind of diversity obtaining between matter and form, which is more grounded in reality and in nature.¹⁹⁶

Henry makes it clear that there he is speaking of the distinction between essence and actual existence, and not of the distinction between essence and essential being. According to this text, there is *no* distinction between the essence and essential being, just as there is no distinction in a living thing between living and life, or at least such a distinction is *purely* mental or notional and involves no composition whatsoever. The distinction between the essence and actual existence, however, Henry conceives of as being neither purely a distinction of reason, nor as grounded in reality and nature, but as an intentional distinction, that is, a distinction according to diverse intentions concerning the same simple thing, neither of which includes the other within itself. In other words, the intention of the essence does not include that of actual existence, and vice versa, so that the actual existence of a thing is “quasi-accidental” to its essence. Nevertheless, although the actual being of a created thing is outside the intention of its essence, it adds no absolute reality to that essence nor a really distinct principle of being.¹⁹⁷ It does not seem, then, that actual existence and essence can be

¹⁹⁶ Perhaps this is the place to mention that in the present discussion about the distinction between essence and existence, Henry takes “essence” in an expansive sense, to mean both the essence proper, the *quod quid est*, as well that which the essence belongs to, i.e. the supposit, although he fails to mention this until the very end: “Et accipio hic in hac quaestione essentiam large pro eo quod quid est: et re cuius est: de quibus proponitur quaestio sequens.” For more on Henry’s intentional distinction generally and how it relates to essence and existence in particular, see the works cited in note 167 above, as well as John Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey of Fontaines* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1981), 66-89.

¹⁹⁷ Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, Art. XXVIII, Q4. fol. 168r, “Dico actualis existentiae: quia cum ipsa facit compositionem in creatura: non autem ab esse essentiae: quia illud est proprius actus eius essentialis: sicut vivere et actus vitae in vivente. Unde in creatura ex essentia et esse essentiali non est aliqua compositio: sicut neque in vivente ex vivere et vita. Et ideo talis diversitas dicitur esse non secundum rationem tantum: neque secundum rem et naturam: sed secundum intentiones diversas circa eadem rem simplicem consideratas, quarum una seorsum accipitur ab alia nec eam includit in se: et ideo quasi accidentaliter ei advenit . . . Et sic quia extra intentionem essentiae rei creatae est suum esse actuale, licet nihil rei absolutae addat essentiae, ut habitum est

the two principles similar to matter and to form that provide the elements of real spiritual composition.

If this is the case, then much less will a composition from potency and act provide a solution. As we have seen, Henry regards this latter composition as “lesser” than the previous two of essence and existence and of essence and supposit; much less then will it provide for a real composition of really disparate elements. A detailed presentation of Henry’s *Summa* XXVIII.6 is not necessary to prove this. As he admits very plainly, for him this kind of composition is not truly composition, since potency is nothing but a relation [*respectus*] in the thing which possesses it to that thing to which it is in potency. As he explains:

For the potency of matter, by which matter is susceptible of form, is perfected by form; and the potency of form, by which it is inclined towards matter, is perfected by its being in matter, and the case is similar in the composition of an accident with its subject, and of a thing with its essence, and of the essence with the supposit, and of the supposit with actual existence [*esse existentiae*], and of something incomplete in actual existence or essence with its complement. For matter is in potency to form and conversely; and subject to accident, and conversely; and a thing *qua* thing [*res ut res*] to essential being [*esse essentiae*]; and an essence to [its] supposit; and a supposit to existence [*existentiam*], and [something] incomplete to [what is] complete. And so it is plain that composition from act and potency is the most common and simplest [composition], and is included in every other kind of composition, although not conversely . . .¹⁹⁸

supra: Ideo contingit quod in omni creatura sit compositio ex essentia et esse, ut sit esse intentio alia extra intentionem essentiae: ex quasi accidentalibus eis: secundum modum supratactum.”

¹⁹⁸ Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, Art. XXVIII, Q. 6 fols. 169v-170v: “Sed iste modus compositionis non est vere compositio: quam ut infra videbitur, potentia non est nisi respectus fundatus in eo cuius est, in respectu ad aliud qui comparatus ad id super quod in illo fundatur, cadit in eius essentia. Comparatus vero ad aliud, habet natura respectus: qui non facit compositionem aliquam cum eo cuius est: ut similiter infra videbitur. Iste autem modus compositionis et si esset vera compositio in creaturis, omnino in deo cadere non potest . . . Potentia enim materiae qua materia est susceptiva formae, perficitur per formam: et potentia formae qua inclinatur ad materiam, perficitur per esse suum in materia, et similiter est in compositione accidentis cum subiecto: et rei cum esse essentiae, et essentiae cum supposito: et suppositi cum esse existentiae: et incompleti in esse existentiae vel essentia cum suo complemento. Materia enim est in potentia ad formam et e converso: et subiectum ad accidens: et e converso: et res ut res ad esse essentiae: et essentia ad suppositum: et suppositum ad existentiam: et incompletam ad completum. Et sic patet quod compositio ex actu et potentia communissima est et simplicissima: et in omni alio modo compositionis includitur, non e converso. . . .”

Much might be made of the conception of potency that Henry puts forth here, and of its striking differences from those of either, say, St. Bonaventure or of St. Thomas. In the interest of brevity, however, and of ending this long digression, I will only say that it is plain that for Henry a composition of potency and act need not be any more a composition of real metaphysical elements constituting a composite capable of motion and change than are the compositions from an intentionally distinct essence and existence or essence and supposit.

At this point I turn back to Henry's *Quod*. IV.16. Having followed Henry's reference to his *Summa*, attempts to find there compositional elements in spiritual creatures similar to matter and to form, which would allow him to account for spiritual composition against the objections of the proponents of spiritual matter, have been in vain. Henry's references in the quodlibetal question to a distinction between and composition of quiddity and essence, and his inaccurate presentation of the distinction between *quod est* and *quo est* as given in his *Summa*, along with his reference to the latter treatment, which it contradicts, seem to suggest that this portion of the question at least was hastily composed. In light of the evidence it seems to me that Article XXVIII in the *Summa*, on the divine simplicity, was not composed with the problem of spiritual matter especially in mind, and that *Quod*. IV.16, on spiritual matter, was not composed with all the details of the *Summa* article fresh in Henry's mind.

The closest, therefore, that Henry comes to explaining his "something similar to matter and something similar to form" comes in the replies to the objections in the quodlibetal question. In reply to the argument—invoking the authority of Boethius—that angels fall into the genus of substance, while substances as such are composed of matter and form, Henry states that Boethius did not mean to insist that the category of substance is composed from matter and form, but "from something material and formal." By form in

spiritual substance “he understands the first form, which is being [*esse*] itself; by matter, the first subject, which by its nature is unable to be on its own [*secundum se*]; and by the composite he understands that which is able to be on its own, which yet is not being itself . . .”¹⁹⁹ Again, this remark is rather cryptic. At first glance it appears that Henry is taking a position on spiritual composition similar to that of St. Thomas, whereby *esse* corresponds to form and *essentia* to matter in physical composition. However, his explanation of the relation of *esse* to *essentia* and to *suppositum* in his *Summa* clearly precludes a Thomistic understanding, and leaves us with the impression that the elements of spiritual composition for Henry are “material and formal” only in the most equivocal sense. Ultimately, it seems, for Henry spiritual creatures are more simple than they are even for Thomas, subject only to various kinds of intentional distinction. He appears to admit *no* real composition from really diverse principles or elements.²⁰⁰

Before letting Henry go we must take account of one more matter. Girard Etzkorn recently published a volume of “various questions” ascribed to Henry of Ghent, one of which (Q.5) argues at length in favor of spiritual matter.²⁰¹ In a preface Etzkorn argues that, although certainty is difficult, the questions may be Henry’s, and that at least they are

¹⁹⁹ Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet* IV.16, fol. 131v, “Ad illud quod arguebatur primo per Boetium . . . [Henry states that substances can be composed of essence and existence, not necessarily of matter and form] Boetius ergo large sumit materiam in suo dicto, sicut et Averrois: non intendens quod substantia predicamentum sit compositum sicut compositum ex materia et forma: sed ex aliquo materiali et formali: ut per substantiam quae est forma, intelligat formam primam quae est ipsum esse; per materiam, primum subiectum: cui ex natura sua non convenit secundum se esse; et per compositum intelligat id cui conveniat secundum se esse, quod tamen non est ipsum esse . . .”

²⁰⁰ Henry is, of course, far from all the Franciscans in this chapter on nearly every point at issue. One place where he draws near to some of them, however, is in granting to matter some essence and existence of its own. The very closing words of *Quod*. IV.16 are as follows: “Dicendum quod licet materia non habeat de se actum formae, habet tamen actum suae essentiae et existentiae, in quantum est effectus dei non existens pure nihil: sed aliquid in sua essentia et in sua existentia, differens a formae existentia et ab eius essentia: licet in composito super actum suae existentiae nata sit recipere actum formae, in quantum forma est actus compositi et materiae in composito.”

²⁰¹ *Quaestiones variae Henrico de Gandavo adscriptae*, Girard J. Etzkorn, ed. (Leuven University Press, 2008), 58-77, Q.5: “Utrum angelus sit compositus ex materia et forma.”

consistent with his doctrine. About the spiritual matter question, he says, “In Q.5 of this set . . . there is a remarkable affinity to Henry’s *Quod. II*, q.8, where, though preoccupied with the principle of individuation, he holds that immaterial substances have a material principle.”²⁰² He goes on to note two supposed parallels.

An examination of Henry’s *Quodlibet II.8*,²⁰³ however, shows that on the contrary Henry assumes the immateriality of angels from beginning to end. The doctrine of the question throughout is consistent with Henry’s doctrine as we have seen it in *Quodlibet IV.16*. Oddly enough, Etzkorn seems not to have compared his Q.5 with Henry’s *Quod. IV.16*. The two have nothing in common. Q.5 expressly affirms arguments which Henry expressly denies, such as the argument for spiritual matter from angels’ belonging to the genus of substance, and interprets *quo est* and *quod est* as corresponding to matter and form;²⁰⁴ it argues that composites act only by reason of form, and suffer by reason of matter.²⁰⁵ The question as a whole is sophisticated, with an acute historical awareness of the problem and a multitude of arguments and authorities, but it is entirely in keeping with the traditional Franciscan approach and entirely opposed to Henry’s own treatment and opinions. It seems clear to me that Etzkorn’s Q.5 is not by Henry.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, xii.

²⁰³ In *Henrici de Gandavo Quodlibet II*, ed. R. Weilockx (Leuven University Press, 1983), 34-57: Q.8, “Utrum possint fieri a Deo duo angeli solis substantialibus distincti.”

²⁰⁴ *Quaestiones variae*, 62.

²⁰⁵ *Quaestiones variae*, 66: “. . . recte dicitur quod agere maxime convenit composito ratione formae, pati vero ratione materiae.”

III.2.2. Giles of Rome

Giles of Rome (1243/7-1316) was an Augustinian Hermit and the “most original” of the early followers of St. Thomas Aquinas.²⁰⁶ Giles may be the most significant figure of the period who was neither Dominican nor Franciscan nor secular. He was *magister regens* in Paris about 1285-1291; in addition to being prominent in debates with his contemporaries, he left many copious writings which were influential in the ensuing decades.²⁰⁷

If Henry of Ghent’s rejection of spiritual matter does not seem as carefully thought out as we might expect from a figure of his stature, the same cannot be said for Giles of Rome. That the subject was a matter of serious consideration for Giles is made plain by the fact that he treated it at several times and at various lengths.²⁰⁸ In his day Giles seems to have

²⁰⁶ See Zavalloni, *Richard de Mediavilla*, 272: “Parmi les disciples de Saint Thomas, il est sans aucun doute le plus original.”

²⁰⁷ For aspects of Giles’ life and thought, see P. Mandonnet, “La Carrière scolaire de Gilles de Rome,” *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques*, 4 (1910), 481-91; Edgar Hocedez, “Gilles de Rome et Henri de Gand sur la distinction réelle (1276-1278),” *Gregorianum*, 8 (1927), 358-84; Edgar Hocedez, “La Condamnation de Gilles de Rome,” *Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale*, 4 (1932), 34-58; Jean Paulus, “Les disputes d’Henri de Gand et de Gilles de Rome sur la distinction de l’essence et de l’existence,” *Archives d’histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge*, 13 (1940-1942), 323-358; P. Nash, “Giles of Rome: Auditor and Critic of St. Thomas,” *The Modern Schoolman*, 28 (1950-1951), 1-2; P. Nash, “Giles of Rome on Boethius’ ‘Diversum est esse et id quod est,’” *Mediaeval Studies*, 12 (1950), 57-91; P. Nash, “The Accidentality of Esse According to Giles of Rome,” *Gregorianum*, 38 (1957), 103-15; G. Trapé, “Il Platonismo di Egidio Romano,” *Aquinas*, 7 (1964), 309-44; G. Trapé, “Causalità e partecipazione in Egidio Romano,” *Augustinianum*, 9 (1969), 91-117; John Wippel, “The Relationship between Essence and Existence in Late Thirteenth-Century Thought: Giles of Rome, Henry of Ghent, Godfrey of Fontaines, James of Viterbo,” in P. Morewedge, ed., *Philosophies of Existence: Ancient and Medieval*. New York: Fordham University Press, (1982), 131-164; S. Donati, “La dottrina di Egidio Romano sulla materia dei corpi celesti. Discussioni sulla natura dei corpi celesti alla fine del tredicesimo secolo,” *Medioevo XII* (1986), 229-280; Giorgio Pini, “La dottrina della creazione e la ricezione delle opere di Tommaso d’Aquino nelle Quaestiones de esse et essentia (qq. 1-7) di Egidio Romano,” *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale III* (1992), 271-304.

²⁰⁸ See Giles of Rome, *In secundum librum Sententiarum* (Venice, 1581), Vol I, Dist.3 p.1 q.1 a.1; *Opera Omnia* vol. III.2, *Reportatio Lecturae super Libros I-IV Sententiarum* l. II qq. 20-26 (Firenze: Sismel, 2003); *Quodlibeta*, Quod. I q.8 (Venice: Simon de Lueve, 1503).

been considered something of an expert on angelic and human psychology and was widely consulted thereon by, among others, several of the authors appearing in this study.²⁰⁹ It is no surprise, then, that he would have taken the issue of spiritual composition seriously. Giles' most comprehensive treatment is that in his *In secundum librum Sententiarum*, in which the question is whether angels are composed of matter and form. This is the treatment I will use here, without attempting to address every point it makes, since it is rather prolix, repetitive and digressive, with a tendency to wander off the subject.

Like Henry, Giles begins the body of his question by recognizing that some "Doctors" affirm that all things besides God have a nature composed of matter and form, and by asserting that "Avicbron is of this opinion in his book, which he has intitled *Fons vitae*: which opinion many Doctors of our time have followed and [continue to] follow."²¹⁰ Giles' invocation of Avicbron once again signals the stance he will take on the matter from the outset.

Nevertheless, before criticizing or refuting his opponents he endeavors to give them their due, and recites at some length the authorities commonly used to defend spiritual matter

²⁰⁹ See, for instance, the comment by the editors in Johns Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super secundum et tertium De anima*, ed. T. Noone et al. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006), *136: "... many teachers and scholars at the close of the thirteenth century turned to Giles' work on the angels for aid when preparing their own lectures on human and angelic psychology; indeed, in our readings for the sources of the *Quaestiones De anima*, we have found the following authors exhibiting a considerable degree of dependence upon Giles' *De cognitione angelorum*: in Paris, James of Viterbo, John of Paris, Vital du Four, and Gonsalvus Hispanus; at Oxford, Thomas Sutton and William Ware. To this list, we must add John Duns Scotus."

²¹⁰ Giles of Rome, *In secundum librum Sententiarum*, Dist. 3 p.1 q.1 a.1, 161: "Respondeo dicendum, quod circa hoc sunt Doctorum opiniones. Quidam enim volunt, quod omnia, citra primum, habeant naturam compositam ex materia, et forma, et huiusmodi opinionis est Avicbron in libro suo, quem intitulavit de fonte vitae: cuius opinionem plures Doctores nostri temporis secuti sunt, et sequuntur. . . ."

from Aristotle,²¹¹ Augustine, Boethius, and so forth, and remarking that “these [people] also have certain arguments [going] for them.”²¹² Giles offers two.

The first and longer of these arguments is from angelic passivity, and more specifically, *self*-passivity. The defenders of spiritual matter claim that in anything which undergoes something [*patitur*] from another there is something really inferior to that by which the agent acts. This is how the passive subject undergoes something by the agent. Since, according to this position, an angel is passive with respect to himself, since he moves himself, it is necessary to posit in the angel two natures: one whereby he acts and another whereby he is passive. Nor can it be said that these natures differ by reason alone—presumably because acting and undergoing themselves are not merely rationally distinct. If the angel really moves himself, therefore, he must have a nature which bespeaks act, and another which bespeaks potency, and therefore his whole nature must include both matter and form. Nor is it sufficient to say (again, according to this position) that the angel is composed from essence and existence, one of which is the active, and the other the passive, principle. For, in order for an angel to move himself, he requires not only an essence, and existence whereby that essence exists (although certainly each of these is required if the angel is to act); he also requires the *kind* of nature or essence which is able to move itself. If

²¹¹ Although he does not do so here, in another treatment Giles emphasizes his conviction that Aristotle certainly did not affirm spiritual matter, who often said that the intellect is immaterial and unmixed (with matter), and who implicitly denied any kind of matter in separate substances. Those who use Aristotle’s words to defend spiritual matter understand him badly. See Giles of Rome, *Opera Omnia* vol. III.2, *Reportatio Lecturae super Libros I-IV Sententiarum* 1. II. Firenze: Sismel, 2003. dist. 3, Quaestio 20, p. 229: “Sed simpliciter credo quod angelus non habet materiam, cuius opinionis videtur esse Philosophus, qui sepe dixit intellectum esse immaterialem, impermixtum, et cum negavit [corpora] materiam naturalem et matematicam a substantiis, per hoc videtur negasse omnem materiam, quia ab hac et illa non intellexit nec credidit aliam esse. Similiter verbum Philosophi male accipitur . . .”

²¹² Giles of Rome, *In secundum librum Sententiarum*, *ibid.*, “Habent et isti quasdam pro se rationes.” The arguments given here are in addition to those offered in the opening objections, which will be mentioned with Giles’ responses at the end of the section.

such a nature does not have in itself both an active and a passive principle, then an angel would be both active and passive with respect to the same principle, since both his existence and his essence would act upon him to move him, and would also be acted upon in order to be moved. In addition to composition from essence and existence, then, we must also posit in the angel a composition from matter and form.²¹³

The second argument which Giles recognizes from his opponents also concerns potentiality. Potentiality seems to be the property of matter, and it is matter which is first and foremost being in potency. Since potentiality belongs to matter above all, matter is the cause of potentiality in all things, and therefore it is impossible to preserve potentiality in angels without “the nature of matter”, i.e. potentiality, and without the matter which has this potentiality. Giles notes that the proponents of spiritual matter touch upon “many difficulties on the part of potentiality: but because they all have the same root and difficulty, therefore for the sake of brevity they are dismissed.”²¹⁴

²¹³ Ibid., “Dicunt enim, quod in eo, quod patitur ab alio, est aliquid, quod realiter est inferius eo, per quod agens agit: ratione cuius passum patitur ab agente: cum ergo angelus, ut dicunt, patiatur a seipso: quia movetur a seipso: oportet in ipso angelo dare duas naturas: unam, per quam agit: aliam, per quam patitur. Nec dici potest, quod istae duae naturae differant solum ratione . . . Si ergo angelus seipsum movet: oportet, quod in ipso angelo, et in natura eius sint hae duae naturae, quarum una dicat actum: alia potentiam. Quare si ipsa natura angeli est composita ex duabus naturis: oportet ibi esse materiam, et formam. Nec valeret, ut videtur, si quis diceret, quod in angelo est compositio ex essentia, et esse, quarum unum se habet, ut actus, alius, ut potentia. Nam ex hoc non videtur, quod possimus salvare Angelum movere seipsum; nam angelus, ut agat, non solum requiritur, ut sit, et ut habeat esse: sed est, ut habeat essentiam, et naturam; utrumque requiritur ad actionem angeli, et essentia, et esse. Poterimus ergo ex ista compositione vellemus salvare, quod angelus agat. Si autem ex eodem compositione vellemus salvare, quod angelus a se pateretur, tunc idem per idem, et respectu eiusdem esset agens, et patiens: ut idem angelus per eadem essentiam et esse respectu sui ipsius esset agens, et patiens. Cum ergo hoc stare non possit, praeter compositionem illam ex essentia et esse oportet ponere in angelo compositionem aliam ex materia et forma: ut salvare possimus, quod in seipsum agat.” It is interesting to note that Giles does not consider a position that admits a hylomorphic composition and *not* one from essence and existence.

²¹⁴ Ibid., “Adducuntur etiam difficultates aliae ex parte potentiae; ut quia potentialitas videtur esse proprietas materiae: quid quod est primo tale in aliquo genere, est causa omnium aliorum, que sunt post; si materiae per se, et primo competit esse in potentia; quicquid erit per naturam materiae: non ergo poterimus salvare potentialitatem in angelo, nisi per naturam materiae, et nisi habeat in se materiam. Tanguntur insuper in hac materia plures difficultates ex parte potentialitatis: sed quia omnes habent eandem radicem, et difficultatem, ideo brevitatis gratia dimittantur.”

Despite these arguments and the authorities cited by his opponents Giles means to show that matter-form composition in spiritual substances is impossible. He means to do this in four ways: first, by considering the conditions of material things, that is, by considering the necessary relation of matter and quantity; second, from the perfection and nobility of the angels; third, from the transformation which occurs in material things; fourth, from the kind of action which we attribute to the separate substances.²¹⁵

The first of these four “ways” is the longest and most detailed. Giles attempts to show that matter necessitates dimensive quantity, and hence corporeality, so that if angels are material, they must also be corporeal. For we say that there can be more than one immaterial thing and, if angels are immaterial, there are many of them. But Giles claims that if angels were material there could only be one of them. A plurality of angels, differing in number, species, or genus, would be impossible. Furthermore, if there were a material angel, he claims that this would exclude the possibility of a material body also existing, and vice versa, so that, given that a body exists, it is also impossible for there to be a material angel.²¹⁶ All of these claims follow for Giles from a proper consideration of the relation of matter to quantity.

Matter is never separated from quantity, and quantity is always understood to be in matter, for it is through quantity that matter is disposed to receive a substantial form. If we supposed the opposite, that matter could receive a form without a preceding form, there

²¹⁵ Ibid., “Adductis auctoritatibus, et rationibus, quod in substantiis spiritualibus sit compositio ex forma, et materia; ante, quam solvamus auctoritates, et rationes adductas; volumus ostendere non esse possibile spirituales substantias sic esse compositas. Adducemus nam ad haec quatuor vias. Prima sumetur ex differentia rerum materialium, secunda ex perfectione et ex angelorum nobilitate: tertia ex transmutatione, quam contingit esse in rebus materialibus: quarta ex opere, et actione, quam attribuimus substantiis separatis.”

²¹⁶ Ibid., 161-162: “Prima via sic patet; dicemus nam quod possunt esse plura immaterialia; ut plures angeli, si sint immateriales: tamen si essent materiales nullo modo possent esse plures angeli, nec numero, nec specie, nec genere differentes: immo ex quo materiam ponimus in rebus corporalibus: si poneremus materiam in angelis, non posset angelus simul cum re corporali; et ex quo poneretur esse aliquod corpus in rerum natura, non posset esse in rerum natura aliquid Angelus. . . .”

would never be more than one substantial form in matter. This is because the only reason more than one substantial form can exist in matter is that no one material thing, existing under any given form, is able to exhaust the totality of existing matter.²¹⁷ Rather, because matter is divided into quantitative parts, one form can exist in one part and another part in another. Every material thing contains *some* of the totality of matter, while failing to contain some, and the amount of matter not contained by a given material substance is then available for other forms. This is only possible because of quantitative division, and therefore, if quantity did not exist in matter *prior* to substantial form, only a single material thing could exist. Matter and its quantitative diversity precede (at least logically) the existence of substantial form in matter.²¹⁸ A multiplicity of material angels could not achieve plurality by a diversity of form alone, therefore: they must also be diversified by quantity. For if matter is to sustain more than one substantial form, there must be some diversity in matter itself before the reception of form, serving to receive a diversity of forms. This diversity cannot be provided by the essence, the form being received, but must be prior to it, and so must be attributed to the “partibility of matter” (i.e. divisibility into parts). We must posit, therefore, that matter has extension and partibility prior to the reception of a corporeal substantial form, so that the diverse parts of matter can be disposed to receive a diversity of such forms.²¹⁹

²¹⁷ Ibid., 162: “Redeamus ergo ad propositum, et dicamus, quod materia nunquam separatur a quantitate, et quod quantitas semper intelligitur esse in materia, ut suscipiat substantialem formam; quam si tamen daretur oppositum, ut quod materia absque quantitate praecedente posset suscipere formam, nunquam in materia esset nisi una substantialis forma . . . non enim posset esse duo materialia qualitercumque differentia, nisi quia neutrum illorum materialium constat ex tota materia . . .”

²¹⁸ Ibid., “Quare si sunt duo materialia qualitercumque, ponantur distincta, oportet, quod in neutro sit tota materia, sed in quolibet sit aliquid de materia; habebit ergo materia aliquid et aliquid, et per consequens habebit partem et partem. Sed hoc non potest habere nisi per quantitatem: consequens ergo est, quod non possunt esse plura materialia, nisi ponamus materiam habere quantitatem.”

²¹⁹ Ibid., “. . . Si ergo sunt duo materialia: origine prius intelligitur esse informis materia huius, et illius materialis, quam haec, vel illa materia perficiatur per formam oportet ergo in ipsa materia sic informi intelligere aliquam diversitatem, ut possit diversas formas recipere. Sed hoc non posset esse per essentiam: erit ergo per

Informed matter itself, without any essence, must be understood as diverse, according to its division into parts, i.e. according to quantity: there could not be many things unless matter came in some *amount* which could be apportioned to the various forms.²²⁰

At this point Giles says, “But man’s intellect is not quiet.” To the foregoing his opponent might raise an objection. “He would say that distinction is through form. And matter differs from this [form] and the matter of this [differs] from the matter of that, because there is here one form and there another.” Because there is distinction in forms, there is also distinction in the matter of those forms.²²¹

But someone making this distinction has not, Giles claims, grasped the strength of his previous point. What is wholly unformed is in itself one, having no property to provide diversity, including numerical diversity; and the unformed, i.e. matter, precedes form in the origin of the substance. Since it is wholly one, several different forms would be unable to arise in a wholly unformed matter and so diversify it, since, in order for them both to perform their diversifying function, two incompatible forms would have to simultaneously exist in a single unformed subject. Only quantity can diversify its own subject, while other forms merely perfect their subjects. Diversity implies quantity, and so, again, quantitative diversity is presupposed by substantial diversity in material things. “Unless quantity were present in

partialitatem materiae . . . De necessitate itaque, illud, quod origine prius intelligitur esse in materia, est quod dat extensionem, et partialitatem materiae, ut possit materia sic habens partes in diversis partibus suscipere diversas formas. . . .”

²²⁰ Ibid., 163: “In ipsa itaque materia informi intelligitur diversitas, quod non potest esse secundum essentiam: erit ergo secundum partialitatem tantum, quod esse non contingit, nisi per quantitatem: nullo ergo modo possunt poni plura materialia, nisi ponatur materia esse quanta. . . . Sola autem quantitas etiam per se loquendo facit diversitatem in ipso suo esse, quod dat materiae informi, quia dat ei esse extensum, et per consequens dat ei diversitatem partium, propter quod in ipso suo esse, quod dat materiae quantitas, diversitatem facit, quia diversitate facta, possunt esse plura materialia, et in diversis partibus materiae possunt recipi diversae formae; hac vero diversitate non existente, omnis diversitas rerum materialium tollitur. . . .”

²²¹ Ibid., “Sed intellectus hominis non quiescit. Dicit enim, quod distinctio est per formam. Et differt hoc materiale ab illo, et materia huius a materia illius, quia est ibi alia et alia forma. Propter quod ex quo ponimus distinctionem in formis, ut videtur: non est difficile in ipsa materia distinctionem salvare.”

matter, matter could have no diversity in order to be able to receive several material forms, in order for there to be several material things.”²²²

Having shown all this, Giles declares that if angels were material, then they would also have to be subject to quantity and be *figurabiles*, i.e. have shape and spatial dimension. But this is contrary to the common conception of the wise about them.²²³ The only alternative, however, is even more unacceptable. One may admit the bare metaphysical possibility of a material angel, but in such a case there could exist only a single angel, and no other material thing in the universe, neither a body nor anything else. Given, however, that there is more than one material thing, the theory of spiritual matter falls apart. Angels are either immaterial, or they have extension and are corporeal.²²⁴

Giles is unimpressed by the suggestion that spiritual creatures have a kind of matter which behaves differently than corporeal matter, in which diversity is not given by quantity but by something else. This is nothing other than to abandon the reality of matter while trying to retain the name. Matter is that which is pure potency, which is *prope nihil*, next to nothing, than which nothing can be closer to nothing. There cannot be different kinds of such a tenuous principle! Furthermore, if the matter of the angels were conceded to be different

²²² Ibid., “Sed sic arguens, virtutem verborum praecedentium non percepit. Nam, ut diximus, ipsum informe de se est unum, et origine praecedit formam. Cum ergo de se sit unum, non possunt ei advenire plures formae: quia in uno et eodem informi plures formae oppositionem habentes advenire non possunt. . . . Et quia sola quantitas suum subiectum diversificat, ceterae autem formae per se suum subiectum solum perficiunt: nullo tamen modo in ipso suo subiecto diversitatem faciunt, nisi ponatur quantitas advenire materiae: non poterit materia diversitatem habere, ut possit plures formas materiales recipere, ut plura materialia esse possint.”

²²³ Ibid., “His visis, dicamus, quod ex quo diversificatio materialium praesupponit quantitatem, si ponantur angeli esse materiales: non poterunt esse plures qualitercunque formae different, vel numero, vel specie, vel genere, nisi ponantur angeli esse quanti, et figurabiles: quod est contra communem animi conceptionem sapientium . . .”

²²⁴ Ibid., 164: “Quare si non esset nisi unum materiale: utputa unus Angelus, si nihil aliud esset materiale in universo, nec corpus, nec aliquid aliud, forte ratione proposita huic positioni non esset omnino contraria; sed ex quod aliquid aliud ponitur esse materiale, et non possunt esse plura materialia, nisi quodlibet illorum sit quantum, impossibile erit esse aliquem Angelum, nisi ponatur esse quantus, et habere extensionem. . . .”

from the matter of a body in this way, Giles would ask whether the matter of one angel differs from the matter of another. If so, and if not by quantity, how? We would be reduced to positing the absurdity that there would be as many essentially different kinds of matter as there are angels, so that one angel would differ as much from another angel as an angel does from a body.²²⁵ The notion of spiritual matter thus collapses into incoherence and metaphysical extravagance.

The second way Giles uses to prove the impossibility of spiritual matter is taken from the nobility and perfection of the angels. He repeats once more Augustine's characterization of matter as *prope nihil*, while reminding us that spiritual substances are the noblest and most perfect of creatures. Now a thing is noble insofar as it is nearer, i.e. more similar, to God, and more remote from nothing, or because in the order of things it has a superior and more excellent being. So, conversely, a thing is ignoble and imperfect insofar as it is removed, i.e. less similar, from God, or nearer to nothing, or has the lowest and most reduced kind of being. On account of all this, the nature of angels is the noblest and most perfect, while that of matter is the most ignoble and imperfect. If, then, an angel were form in matter, he would be next to God, *prope Deum*, on account of his nature; but on account of his material being [*esse*] he would also fail to have that noble and perfect being, namely, of being next to God. He would be both very similar and very dissimilar to God. In order to avoid this contradiction, then, and to preserve the dictum of Augustine that God made one thing next to

²²⁵ Ibid., "Dicemus ergo, quod sic loquentes, recedunt a re, quae est materia, sed solum nomen materiae tenere nituntur. Natura hoc est materia, quod est pura potentia, quod est ita prope nihil, quod magis prope non potest . . . tamen et si concederetur, quod materia Angelis, sic differat a materia corporis, quaereremus, utrum materia unius Angeli sic differat a materia alterius: quod est absoluta ab omni forma adhuc differret. Ponitur ergo ista absurditas, quod quot erunt Angeli, tot erunt materiae per essentiam differentes. Differet ergo angelus ab angelo, sicut angelus a corpore. . ."

himself (the angelic nature) and one thing next to nothing (matter), we must admit that an angel is immaterial.²²⁶

Giles' third way is taken from the transformation which takes place in material things. Giles points out that God's agency and creatures' agency does not work in identical ways with respect to matter. God can act directly on matter itself, while created agents do not touch upon the very essence of matter, but act on matter through the mediation of the quantity and other forms under which it exists.²²⁷ Given, therefore, that there is one matter for all bodies—and this is Giles' position, for matter must be essentially the same wherever it is found—any body can be changed into any other body by the divine power. Again, given that intellective souls had matter, it would be essentially the same in these souls, in angels, and in bodies. (Giles remarks that those positing matter do hold this, for if they didn't, they would be unable to maintain that matter is pure potency, which can have no distinction in itself. Of course, those who posit an essential difference in spiritual and corporeal matter also deny that matter is pure potency.) Now, Giles does not deny that there is some potentiality in angels; what he abhors is the suggestion that angels contain pure potency, which is the property of matter

²²⁶ Ibid., 164-165: "Secunda via ad hoc idem sumitur ex perfectione Angelorum, sive ex eorum nobilitate. Nam secundum Augustinum 12 Confes. Angelus est prope Deum, materia informis est prope nihil. . . . Res ergo est nobilis, vel quia est propinquior, i.e. similior Deo, vel quia remotior a nihilo, vel quia in ordine rerum habet esse superius, et excellens. Sic e contrario res erit ignobilis, et imperfecta, vel quia est multum remota, vel multum dissimilis a Deo, vel quia est multum propinqua ipsi nihilo: vel tertio, quia in ordine rerum habet esse infimum, et depressum. Propter omnia praedicata tria: est natura angelorum nobilis, et perfecta; e contrario propter tria opposita natura materiae est ignobilis, et imperfecta. . . . Si enim esset angelus forma in materia: secundum considerationem posset esse prope Deum: sed secundum esse, quod haberet, et secundum quod haberet esse in effectum: quia haberet esse materiale: non haberet illud esse nobile, et perfectum: videlicet, quod esset prope Deum, et quod in ordine creaturarum haberet esse Deo valde simile, sicut materia valde dissimile. Quare ut salvemus dictum Aug. de nobilitate Angeli, dicimus ipsum esse quod immateriale." One might remark that this use of Augustine's formulation against Augustine's position is somewhat amusing in light of Giles' comment, seen in an earlier note, about his opponents who do the same with the words of Aristotle.

²²⁷ Ibid., 165: "Tertia via ad hoc idem sumitur ex transmutatione, quae contingit esse in rebus materialibus. Dicemus enim, quod aliter materia comparatur ad Deum, et aliter ad alia agentia. Nam alia agentia non attingunt immediate ipsam essentiam materiae, sed attingunt eam, mediante quantitate, et mediante forma, sub qua existit . . ." I omit a rather long discussion which takes place here on the subject of this distinction.

itself. In such a case not only could any body be transformed into any body, but any body could be changed into a spiritual substance, and conversely, at least by the divine power.²²⁸

The fourth way Giles uses to deny the possibility of spiritual matter is taken from the work or action which is attributed to separate substances, namely understanding. This is of course Giles' version of the argument from intellection which St. Thomas favored. Now, knowable objects are in the knowing mind, not according to a material mode, but rather according to "a certain formal expression." Cognition as such always presupposes some kind of immaterial mode of receiving its object; even sense activity, which is a humbler kind of cognition, is said to receive its species without matter.²²⁹ It is of some interest that Giles takes up the point used by William de la Mare and others—that the sense receives its object without matter as much as the intellect does—in order to use it in his argument against them. Giles goes so far as to claim that it is immateriality which *makes* cognition, and indeed wherever there is some cognition there is some mode of immateriality, even in sense. Materiality therefore impedes cognition. But this talk of "modes" of immateriality indicates how Giles gets around the objection that, since the sense organ is material and yet receives its object immaterially, the same might be true of the intellect. For one must distinguish between

²²⁸ Ibid., "Posito ergo, quod omnium corporum sit una materia: quod ponendum est, ut infra declarabitur: quia ubicunque est proprie materia: oportet, quod sit eadem per essentiam: poterit virtute divina quodlibet corpus in quodlibet corpus mutari; sic, et si animae haberent materiam proprie sumptam: esset eadem per essentiam in animabus, vel in angelis, et in ipsis corporibus, quod et concedunt ponentes materiam in substantiis spiritualibus; quod si non concederent; non esset ibi aliquid, quod esset potentia pura: quia, ut saepe saepius diximus: in potentia pura non potest esse distinctio. Non enim negamus quin in angelis sit aliqua potentialitas: horremus tamen ibi ponere, quod ibi sit potentia pura: quod est proprium ipsi materiae: quia si ibi esset aliquid tale, esset idem per essentiam cum materia istorum inferiorum. Posset ergo fieri saltem virtute divina non solum ex quolibet corpore quodlibet corpus: sed etiam ex quolibet corpore quaelibet spiritualis substantia, et e converso . . ." Recall that Olivi admitted this inference as legitimate.

²²⁹ Ibid., 166: "Quarta via ad hoc idem sumitur ex opere, vel ex actione, quae attribuitur substantiis separatis: cuiusmodi est intelligere. Nam semper in cognoscente sunt ipsa cognoscibilia . . . non secundum modum materialem, sed magis secundum quandam expressionem formalem oportet cognoscibilia esse in cognoscente. Cognition ergo semper praesupponit quandam immaterialem modum recipiendi. Nam et sensus, qui est cognitio infima: dicitur suscipere speciem sine materia. . . ."

material and immaterial being, as well as between what can know [*cognoscens*] and what cannot; but one must also distinguish between what can know excellently and what can know, but not excellently. Plants and non-living bodies are changed *only* materially, and therefore have neither cognition nor perception, while animals do indeed have some kind of immaterial mode of reception, and therefore have some kind of cognition.²³⁰

The ascending grade of kinds of cognition, from the lowest animal sense-perception and feeling to the highest angelic intellection, requires a corresponding ascending grade of immateriality. Just as there are some kinds of living things (plants) which are material and are only moved materially, and others (animals and men) which are material but are moved both materially and immaterially, so, we must admit, there is a third kind (the angels and separated souls) which are immaterial and moved only immaterially. If we did not admit this third grade, we could admit no higher cognition than the perception of sense. If, therefore, the angels understand, it is necessary not only that they receive nothing materially, but also that they lack matter altogether. To insist that they receive species without matter but have matter themselves is to insist that they have sense but not intellect, for this is what it is to sense.²³¹

²³⁰ Ibid., “Et quia immaterialitas facit cognitionem, immo ubicumque est cognitio aliqua, ibi est aliquis immaterialitatis modus; ipsa vero materialitas cognitionem impedit: oportet secundum esse materiale et immateriale distinguere non solum cognoscens a non cognoscente, sed etiam cognoscens excellenter a cognoscente non excellenter. Videmus enim, quod plantae solum immutantur materialiter, sicut immutantur corporal naturaliter: ideo nullam cognitionem habent: nec aliquid sentiunt: Animalia vero, quia quantum ad eorum sensus, habent quendam modum suscipiendi immateriale: quia eorum sensus, ut diximus, est susceptivus specierum sine materia: ideo cognitionem habent. . . .”

²³¹ Ibid., “. . . si non esset dare tertium gradum in viventibus, videlicet, quod aliqua viventia essent, quae nec materiam haberent, nec materialiter aliquid reciperent; non esset aliqua altior cognitio, quam cognitio sensitiva. Ergo si Angeli intelligunt: non solum oportet, quod nihil materialiter recipiant, sed etiam necesse est, quod ipsi in se materia careant: quia si materiam haberent, et solum speciem sine materia reciperent: quia hoc est sentire: esset in eis sensus non intellectus. . . .”

One might also say, according to Giles, that higher kinds of cognition consist in understanding universals. But universals are not composed of matter and form: understanding something by means of a universal is to understand it especially in the mode of form. “Wherefore if in intellectual consideration even matter itself is drawn into the formal mode, it is necessary for an understanding spiritual substance to be form itself, and not to have matter in itself. For if it had matter in itself, then the form received in it would have material being . . .” In such a case understanding universals would be impossible, since a material mind could only represent a thing to itself under some material conditions. A knower, therefore, does not receive its species materially, but formally. There are, however, more and less formal kinds of reception, just as there are more and less excellent kinds of cognition, so that the intellect receives its object more formally than does the sense.²³² The intellect, therefore, receives neither materially (like plants) nor together with material conditions (like the sense powers), but altogether formally, so that to say that it nevertheless had in itself some pure potency is altogether incoherent. “Wherefore it is consequently concluded from its intellectual operation that a spiritual substance lacks matter . . . for no material [substance] can be elevated to knowing something immaterial.”²³³

Having given his “four ways,” Giles now answers the objections of his opponents, first considering those offered in the corpus of the question, and then the initial arguments

²³² Ibid., 167: “Quare si in consideratione intellectuali etiam ipsa materia trahitur ad modum formae, oportet substantiam spiritualementem esse ipsam formam, et non habere in se materiam. Si enim haberet in se materiam, tunc forma recepta in ea haberet esse materiale. . . . Nunquam ergo posset repraesentare sine conditionibus materiae, propter quod per talem formam non possemus universale cognoscere. Dicemus ergo, quod cognoscens non recipit materialiter, sed formaliter: recipit tamen magis et minus formaliter: secundum quod est magis et minus excellens cognitio: ut intellectus recipit magis formaliter quam sensus . . .”

²³³ Ibid., “Dicere autem, quod intellectus, qui recipit omnino formaliter (quia nec cum materia, nec cum conditionibus materiae) habeat in se aliquid, quod sit potentia pura: est omnino inconueniens. . . . Quare consequens est, quod substantia spiritualis ex ipsa sua operatione intellectuali concludatur carere materia. . . . Nullum enim materiale potest elevari ad cognoscendum aliquid immateriale. . . .”

pro. He rejects appeals to *De unitate et uno* which, he recognizes, is not by Boethius. It is neither redolent of Boethius' style, nor does it reflect his positions in his other authentic works, and consequently has no authority. As for Avicbron, Giles' opinion is that he was not of sound mind, and erred on spiritual matter as he erred in many places in his book. Avicbron entitled his book *On the Fount of Life* [*de fonte vitae*], but it merits rather the opposite name, given the number of errors it contains. Giles furthermore denies that Augustine affirmed spiritual matter, or, if he did, he offered the theory as part of a tentative investigation rather than asserting it as settled truth.²³⁴

To the argument that, since an angel moves himself, we must posit two elements, one which moves and one which is moved, Giles replies with a rather novel solution. It is unnecessary to posit different things [*res*] composing the angelic nature; all that is necessary is to recognize two really different potencies in the angelic nature, namely the intellect and the will. For the intellect moves the will, and vice versa, and so an angel moves himself and is divisible into two potential parts, one moving and one moved, whether it is the intellect moving the angel to willing, or the will moving him to understand.²³⁵

²³⁴ Ibid., 168: "Quod autem addebatur de Boetio in libro de unitate et uno, quod Angelus et anima non sunt quid unum simplicitate, sed unione simplicium, ut unione materiae et formae: dici debet, quod liber ille non est Boetii: nec redolet stilum eius; et quia non est liber authenticus: ideo sollicitum esse de opinione eius, vel de opinione viri non authenticus, non est approbandum. . . . Quod autem dicebatur de Avicbron, quod hoc sensit in libro de fonte vitae; dici debet, quod in hoc Avicbron sanam mentem non habuit, sed erravit: sicut in multis locis in libro illo erravit. Intitulavit enim eum de fonte vitae, sed magis meruisset ille liber nomen oppositum: cum non solum circa existentiam rerum, sed etiam circa actiones entium multos errores contineat. . . . Dici debet, quod ibi Augustinus non loquitur asserendo, sed magis investigando, et veritatem inquirendo. . . ."

²³⁵ Ibid., 169: "Quod vero addebatur, quod angelus seipsum movet, ideo oportet in angelo dare duo differentia realiter, quia idem secundum idem, et respectu eiusdem, non potest esse movens et motum: non dabimus in angelo duas res componentes naturam, sed dabimus ibi duas potentias realiter differentes: intellectum scilicet et voluntatem. Nam, quia intellectus movet voluntatem, et e converso: angelus movet seipsum, quia est divisibilis in duas partes potentiales: quarum una est movens, et alia mota; ut per intellectum movet seipsum ad volendum, et per voluntatem ad intelligendum."

As for the argument that whatever has potentiality has it through matter, which is the sole principle of potentiality, Giles insists that the term “potentiality,” as applied to matter and to the soul or other spiritual substances, is altogether equivocal. The potency of matter is “pure potency,” while there is nothing in a spiritual substance which is pure potency. The potency of matter is for sensibles, while that of spiritual substances is for intelligibles. “Potency” does not have a single meaning for all things, and what is true of corporeal potency is not true of spiritual potency.²³⁶

This argument is along the same lines as the reply to the third initial objection, with which I will, for that reason, begin. The objection argued that whatever has the property of matter also has matter; but the property of matter is to be in potency. Since, therefore, spiritual substances have in themselves some potentiality, they must have matter as well.²³⁷ To this Giles replies, as we have just seen, that not all potency is the kind of potency which is the property of matter. Spiritual and material potencies are each called “potency” equivocally, and so one cannot argue from spiritual potency to the presence of matter.²³⁸

²³⁶ Ibid., “Quod autem addebatur de potentialitate, et quod potentialitas per se, et primo convenit materiae, et ideo quicquid habet potentialitatem habet per materiam; Dicitur debet, quod potentialitas materiae, et animae, vel, cuiuscunque substantiae spiritalis: est omnino aequivoce; quia potentia materiae est potentia pura: nihil autem est in substantia spiritali, quod sit pura potentia: vel potentia materiae est ad formas sensibles, vel ad aliqua sensibilia: potentia autem substantiae spiritalis est ad intelligibilia: Primum ergo in aliquo genere est causa omnium aliorum, quae sunt post quando illa accipiuntur univoce, et secundum rationem unam. . . .”

²³⁷ Giles of Rome, *ibid.*, 160: “Quod autem addebatur de potentialitate, et quod potentialitas per se, et primo convenit materiae, et ideo quicquid habet potentialitatem habet per materiam; Dicitur debet, quod potentialitas materiae, et animae, vel, cuiuscunque substantiae spiritalis: est omnino aequivoce; quia potentia materiae est potentia pura: nihil autem est in substantia spiritali, quod sit pura potentia: vel potentia materiae est ad formas sensibles, vel ad aliqua sensibilia: potentia autem substantiae spiritalis est ad intelligibilia: Primum ergo in aliquo genere est causa omnium aliorum, quae sunt post quando illa accipiuntur univoce, et secundum rationem unam. . . .”

²³⁸ Ibid., 169: “Ad tertium dicendum, quod non quaelibet potentia est proprietas materiae. Convenit enim substantiis spiritalibus aliqua potentialitas, sed illa potentialitas dicitur aequivoce cum potentialitate materiae, ut est per habita declaratum. Propter quod propter in esse talem potentialitatem in substantiis spiritalibus, non possumus arguere ibi esse materiam.”

The first²³⁹ and second initial objections argued from the fact that spiritual substances fall within the genus of substance, which is composed of matter and form. Whatever things are in the same genus share in the principle of that genus, and spiritual substances fall within the genus of substance just as corporeal substances do. Therefore the same principles of substantiality are present in each, and the principles of substantiality for corporeal substances are matter and form; therefore the same principles will be present in spiritual substances.²⁴⁰ Giles' response to this is that matter and form are not the principles of substance *simpliciter*, but only of sensible substances. As, when we speak of bodies and spirits being in the genus of substance, we are taking "genus" in the most general sense, so we should also take "principle" in the most general sense. The principles of substance in the most general sense are not matter and form, but potency and act. What we ought to say, then, is that whatever is in the genus of substance is not altogether simple, but is composed of potency and act, not that it must be composed of matter and form.²⁴¹

The fourth objection and response continue the same line of thought. The objection states that the substance of a spiritual creature is either act alone, potency alone, or a composition from each. It is not act alone, for nothing is pure act but God; nor is it potency alone, for then it would be pure potency and therefore identical with matter. Therefore the substance of an angel is a composite of two things; but no two things make one substance or

²³⁹ The first argues from the words of Boethius, over the interpretation of which Giles quibbles in his reply. The second argument makes the same point from reason, and so this is the one I note here, with its response.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 160: "Praeterea quae sunt in uno genere communicant in eisdem principiis; sed omnes substantiae sunt in eodem genere et in eodem praedicamento: tam corporalia, quam spiritualia: ergo communicant in eisdem principiis: sed principia corporalium sunt materia et forma, ergo et spiritualium erunt haec eadem principia."

²⁴¹ Ibid., 169: "Ad secundum dicendum, quod materia et forma non sunt principia substantiae simpliciter, sed sunt principia substantiae sensibilis: cum ergo dicitur quod quae sunt in eodem genere communicant in eisdem principiis, dici debet quod sicut accipitur genus generaliter, sic oportet principia generaliter accipere: non ergo accipiemus principia generis substantiae sic stricte pro materia et forma, sed accipiemus ea magis large pro potentia et actu: dicemus ergo, quod quodlibet, quod est directe in praedicamento substantiae, non est omnino simplex, sed est compositum ex potentia et actu."

one essence but matter and form, and so an angel is composed of matter and form.²⁴² Giles replies that the angels are indeed neither pure potency nor pure act, but are composed from each. It is not necessary, however, that this composition be *within* the essence, or that there be *two* essential principles corresponding to potency and act. Rather a single essential principle can enter into composition, as a potency, with the existence [*esse*] which it has, as its act, and so an angel's composition can be one of essence and existence rather than of matter and form.²⁴³

The fifth objection recalls Boethius' dictum that a simple form is not the subject of form, whereas angels are the subjects of properties. Giles replies that it is true that a simple form cannot be the subject of anything, *if* it is truly simple. But nothing is truly simple but the divine essence, which Boethius was speaking of when asserting his principle. The essence of an angel is not truly simple, since it contains some potentiality; it is not necessary, then, to posit a composition of matter and form to keep it from being truly simple, when a composition of essence and existence suffices.²⁴⁴ Giles elaborates on his conception of essence/existence composition at much greater length in the following article, Dist. III p.1

²⁴² Ibid., 160: "Preaterea aut eorum substantia est solum actus: aut solum potentia: aut est composita ex utrisque; non est solus actus, quia tunc esset actus purus, et esset Deus: nec est solum potentia, quia tunc esset potentia pura, et esset idem, quod materia. Est itaque angelorum substantia non una res tantum, ut actus tantum, vel potentia tantum, sed est compositum ex duobus rebus: sed nullae duae res faciunt unam substantiam, vel una essentiam, nisi materia et forma: ergo etc."

²⁴³ Ibid., 169-170: "Ad quartum dicendum, quod angeli non sunt actus purus, nec potentia pura, sed est ibi compositio potentiae et actus; sed ista compositio, vel potest accipi secundum rem, prout realiter differt essentia, quae se habet, ut potentia ab esse, quod se habet, ut actus: et tunc potentia et actus non dicent partes quidditatis, vel naturae, sed potentia dicet ipsam quidditatem et naturam. Actus vero dicet perfectionem quidditatis, vel naturae, vel potest accipi talis compositio secundum rationem, et sic in ipsa essentia est compositio potentiae et actus, prout huiusmodi potentia; nec est potentia pura, nec actus purus, sed una et eadem essentia, aliter et aliter accepta est potentia et actus. Est ergo in Angelis potentia et actus, sed non propter hoc est ibi compositio materiae et formae, sed essentiae et esse, ut potest esse per habita manifestum."

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 170: "Ad quintum cum dicitur, quod forma simplex non potest esse alicuius subiectum; dicendum quod verum est: si sit omnino simplex; sicut est ipsa natura divina, de qua ipse Boetius loquitur. Huiusmodi autem simplex forma non est essentia angeli, cum sit ibi potentialitas aliqua, sed propter huiusmodi potentialitatem, non oportet ibi ponere compositionem materiae et formae, sed sufficit quod ibi sit compositio essentiae et esse." The sixth and final objection, from *Liber de causis* 9, is of little interest, and I omit it here.

q.1 art.2; but since it plays so little part in his refutation of spiritual matter, I say no more about it here.²⁴⁵

Giles of Rome's discussion of spiritual matter in his *Sentences* commentary is noteworthy for its comprehensiveness and for the seriousness with which he considers the opposing position. His arguments are very thorough and attempt to address the objections which might be brought against them, especially his extended discussion of the relation of matter and quantity. In his version of the argument from intellection he takes into account the points raised since Thomas Aquinas about the immateriality of the sense act. Unlike St. Thomas, although he posits a composition from essence and existence as an alternative to spiritual matter, and although this point (as opposed to some who reject both spiritual matter and the real distinction of essence and existence) is crucial for his own position on spiritual composition, it does not occupy a very significant place in his refutation of spiritual matter itself, where he prefers to argue on grounds pertaining to the structures of corporeal and spiritual essences and their operations. Altogether Giles' treatment is a significant entry in the debate at the end of the thirteenth century.

²⁴⁵ In connection with this subject I should not fail to mention Giles of Rome's substantial work *Theoremata de esse et essentia*, ed. Edgar Hocedez (Louvain, 1930), which also contains some reflections on the relation between the essence/existence distinction and the spiritual matter debate. See, for instance, *ibid.*, Theorem XIX, 129: "Quia tota causa quare nos investigamus quod esse sit res differens ab essentia ex hoc sumitur ut possimus salvare res creatas esse compositas et posse creari et posse esse et non esse, quia non creatur per se quod est potentia tantum nec quod est actus tantum, sed quod est compositum ex utrisque, sic etiam non dicimus aliquid posse esse et non esse, nisi quod est hoc modo compositum. Et quia omnia ista salvare possemus si diceremus omnia esse composita ex materia et forma, ideo hoc posito forte difficile esset ostendere quare oporteret quod esse esset res realiter ab essentia differens et superaddita illi. . . ."

III.2.3. Dietrich of Freiberg

Dietrich of Freiberg (c.1250-c.1310) was the Dominican Master in Paris in 1296 or 1297, and is known to have been in Paris until 1300. Dietrich is in the “Albertist” rather than the “Thomist” line of Dominicans, with a special interest in natural philosophy and early science, as evidenced in this section. His approach to spiritual matter provides a valuable contrast to the metaphysical solutions of most of his contemporaries.²⁴⁶

Dietrich of Freiberg’s treatment of spiritual matter²⁴⁷ is called a *quaestio*, but it takes rather the form of a short treatise. There is no set of arguments *pro* and *contra*, and Dietrich answers each objection as he raises it. The question is divided into three sections. First Dietrich examines the issue from what he takes to be a strictly Aristotelian perspective, providing reasons from Aristotle’s physics to deny spiritual matter. Second, he examines the natures of the things under debate, namely, matter, form, privation, and spiritual substances, and concludes that the nature of spiritual substances is incompatible with material composition. Third and finally, he provides authorities to support his view.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁶ For information on Dietrich, see Armand Maurer, “The De Quidditatibus Entium of Dietrich of Freiberg and its Criticism of Thomistic Metaphysics,” *Mediaeval Studies*, Vol. 18 (1956), 173–203; B. Mojsisch, *Die Theorie des Intellekts bei Dietrich von Freiberg*, diss., in *Beihefte zu Dietrich von Freiberg Opera omnia*, ed. K. Flasch, Vol. 1 (Hamburg, 1977); B. Mojsisch, “La Psychologie Philosophique D’Albert le Grand et la Théorie de l’Intellect de Dietrich de Freiberg,” *Archives de philosophie*, 43 (1980), 675–693; K. Flasch, “Von Dietrich zu Albert,” in *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 32 (1985), 7–26; K. Flasch (ed.), *Von Meister Dietrich zu Meister Eckhart* (Hamburg, 1987); K.-H. Kandler, B. Mojsisch, F.-B. Stammkötter, eds., *Dietrich von Freiberg. Neue Perspektiven seiner Philosophie, Theologie und Naturwissenschaft*, (Amsterdam-Philadelphia, 1999); Brian F. Conolly, *Studies in the Metaphysics of Dietrich von Freiberg* (Ph. D. diss.), (Indiana University, 2004).

²⁴⁷ Dietrich of Freiberg. *Quaestio utrum substantia spiritualis sit composita ex materia et forma*. In *Opera Omnia*, vol. III: *schriften zur naturphilosophie und metaphysik*, ed. Jean-Daniel Caviglioli, Burkhard Mojsisch, et al. (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1983) 325-339.

²⁴⁸ Dietrich of Freiberg, *ibid.*, 235: “Prooemium: Ad quaestionem, utrum substantia spiritualis sit composita ex materia et forma, procedendum primo secundum viam Philosophi, qua procedit investigando principia naturae, secundo agendum ex proprietate principiorum naturae et proprietate substantiae ipsius spiritualis naturae, tertio ex auctoritate.”

First, then, Dietrich argues from principles taken from Aristotle's physics. Like Henry of Ghent, for Dietrich the guiding notion is that of *transformation*. We only know that matter is in things because of transformation, which takes place in beings in potency; different kinds of potency are recognized only because of the different kinds of transformation which can take place, and matter is recognized only insofar as we recognize a subject capable of transformation. Aristotle discovers the principles of nature by taking note of what is required for natural transformations—i.e., generation and corruption—to take place: a material subject in potency to substantial form and to its opposite privation.²⁴⁹

Besides generable and corruptible things there are other natural things, namely the heavenly bodies, which, since they are mobile, also have the principles common to all mobile beings—matter, form, and privation—“with the community of a certain analogy.” These bodies are not subject to transformation in their substance, but only in place, and therefore there is not found in them a subject in potency to substantial transformation, nor a privation of other substantial forms, but something “proportionally similar” appropriate to the type of transformation of which they are capable. “For matter is not accepted in physics, except where there is a subject of transformation.” A heavenly body is not composed *from* matter, then, but is *itself* the matter for its changes in place, and the only privation it contains is that of the places it is in potency to occupy. This makes it clear that the matter of the heavens and

²⁴⁹ Ibid., “. . . nihil fecit nos scire materiam esse in rebus nisi transmutatio. Transmutatio autem est entis in potentia. Unde secundum diversum modum transmutationis accipitur diversitas potentiae in subiecto transmutato seu transmutabili, quod est subiectum transmutationis, dicitur et est materia . . . Philosophus investigando principia naturae, quae sunt materia, forma, privatio, procedit ex entium naturalium transmutatione et ex modo transmutationis . . . Haec igitur tria sunt principia secundum substantiam entium generabilium et corruptibilium, et hoc secundum eum modum potentiae, quo materia subiecta est in potentia ad formam substantialem et eius oppositam privationem.”

that of generable and corruptible things are only called matter analogically; since their transformations are not of the same kind, neither are their potencies.²⁵⁰

Dietrich therefore insists that Aristotle denied that the heavenly bodies have matter in the same sense that generable and corruptible things do. They are not composed from matter, even matter of a different sort than that of sublunar things; they have matter only in the sense that they are themselves the subjects for changes in place, not in the sense that they have some matter as the principle of their own substance.²⁵¹

The question of whether spiritual substances have matter should be approached the same way as in the case of the heavenly bodies. If, by Aristotle's reasoning, even the heavenly bodies are not composed from matter the way generable and corruptible things are, much less will spiritual substances be, and for the same reason. Angels and rational souls have matter in a similar way that heavenly bodies do, in that they have certain forms and privations for which their own substance serves as the "material" subject. A spiritual substance can itself be the matter *for* a certain form, but is not composed *from* matter and form.²⁵²

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 326: "Sunt autem et alia entia naturalia, in quibus inveniuntur haec tria principia, inquam, quae sunt materia, forma, privatio, communia omnibus entibus mobilibus communitate cuiusdam analogiae. Quia enim huiusmodi entia, de quibus nunc agitur, scilicet corpora caelestia, non sunt transmutabilia in sua substantia, sed secundum locum, ideo non inveniuntur in eis subiectum, quod est in potentia ad transmutationem secundum substantiam, et per consequens nec privatio opposita formae substantiali, sed aliquid proportionaliter simile, et hoc secundum modum suae transmutationis et secundum modum potentiae ad talem transmutationem. Aliter enim non accipitur materia in physicis, nisi secundum quod per se est subiectum transmutationis. Et secundum hoc in corpore caelesti, in quantum est ens physicum, est materia ipsum corpus, quod movetur, locus autem, ad quem, forma, ad quam fit motus; privatio autem ei opposita est terminus, a quo fit motus. . . . Secundum hoc ergo manifestum est, quod ex diverso modo transmutationis arguimus diversitatem potentiae et ex diversitate potentiae diversitatem materiae, quae per se est subiectum transmutationis."

²⁵¹ Ibid., 327: ". . . loquens ibi specialiter de corporibus caelestibus dicit non solum, quod non habent materiam, sed quod non habent aliquam materiam nisi solum eam, quae est mota in loco tantum, et propter hoc vocat eum subiectum. Si autem haberent alterius generis materiam, quae esset talis substantiae, scilicet corporis caelestis, principium, habebat eam ibi exprimere, cuius contrarium manifeste apparet."

²⁵² Ibid., "Ex isto igitur processu Philosophi, qui dictus est, trahitur ratio, et competit similiter substantiis spiritualibus, de quibus quaestio est, investigando materiam in eis, si quam habeant. Habent enim et ipsae tales

This, in brief, is what Dietrich thinks must be inferred from Aristotelian physics. In the second section he examines the issue by examining the properties belonging to the principles of nature—matter form, and privation—and the properties belonging to the nature of spiritual substances. At this point it may be worthwhile to point out that in his discussion of Aristotle’s own thought, Dietrich relies wholly on his view of Aristotle’s teaching on the heavenly bodies, reasoning to spiritual creatures by analogy. He makes no attempt here to reject spiritual matter based on anything Aristotle directly says about the human intellect or about the separated substances.

In the second section, then, Dietrich begins by arguing from the nature of matter. Let it be supposed (which is granted by all) that spiritual creatures do not have that matter which is the subject of generation and corruption. If this is so, some other matter must be found in them. But can there be another kind of matter? Matter is a being in pure potency; two different kinds of matter must stand at an equal distance from nothing, must each be immediately, in Augustine’s words, *prope nihil*, and therefore stand, on the other side, at an equal distance from God the first principle. But if were the case, if there were two kinds of matter with the exact same “grade of nature”, it would be impossible to find any difference between them. For things which have the same order in nature also have the same sort of entity. Two different kinds of matter, then, are impossible.²⁵³ The suggestion that, while two

substantiae, scilicet angeli et animae rationales, materiam proportionaliter similem corporibus caelestibus, formam quoque et oppositam privationem, ut in ipsis accipiatur materia ipsa sua substantia, forma et opposita privatio . . . igitur dicendum est substantias spirituales non esse compositas ex materia et forma.”

²⁵³ Ibid., 328: “Secundo patet idem ex proprietate et propria ratione horum principiorum, quae sunt materia et forma et privatio, sic: Supponatur enim, quod et ab omnibus conceditur, videlicet quod in huiusmodi substantiis spiritualibus non est materia, quae est subiectum generationis et corruptionis. Tunc considerandum est impossibile inveniri in natura materiam aliam ab ea, quae est subiectum generationis et corruptionis, materiam, inquam, quae sit ens pure in potentia, sicut est illa, quae est subiectum generationis et corruptionis, pure ens in potentia. Si enim ponantur tales duae materiae, aequaliter distabunt a nihilo, cum sint entia pure in potentia, quae eo ipso sunt immediate prope nihil secundum Augustinum XII *Confessionum*. Ergo aequaliter distabunt

kinds of matter may be pure potency in themselves, they may contain a difference in virtue of being ordered to diverse acts, is rejected. The potency of matter for some form is founded in its own nature, and so if there is not some essential difference in different kinds of matter—which Dietrich just argued is impossible—there can only be one kind of matter, that of generable and corruptible things. “If therefore spiritual substances are composed from matter and form, they have no matter except that of generables and corruptibles; therefore they are generable and corruptible in their nature, which is false, impossible.”²⁵⁴

Dietrich recognizes that some adherents of spiritual matter both admit the homogeneity of all matter and maintain the incorruptibility of spiritual substances. They do so by claiming that, even though matter in itself is in potency to any form whatsoever, in the case of actually existing spiritual substances, their matter is so perfected and completed by the spiritual form that all its appetite to other forms is satisfied and it has no inclination to another form. But Dietrich rejects this, because matter under any form whatsoever remains in privation to all other forms, and thus retains its intrinsic potency or aptitude to these other forms. The matter of a spiritual substance would remain necessarily in potency to generable and corruptible forms, and the spiritual creature itself would remain generable or corruptible.

secundum gradum suae naturae a primo principio, Deo. Quae enim ab uno termino aequaliter distant, distabunt etiam aequaliter ab alio termino talis distantiae. Sed quae secundum eundem gradum naturae distant a primo principio, Deo, impossibile est ea habere differentiam ab invicem. Eiusdem enim ordinis esse in natura est esse eiusdem entitatis secundum Boethium IV *De consolatione* pr. 2 . . .”

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 328-329: “Fortassis dicetur ad istud, quamvis dictae materiae sint entia in potentia in suis essentiis, ex ordine tamen ad diversos actus habent ad invicem differentiam. Sed istud non valet. Ordo enim sive habitudo materiae ad formam consistit in eo, quod propria forma est in propria materia . . . Igitur oportet natura et intellectu prius esse differentiam istarum materialium in se quam diversam habitudinem seu ordinem ad diversos actus vel formas inde, quod est impossibile in diversis materiis, quae sunt pure entia in potentia, ut positum est. Si igitur substantiae spirituales sunt compositae ex materia et forma, non habent materiam nisi generabilium et corruptibilium; ergo sunt generabiles et corruptibiles secundum naturam, quod est falsum, impossibile.”

No form can so perfect its matter as to eliminate that matter's potency to other forms, and thus its inclination to them.²⁵⁵

Dietrich goes on to consider and reject several ways in which the form of incorruptible substances might be said to complete the potency and appetite of their matter in such a way as not to be subject to substantial change. Out of several reasons he gives for rejecting this account I will mention only two of particular interest. The first stems from, again, the similar conditions obtaining between spiritual substances and the heavenly bodies. If some form could satisfy the whole appetite of matter, it would follow that the form of a heavenly body—which, like a spiritual substance, is incorruptible and not subject to substantial change—would satisfy the inclination of its matter even to the form of a spiritual substance, even though the form of the heavenly body is inferior in the grade of nature to that of the spiritual substance. For if matter in itself has an “appetite” to all forms, the matter of a heavenly body ought to have an appetite to spiritual forms; but since the heavenly body is incorruptible, this appetite must be satisfied. “But this is impossible, since the appetite of matter for a form of a superior grade of nature is not satisfied by the form of an inferior grade of nature.”²⁵⁶ It would be unfitting for matter to lack all inclination to further form if, while being the subject only for a corporeal form, it was still in potency and privation to a spiritual

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 329: “Sunt autem nonnulli, qui hoc concedunt, scilicet quod in eis sit materia generabilium et corruptibilium, similiter et in corporibus caelestibus. Quamvis autem talis materia secundum suae naturae proprietatem sit in potentia ad omnes formas generabilium et corruptibilium, sic tamen perficitur per formas spiritualium substantiarum et formas corporum caelestium, quod totus appetitus eius completur, quem alias haberet ad formas generabilium et corruptibilium. Sed istud nihil est dicere . . . Sequeretur enim ipsam habere ordinem ad generabilia et corruptibilia secundum potentiam vel aptitudinem ratione privationis, a qua numquam denudatur materia, sub cuiuscumque formae perfectione inveniatur, et sic dictae substantiae essent generabiles et corruptibiles, quod esset impossibile. Quod autem dicunt, quod totus appetitus materiae completur per formas dictarum substantiarum, non potest habere veritatem . . .”

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 330: “Praeterea, si quaelibet talium formarum complet totum appetitum materiae, sequitur, quod forma inferioris gradus in natura, puta forma caeli, compleat totum appetitum materiae, quem habet ad formam spiritualis substantiae, quod est impossibile, cum appetitus materiae ad formam superioris gradus naturae non completur per formam naturae gradus inferioris.”

form. Along similar lines, Dietrich argues: “Furthermore, since the rational soul is incomparably nobler than any corporeal form, if the form of a heavenly body satisfied the whole appetite of matter, much more, on account of its perfection, would the rational soul satisfy the whole appetite of matter, which is plainly false.”²⁵⁷ Dietrich seems here to have in mind the fact that the body, even when informed by the rational soul, remains subject to substantial transformation. If this is the case, however, it seems that he is overlooking the distinction between the matter of a human being’s body (existing corporeally) and the matter of the soul as *hoc aliquid* (existing spiritually). The soul is capable of being separated from the body at death, and so the body is subject to generation and corruption; but the soul itself is not, and it could be argued that the form of the soul satisfies all the appetite of its own proper matter, without doing so for its corporeal matter. But perhaps Dietrich’s point is that, if his opponents are right, the form of the soul *ought* to satisfy the appetite of the corporeal matter of the body as well, and that body as well as soul should be free from generation and corruption. It turns out, as we shall see in the next chapter, that Gonsalvus of Spain claims that this is in fact both possible and the way things will actually be in the future.

In summing up this discussion, Dietrich emphasises once more that matter is *essentially* a being in potency. Consequently it is indeterminate and determinable in many ways; being in potency means being in potency to contraries, which means that the extent of matter’s potency can never be exhausted by any one of its potential determinate acts. No matter what the form which matter underlies, matter is never free of privation of other forms, and consequently is never free of some aptitude [*ordine*] to an act other than the one it has.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 331: “Praeterea, cum anima rationalis incomparabiliter sit nobilior quacumque forma corporali, si forma caeli corporalis complet totum appetitum materiae, multo magis ratione suae perfectionis anima rationalis complebit totum appetitum materiae, quod constat esse falsum.”

From all this it follows that anything which has matter as a base is subject to generation and corruption, and so anything that is not subject to generation and corruption, such as spiritual substances, cannot have matter.²⁵⁸

In addition to this, Dietrich adds that matter is necessarily tied not only to generation and corruption but also to extension. Since matter is a being in potency and a transformable being, it is necessarily an individual having parts which are posterior to the whole. These cannot be parts in act [*in actu*], as flesh and bone, hands and feet are parts in act of the body, because such parts, although they are in potency with respect to the body as a whole, in themselves have some act, and are not in their substance [*in sua substantia*] beings in potency. Matter itself, however, is pure potency, not only with respect to the act in which it participates through generation—as a hand or foot is potential with respect to the whole body—but in its very substance, and in the disposition of its whole to its parts. But such a compound of whole and parts, all of which are purely potential, is possible only in a continuum, whose parts are parts in potency, distinguished only by their relation to the boundaries which contain them. The kind of being that matter is, therefore, something whose parts are pure potency in a whole which is also pure potency, requires spatial dimensions in order to exist, because otherwise any distinction between its parts is impossible. “Therefore it is not found in spiritual substances.”²⁵⁹

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 332-333: “Summarie igitur colligendo, quae dicta sunt, dicendum, quoniam materia est ens in potentia per suam essentiam et per consequens ens indeterminatum, determinabile autem pluribus modis, potestate continens actus sui determinativos, una potentia contrariorum, cuius potentiae ambitum non exhaurit quicumque actus, sub quo stat, numquam denudata privatione et per consequens nec ordine ad alium actus et ex his necessario subiecta generationi to corruptioni, quoniam, inquam, sic se habet materia, quaecumque poneretur in natura ens pure in potentia, necessario concluditur spiritualem substantiam non componi ex materia et forma. Esset enim generabilis et corruptibilis secundum naturam, quod est impossibile.”

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 333: “Materia igitur prima, cum sit ens in potentia et ens transmutabile, necessario est ens hoc, id est individuum habens partes, quae sunt posteriores toto. Huiusmodi autem partes non possunt esse partes in actu et per consequens nec distinctae in actu, sicut caro et os, manus et pedes sunt partes in actu; quamvis sint entia in

Dietrich repeats again that spiritual substances do not need matter for their operations, nor as a foundation for their essence or to enter into composition with their essence. “For the potency which is in them for their proper operations is sufficiently founded in their substances [already] complete in being, and not in any material principle, much more so than in the heavenly bodies . . .”²⁶⁰ All told what is unusual in Dietrich’s treatment of spiritual matter is this constant advertance to the principles of physics or natural philosophy, and his arguments from the properties of physical bodies to those of spiritual substances. Despite the respectable length of his treatise compared to other treatments of spiritual matter, Dietrich seems uninterested in many of the issues that have so preoccupied other thinkers in our study: the relation of essence to existence in substances; the nature of the relation between matter and form, and whether they are intrinsically correlative or not; the nature and ground of intellectual operations and accidents, etc. For him the problem is a simple matter of the principles of physics: matter is the principle of generation and corruption. Since spiritual creatures are incorruptible, they cannot have matter. Other considerations are more or less irrelevant in light of this simple solution.²⁶¹

potentia, quia stant sub ratione et integritate totius, sunt tamen, ut dictum est, partes in actu. Tales autem partes in actu non habet id, quod in sua substantia est ens in potentia; esset enim iam actuatum et ens actu in sua substantia propter interiorem talis substantiae dispositionem quoad partes in actu distinctas. Materia autem est pure ens in potentia, non solum per respectum ad actum, ad quem transit per generationem, sed in sua substantia quantum ad intrinsecam suae substantiae in suis partibus dispositionem. Tales autem partes, quae sunt partes in potentia, non inveniuntur nec esse possunt nisi in quanto continuo, cuius partes sunt partes in potentia, nisi distinguantur in communi termino, ad quem continuantur. Unde secundum huiusmodi partium dispositionem in substantia materiae attenduntur dimensiones interminatae in materia. Materia igitur, ens pure in potentia, impossibile est, nisi in quanto continuo. Ergo non invenitur in substantiis spiritualibus.”

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 334: “Manifestum est autem, quod ad operationes substantiarum spiritualium nihil pertinet materia in fundamento essentiae suae vel in compositione essentiae suae. Potentia enim, quae est in ipsis ad suas proprias operationes, sufficienter fundatur in substantiis earum completis in esse et non in aliquo materiali principio, multo fortius quam in corporibus caelestibus . . .”

²⁶¹ I omit here any presentation of the third section of the question, in which Dietrich presents and considers authoritative texts, since it adds nothing essential to the discussion in the first two sections.

III.2.4. John Quidort of Paris

John of Paris, also called John Quidort (d.1306), lectured on the *Sentences* in Paris some time between 1292 and 1296. He is primarily remembered, first, because of his important place in the contemporary debates on papal power and authority, and second, because he composed one of several extant detailed responses to William de la Mare's *Correctorium*.²⁶² There he naturally defends St. Thomas' doctrine against those he calls "calumniators," but he does so without merely repeating Thomas' words and arguments. John might be called an "Aristotelian eclectic" who took inspiration from a number of non-Franciscan thinkers in the latter half of the thirteenth century, including those appearing in this study, and this fact, together with his appearance at Gonsalvus of Spain's disputed question seen in the next chapter, makes him of particular interest.²⁶³

John begins his first discussion of spiritual matter by reminding the reader of Thomas' doctrine in *Summa theologiae* q.50 art.2. For Thomas, an angel is not composed from matter and form, as Avicenna thought. Spiritual and corporeal forms cannot

²⁶² John of Paris (Quidort). *Le Correctorium corruptorii "Circa"*, ed. J.P. Muller (Studio Anselma, 12-13), Rome, 1941.

²⁶³ See John of Paris (Quidort), *Commentaire sur les Sentences. Reportation. Livre II*, ed. J.P. Muller O.S.B. (Rome: Herder, 1964), Introduction, xxix: "Jean de Paris qui, dans son *Correctorium corruptorii*, a si ardemment défendu saint Thomas contre les attaques du franciscain Guillaume de la Mare, adopte naturellement dans son Commentaire les grandes thèses de l'aristotélisme chrétien proposées par le Docteur commun. Mais il ne se sent pas astreint de suivre à la lettre le maître en sacrifiant toute pensée originale." Ibid: "On connaît déjà . . . son interprétation de l'*esse* comme accident prédicable de l'*essentia*. Cette doctrine, qui est à la base même de la métaphysique, est exposée très en détail ici, sans que saint Thomas soit mentionné." later, xxx-xxxi, the editor indicates that John also respected, was influenced by, and frequently cited Giles of Rome, Henry of Ghent, and Godfrey of Fontaines, without being slavishly devoted to any of them. See also M. Grabmann, *Studien zu Johannes Quidort von Paris. O.P. (Sitzungsbericht der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philos. Philolog. Und historische Klasse)* (München, 1922); P. Glorieux, "Jean Quidort et la distinction réelle de l'essence et de l'existence," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* XVII (1951) 111-157; J.P. Muller, O.S.B., "Les reportations des deux premiers livres du Comentaire sur les Sentences de Jean Quidort de Paris, O.P.," *Angelicum* XXXIII (1956), 361-414; Francis Cunningham, "The 'Real Distinction' in John Quidort." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 8 (1970), 9-28.

simultaneously be in the same thing in the same respect. If therefore there were one matter for corporeal and spiritual things, it would be necessary for corporeal and spiritual forms to be received in respectively different parts of matter. This is impossible, for matter is only divisible into parts through quantity, but there is no quantity in angels. Wherefore there is no matter in them either.²⁶⁴

After summarizing William de la Mare's objections to Thomas and his position as given in the *Correctorium fratris Thomae*, John goes on to say that those arguing against Thomas err "in general," since their position is bad and they presuppose many false things in their responses to him. They err in the substance of their position, by saying that angels are composed of matter and form, for from this follow both philosophical and theological errors. John singles out four: 1) that there is matter in the angels; 2) that that matter is not of the same sort as the matter of lower things, but is of some higher kind, since it is spiritual, while the matter of lower things is corporeal; 3) that matter in the angels is not simply numerically one, nor numerically one and extended under diverse forms or things, but is numerically plural; 4) that this plurality comes from something one.²⁶⁵ One should remember that William de la Mare treated the homogeneity of matter in his *Sentences* commentary, not in

²⁶⁴ John of Paris. *Le Correctorium corruptorii "Circa"*, ed. J.P. Muller (Studio Anselma, 12-13), Rome, 1941. 51: Articulus 9 (10). *Utrum angelus sit compositus ex materia et forma*. "Circa quaestionem 50 articulo 2 calumniantur. Ibi enim dicitur in responsione principali quod angelus non est compositus ex materia et forma sic quod sit una materia corporalium et spiritualium, sicut ponit AVICEBRON, quia forma spiritualium et forma corporalium non possunt simul eidem inesse secundum idem. Et ideo oportet, si una esset materia corporalium et spiritualium, quod materia secundum diversas partes sui recipiat formam corporalium et spiritualium, quod esse non potest, quia materia sine quantitate non est divisibilis, ut dicitur *I Physicorum*. Quantitas enim in angelo non est, quare nec materia modo praedicto."

²⁶⁵ John of Paris, *ibid*, 53-54: "Sed isti in tribus errant in generali, quia et male ponunt et in responsionibus falsa supponunt. In substantia positionis suae errant in dicendo angelos compositos ex materia et forma. Ad hoc enim consequuntur errores in philosophia et in theologia. Secundum enim quod ex verbis suis colligitur expresse, ipsi ponunt quattuor de ista materia angelorum, quae simpliciter sunt falsa. Unum est, quod materia est in angelis. Alius est, quod illa non est unius rationis cum materia inferiorum, sed est alterius generis, quia est spiritualis, et materia inferiorum est corporalis. Alius est, quod materia in angelis non est una numero simplex, nec una numero extensa sub diversis formis vel diversa, sed est plures numero. Alius est, quod est plures numero ex una, sicut punctus efficitur duo puncta."

his *Correctorium*, and that he gave an ambivalent response to the question even there, compared with Nicholas of Ockham and Richard of Middleton, who do unambiguously hold the position which John objects to. John therefore is not simply giving a point-for-point refutation of spiritual matter as argued for in William's *Correctorium*, but is really arguing against the position of the Franciscans of his day "in general," as he puts it.

The first of his objections is to the notion that there is matter in the angels at all. This "is false and against the philosophers," John says, mentioning a number of them.²⁶⁶ "Again, it is against common conceptions about an angel, for an angel in his essence is simpler or at least as simple as whiteness." Parenthetically I would like to point out the oddness of saying that the "common conception" about angels is that they must be at least as simple as whiteness, when more likely the comparative simplicity of an angel and a color would not occur to one. It also seems odd and perhaps unfair to hold a substance up to the standards of simplicity of an accident: in the last chapter we saw Bonaventure point out that non-substantial items may be simple in a way that substances are not. At any rate, John points out that the essence of whiteness has no real composition from matter and form, and if it were separated from the matter in which it exists—which does not belong to its substance—it would be an altogether pure form without matter. Much more, therefore, will an angel be a form without matter.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 54: "Primum istorum falsum est et contra philosophos. Dicit enim auctor *de Causis*, quod intelligentia non est delata super rem aliam. Item, quod est simplex et non dividitur, et quod una pars eius non est nobilior altera, et multa consimilia. Item, Commentator in infinitis suis expositionibus dicit hoc de intellectu, sicut inferius videbitur. Praeterea, PHILOSOPHUS, *I De Generatione* dicit, quod materia non separatur a passionibus et morpheis, et sic non est in angelo, cum non sint in eo passiones et morphae. Item Avicenna. Item Algazel. Item Dionysius, ut supra."

²⁶⁷ Ibid., "Item, est contra communes conceptiones de angelo, quia angelus in essentia sua simplicior est vel aequae simplex ad minus sicut albedo. Albedo autem in sua essentia nullam realem compositionem habet ex materia et forma, sed si separaretur a materia in qua est, quae non est de sua substantia, ipsa omnino esset forma pura sine omni materia. Quare multo magis angelus forma erit sine omni materia."

John's next objection is of an altogether different, and interesting, sort. "That opinion," the theory of spiritual matter, "removes the distinction and order of the principal parts of the universe." The forms of all the parts of the universe are constructed according to a diverse series of grades between two extremes, ranging from matter at the lower end, which is *prope nihil*, and to the first being [*ens*], God who is pure being itself. This series of diverse grades produces an essential difference between the forms of bodies and between angels and souls. Like Giles of Rome, John insists that there must be forms which can in no case exist without matter—those of bodies—; forms which can exist both with and without matter—intellective souls—; and forms which can exist only without matter, namely angels. If angels were granted to be forms in matter, then the general order and distinction of the parts of the universe would be destroyed.²⁶⁸ Recall the reflection in the second chapter that, while for Bonaventure all substances in the universe must obey the same general rules and conform to the same universal structure, for Thomas different rules apply across the spiritual and corporeal realms. John of Paris recognizes this and consciously chooses the Thomistic model as preferable. The universe would be less well-constructed if all substances followed the same order, even if this makes the universe less of a unity.

Another theological and philosophical error follows if we grant that an angel is composed from matter and form. The angel's form can either be separated from his matter, as the intellective soul can be separated from the body, or not. If so, then a subsistent angelic form can exist, and an angel can be corrupted, even as a man can. This is an error, for if

²⁶⁸ Ibid., "Praeterea, opinio illa tollit distinctionem et ordinem partium principalium universi, quia formae rerum seu partium universi distinguuntur penes diversos gradus appropinquationis ad duo extrema, scilicet ad materiam primam, quae est prope nihil, et ad ens primum, quod est purum. Et hoc sic, quia essentialis differentia est inter formas corporalium et animas et angelos. Quia formae istorum corporalium non possunt esse sine materia, animae possunt esse cum materia et sine materia, et angeli sine materia. Si ergo detur, quod forma angeli sit in materia, destruitur ordo et distinctio partium universi in genere."

angels can be corrupted by an external power, namely by the divine omnipotence which could make an angel cease to be, still there is no internal corruptibility in the angelic nature. Another error is that if the angelic form could be separated from its matter, spiritual matter would be subject to generation and corruption, spirits and bodies could be transformed into each other, and so forth. If, on the other hand, we posit that an angel's matter and form are not separable, two errors follow from this as well. The first is that the angel could have no operation which it does not share with its matter, just as with bodies—John is thinking of intellectual activity here. The other error is that there would be something vain in God's works, namely the production of a principle of substantial change which could never be changed, a potency which could never be actualized.²⁶⁹

Again, the theory of spiritual matter, in claiming that God can create nothing without matter, detracts from the divine power. God can make forms which are naturally united to matter to subsist in themselves without matter, such as the accidents of the eucharistic host, which seems like a greater feat than to create a naturally subsistent form. Much more, therefore, should He be able to do the latter. And if God *can* create a naturally subsistent form—which it would be heretical to deny—it would be rash to assert that He has not, since

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 54-55: "Praeterea, istam opinionem sequitur error in theologia et philosophia, quod angelus componatur ex materia et forma. Aut enim sua forma separabilis est a sua materia, sicut anima a corpore seu materia sua, aut non. Si est separabilis a sua materia, tunc propositum habeo, et tunc errores concludo contra opinionem illam. Propositum quidem habeo, quia iam erit ponere creaturam spiritualem sine omni materia, scilicet formam angelicam a sua materia separatam. Item sequuntur errores multi, quorum unus est, quod angelus per naturam suam essem corruptibilis, scilicet separatione suae formae a sua materia. Quod est contra theologiam et philosophiam, quia etsi sit desinibilis potentia, quae est in alio, scilicet in Deo, si Deus scilicet ab influendo cessaret, tamen non est desinibilis vel corruptibilis potentia, quae sit in seipso. Alius error est, quia cum materia angeli separata a sua forma per se esse non possit, necessario transmutaretur in formam aliam ea necessitate, qua unius corruptio est alterius generatio. Et sic spiritus naturaliter converteretur in aliud, ut in corpus vel in aliam creaturam, quod est nefandum et erroneum. Si vero detur quod materia angeli non est separabilis a sua forma qualicumque, sequuntur duo errores. Unus est, quod angelus nullum habet operationem in qua non communicet cum materia, sicut inferiora quorum forma suis materiis sunt alligatae. Alius error est, quod in operibus Dei esset aliquid frustra. . . . Constat autem quod in angelo non est imaginatio vel sensus vel aliqua operatio, qua qualitercumque perficiatur per materiam. Ergo in operibus Dei esset aliquid frustra, si angelus formam haberet materiae alligatam vel unitam . . ."

this cannot be proved.²⁷⁰ Recall, again, that Bonaventure had addressed this objection, and asserted that the eucharistic species was a miraculous exception to the natural order, not an illustration of it.

After the very existence of spiritual matter, John's second complaint is against the notion that spiritual and corporeal matter are not homogeneous. This objection, of course, does not concern every defender of spiritual matter, since the notion that corporeal and spiritual matter are not homogeneous seems to have been a later post-Bonaventurean development, and by no means universally accepted by spiritual matter's defenders in John's own day. John insists that the heterogeneity of spiritual and corporeal matter "is altogether false, even granted *per impossibile* that there were matter in the angels." If there were indeed matter in the angels it would have to be of the same sort as the matter present in bodies, although existing in a different mode. None of the ancients positing matter in all creatures went so far as to posit matters of different kinds or characters [*specierum vel rationum*]. The diversity of things comes not from a diversity of matters but from a diversity of superior and inferior forms, since no one form exhausts or expresses [*terminat vel capit*] the whole extent of matter's potency to natural forms. Like a loose woman who is never satisfied with her husband, matter informed by an inferior form is never satisfied with it, but always desires to replace it with another. On the other hand, John claims, the form of a heavenly body or of one of the Intelligences which moves the universe virtually contains every form to which

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 55-56: "Praeterea, opinio praedicta est erronea, quia derogat divinae potentiae simpliciter, quia constat quod Deus potest creare aliquam creaturam subsistentem sine omni materia. Cuius probatio est, quia, quod maius videtur, potest formae, quae naturaliter unita est materiae, dare subsistentiam in seipsa sine materia, ut patet de albedine in sacramento altaris. Quare multo magis potest creare formam sine omni materia ut angelum. Si enim Deus potest hoc facere, valde temerarium est asserere, quod non fecerit, quod probari non potest. Dicere autem quod non potuerit, est haereticum."

prime matter is in potency (he does not explain in what sense this is true). Therefore such a form exhausts the whole desire of matter for form, and so matter informed with a superior form is not in potency to something else. These sorts of substances, then, are not entangled in the offense of corruption through the desire of some other form and the corruption of the form possessed, and so the matter of these higher substances is like a chaste woman.

Furthermore, two different species of matter would be indistinguishable, standing as they must in the same grade of actuality and at the same distance from or approach to the first act.²⁷¹ For, if what is formal and actual in an angel were to be separated from what is material in him, there would remain nothing but matter in pure potency without any kind of act, which would be in no higher grade than the matter of lower things. For, if you would have it that spiritual matter had some greater actuality than the matter of lower things, it would not be wholly prime matter, and that actuality could then be separated from the matter, until nothing was left but the same pure potency which is found in the matter of lower things. There cannot, therefore, be two essentially diverse kinds of matter, one corporeal and one spiritual.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 56: “Secundum etiam quod ponunt in sua positione, scilicet quod materia angelorum est diversae rationis a materia inferiorum, est omnino falsum, etiam dato quod in angelis materia esset per impossibile. Si enim in angelis est materia, necesse est, quod materia illa de se sit unius rationis cum materia inferiorum, licet sit alio modo se habens. Unde nullus antiquorum ponentium materiam in omnibus creaturis, posuit materiam diversarum specierum vel rationum, sed diversimode se habentem in istis inferioribus et in spiritibus. Quae diversitas non provenit ex diversitate materiae absolutae, sed ex diversitate formae inferiorum et superiorum, quia forma non terminat vel capit totum ambitum materiae, quae est ad formas naturales. Ideo materia informata actu inferioris formae, quasi meretrix viro suo non satiatur actu formae quam habet, sed appetit supponi alii formae. Forma vero corporis caelestis vel intelligentiae, qua movet universum, virtute continet omnem formam, ad quam materia prima est in potentia. Ideo terminat totum appetitum materiae et ideo materia actu informata forma superiorum, non est in potentia ad aliud extra. Ideo non machinatur in maleficium corruptionis per appetitum alterius formae et corruptionem formae habitae. Ideo mulieri castae comparatur. Et haec diversitas provenit ex diversitate maxima, scilicet formarum, sicut alibi diffusius et plenius habet videri. Quomodo enim distinguuntur duae species in universo, nisi per diversum gradum actualitatis seu appropinquationis ad actum primum? Sicut enim non est ponere duas species numerorum in uno gradu distantiae vel appropinquationis ad unitatem, sic nec est ponere in universo duas species in uno gradu actualitatis essentialis seu appropinquationis ad primum actum. . . .”

Rather, if one were to grant that there was matter in the angels, it would differ from the matter in bodies as the matter of fire differs from the matter of air.²⁷²

John's third and fourth complaints are that his opponents posit matter in the angels which is of the same sort but numerically different, without being divided into quantitative parts. This is "altogether false and against philosophy." For if there were several numerically diverse matters in the the angels, each of which is the whole of matter and not a part—since spiritual matter is not subject to quantitative parts—they could only be numbered because of something they share in common. This would have to be something abstractible and universal, something identical with respect to each instance of spiritual matter; but this would be incoherent, for then matter would be intelligible and could not be the principle of individuation. What, then, is the principle of individuation for spiritual things? Spiritual matter therefore could not be numerically plural.²⁷³

Having presented his objections to spiritual matter, at this point John addresses some objections from unnamed opponents. An angel can be in potency to many things even if not

²⁷² Ibid., 57: "Si igitur separaretur quidquid formae et actus est in angelo ab eo quod est materiale, si materia est, non remanebit nisi materia in pura potentia sine omni actu, quae in nullo gradu erit altior quam materia inferiorum. Quia si tu des, quod materia illa habeat aliquid actualitatis plus quam materia inferiorum, non est materia prima penitus, sed ulterius contingit resolvere per intellectum id quod est actus ab eo quod est ibi materiae, quousque nihil sit nisi materia in pura potentia sicut materia inferiorum. Ideo non videtur quod sit ponere duas materias, i.e. diversarum rationum, quarum una sit corporalis, alia spiritualis, sed si in angelo est materia, ipsa non plus, quantum est de se, differt a materia inferiorum, quam materia ignis a materia aeris."

²⁷³ Ibid., 57-58: "Tertium quod ponunt, quod materia angelorum est eiusdem rationis inter se tamen differens numero, est omnino falsum et contra philosophiam. Quia si sunt plures materiae numerales in angelis, quarum quaelibet est tota materia et non pars materiae, ut ipsi dicunt, oportet quod numerentur sub aliquo comuni, sicut duo homines sub homine. Hoc autem est inconveniens, quia sic materia esset abstrahibilis et universalis respectu utriusque, quod est inconveniens, quia iam esset per se intelligibilis, et etiam iam non esset principium primum individuationis. Immo quaerendum esset, quid contrahit materiam ad hanc materiam individuaalem. Igitur non sunt materiae plures numero. . . . Quartum quod ponunt, quod materia in angelis non distinguitur divisione in diversas partes, sed numerositate, sicut cum unus punctus fit duo puncta, istud ostenditur inferius falsum esse et impossibile de materia angelorum propter multa inconvenientia quae sequuntur, scilicet quaestione, ubi idem ponunt, et ibi specialiter ostendetur erroneum esse. Unde in angelis non est materia, et si est materia, ipsa non est diversae rationis a materia inferiorum, licet sit diverso modo se habens propter diversitatem suae formae . . ."

composed from matter and form. It is not the case that, if an angel lacked matter as the principle of mutability, that he would be immutable and therefore would be God. Although an angel has no internal potency to a change in being [*esse*], that is, has no internal principle of corruptibility whereby he could cease to be, still he could lose his being by the power of God. And angels are changed accidentally, according to diverse thoughts and affections and things of this sort. This kind of change does not require a material subject as substantial change does, which is according to being and non-being; but it requires as a subject a being [*ens*] in act, which an angel is. “For an angel is a pure form, a being in act, a subject with diverse accidental properties, to which it is in potency.”²⁷⁴

We ought not to accept that angels have passive potency and therefore must have matter, for three reasons. First, angels do not have passive potency, but receptive potency, which is not the same. Change in an angel is by the reception of impressed illuminations, delightful or painful species, and so forth, not by transformation or the gain of one form through the loss of another. Second, angels again are not in potency to both being and non-being, which potency comes from the presence of prime matter, but are only in potency to certain accidents, which can have a being in act [*ens in actu*] as their subject, rather than prime matter. This subject, the being in act, may be either a pure self-subsistent form, or else a composite of matter and form; angels may be the former and need not be the latter. Third, an angel is a composite of potency and act, not because it has both matter and form, but

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 59: “Quamvis enim angelus non componatur ex materia et forma, tamen est in potentia ad multa, scilicet ad speciem contristatam vel ad passionem quamcumque, ratione cuius potentiae dicitur posse pati. Quod dicitur, quod iam esset Deus, quia esset immutabilis, dicendum quod angelus est immutabilis secundum esse, saltem impotentia mutandi, quae est in seipso, licet etiam posset amittere suum esse potentia, quae est in alio, scilicet in Deo. Tamen angelus mutabilis est secundum accidentia quaedam, ut secundum diversas affectiones et cogitationes et huiusmodi, et haec mutatio non requirit materiam sicut prima mutatio, quae est secundum esse et non esse, sed requirit subiectum ens actu, cuiusmodi est angelus. Nam angelus est forma pura ens actu subiectum cum diversis proprietatibus accidentalibus, ad quas est in potentia.”

because his essence, which is pure form and pure act, is in potency to something [*quaedam*] outside the essence of the thing which does not belong to that essence, namely any number of possible accidents. John completes this argument with a comment that appears to baldly equivocate on the term “matter”:

And therefore such a composition from act and potency does not show that the essence of an angel is composed from matter and form, even granted that all potency is matter or in matter. But it shows that the essence of an angel, which is absolutely pure act, is nevertheless matter with respect to the accidents which are added onto it.²⁷⁵

This conception of the “immaterial” substance as “matter” with respect to its own accidents calls to mind, of course, Dietrich of Freiberg’s similar statements. The position itself is similar to Aquinas’ who as we recall also places the operational accidents of spiritual creatures in the proper accidents distinct from and flowing from their nature.

Like Giles of Rome, John insists that Boethius’ dictum that form cannot be the subject of form only applies to an absolutely simple form without any kind of composition, the sole instance of which is God. An angel is a simple form in the sense that he lacks

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 61-62: “Quod arguunt, quod si angelus habet potentiam passivam, habet materiam quia potentia passiva secundum Commentatorem non est nisi in materia, dicendum ad hoc, quod argumentum deficit in tribus, sicut infra videbitur diffusius. Primo, quia non est idem potentia passiva et receptiva. Unde angelus est in potentia receptiva et non in potentia passiva. Similiter angelus respectu illuminationum a superioribus impressarum et respectu speciei delectantis vel contristantis se habet in potentia receptiva, sed non passiva proprie, quia non est passio per transmutationem vel abiectioem contrarii et haec potentia potest esse sine materia. Secundo, quia dato quod non fiat vis de nomine, si vocetur receptiva, distinguenda est de potentia passiva, quia quaedam est ad actum primum, scilicet esse et non esse, et haec inest rei ratione materiae primae. Alia est ad actus secundos, scilicet ad accidentia quaedam advenientia, quae supponunt esse, et talis potentia passiva non consequitur necessario materiam primam, sed subiectum ens actu. Et hoc subiectum ens actu quandoque est forma pura subsistens per se, quandoque est compositum ex materia et forma. Et ista est in angelis, non prima. Et ideo non oportet angelum materiam habere. Tertio deficit argumentum, quia cum dicitur angelus compositus ex actu et potentia, non intelligitur quod potentia sit quasi pars essentiae angeli eo modo, quo materia pars est essentiae rei, qua componi dicitur ex materia et forma, sed intelligitur componi ex actu et potentia, quia sua essentia, quae est pura forma et purus actus, est in potentia ad quaedam extra essentiam rei, ita quod potentia ista consequitur essentiam et nihil est essentiae angeli. Et ideo compositio talis ex actu et potentia non arguit, quod essentia angeli sit composita ex materia et forma, etiam dato quod omnis potentia sit materia vel in materia. Sed arguit, quod essentia angeli, quae absolute est purus actus, sit tamen materia in qua respectu accidentium, quae superadditur sibi.”

composition from matter and form, but he has composition with other things, with being [esse], with the powers flowing from it, and with his accidents, as well as being composed of genus and difference. John brings up again the eucharistic species as a counterexample to the claim that a form cannot be the subject of accidents without matter. Like Giles again, John points out that many people do not believe that Boethius was the author of *De unitate et uno*, and that it should not be used as an authority.²⁷⁶ John protests that Augustine equivocated on the term “matter” and did not mean to propose spiritual matter in the Franciscan sense. Using almost the same phrase as Giles, John insists that Augustine spoke about spiritual matter by inquiring, not asserting [*inquirendo et non asserendo*], and so we need not follow him.²⁷⁷

Like William de la Mare in his own *Correctorium*, John of Paris points back to the article just examined when he comes to his defense of Thomas’ *Summa* Q.75 a.5. He repeats, with different turns of phrase, a number of the arguments found there, adding only a few items with special reference to the rational soul.²⁷⁸ One of these is in response to William de la Mare’s point that sensible species are received without matter. John replies that this is false, or understood in a false way. For sensible species are indeed received in the sense organ without the matter and the subject of the sensible thing itself, but nevertheless not

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 59: “Quod dicunt de Boethio dicente, quod forma simplex subiectum esse non potest, dicendum quod loquitur de forma simplici per negationem omnis compositionis, cuiusmodi est solus Deus. Angelus autem licet sit forma simplex per privationem compositionis ex materia et forma, tamen est composita compositione cum alio, scilicet cum esse, cum potentiis fluentibus ab ea et cum accidentibus suis. Habet etiam compositionem ex aliquibus, scilicet ex genere et differentia. . . . Notandum vero, quod si pertinaciter voluit dicere quod illud quod est forma simplex sine materia, subiectum accidentium esse non possit universaliter, error est et contra sacramentum altaris, ubi est superficies forma simplex subsistens in se sine omni materia et in qua et ex qua, et tamen sine omni miraculo subiectum est accidentium albedinis et huiusmodi. Quod dicunt, quod est contra Boethium, De Unitate et Uno, dicendum quod falsum est. Nam multi credunt, quod illum librum non composuerit . . .”

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 60-61.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 144. Articulus 27 (28). *Utrum anima sit composita ex materia et forma*. “Circa quaestionem 75 articulo 5 calumniatur . . . Sed contra ista calumniatur multipliciter.” 146: “De primo ergo, quomodo deficiunt in substantia positionis, patere debuit superius, articulo 9, ubi fit mentio de compositione angeli.”

without all matter whatsoever, for they are received in the matter of the receiving sense organ. Whence there is a multiplication of sensible forms from subject to subject, as when the image of a mirror is reflected in another mirror, and there is multiplication of sensible forms.²⁷⁹ It is unclear to me how this is supposed to answer William's argument, however, the whole point of which is that sensible species are received without their own matter and hence "immaterially," even while being supported by the matter of the receiving subject.

Like William de la Mare, in addition to his *Correctorium* John discusses spiritual matter (albeit fairly briefly) in his *Sentences* commentary.²⁸⁰ Much of the material duplicates arguments made in the *Correctorium*, but not all of it.

One of the opening objections argues that since form is limited by matter, a form without matter would be infinite. Since angels are finite, they must therefore have matter. John's response grants the key premise. Forms received in matter are indeed limited by matter from below; they are also limited from above by the being [*esse*] they receive from God. But immaterial forms, such as angels, are not limited with respect to things down below—on that side they are quasi-infinite; but with respect to what is above—namely God, from whom they receive being (*esse*), which is really diverse from their essence—they are limited.²⁸¹

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 151-152: "Alius falsum est, quia dicunt, quod species sensibiles recipiuntur sine materia. Hoc enim falsum est vel falso modo intellectum. Quia recipiuntur quidem species sensibiles in organo sensus sine materia et subiecto ipsius sensibilis, non tamen sine omni materia, quia sunt in organi materia receptae. Unde est multiplicatio sensibilis formae de subiecto in subiectum, sicut cum imago speculi relucet in alio speculo, est multiplicatio formae. . . ."

²⁸⁰ John of Paris (Quidort). *Commentaire sur les Sentences. Reportation. Livre II*, ed. J.P. Muller O.S.B. (Pontificium Institutum S. Anselmi). Rome: Herder, 1964. 39-43, Dist. II, Q. 2, "Utrum angelus sit compositus ex materia et forma."

²⁸¹ Ibid., 43: "Ad secundum dico, quod formae in materia receptae sunt limitatae per materiam et inferius, et superius per esse a Deo receptum. Sed formae immateriales, puta angeli, respectu inferiorum non sunt limitatae, sed quasi infinitae, sed respectu superiorum, scilicet Dei, sunt limitatae, a quo esse recipiunt, realiter ab essentia diversum."

For his own part John argues, much more explicitly here than is common for opponents of spiritual matter, that universal hylomorphism boils down to making all creation corporeal, despite the protests of those who hold it. Whatever has matter is corporeal, so, if angels are incorporeal, they cannot have matter.²⁸² Some ancient philosophers posited that all creatures are composed from matter and form because, according to them, all diversity of things which proceed from God is from the diverse dispositions of matter. For they imagined that matter was a certain extended thing, grosser in one part and purer in another part. In the gross part corporeal natures were received, in the pure part spiritual natures. John attributes this opinion to “the author of the book *De unitate et uno*, which [some] say is Boethius’, which I do not believe. Avicbron was of a similar opinion . . .”²⁸³ The curious thing about this passage is that the notion of matter it describes is closer to that of the *opponents* of spiritual matter, for whom matter is inextricably linked to dimensive quantity, than it is to that of its proponents, including Avicbron, who certainly did not describe or think of matter as *essentially* extended. John goes on to recognize that for Avicbron matter is present in spiritual creatures without quantity, but the whole tenor of his argument indicates his failure to take seriously even the possibility of matter which is *not* subject to corporeal properties. In this he provides an instructive contrast with, for instance, Giles of Rome.

John goes on for a few paragraphs to critique accounts of how matter could exist in spiritual things according to numerical diversity but not according to quantitative parts. For

²⁸² Ibid., 39: “In oppositum est, quia omne quod habet materiam est corporeum. Angeli sunt incorporei, secundum Dionysium. Ergo etc.”

²⁸³ Ibid., 40: “Respondeo. Circa hoc fuerunt opiniones antiquorum. Nam aliqui posuerunt omnem creaturam compositam ex materia et forma, quia, secundum eos, omnis diversitas rerum procedens a Deo est ex diversa dispositione materiae. Imaginabantur enim materiam esse extensam quandam rem, in una parte grossiorem, et alia parte puriorem. Dum in grossa parte recipitur natura corporalis, in pura autem natura spiritualis. Haec fuit opinio auctoris libri *De unitate et uno*, quem dicunt fuisse Boethii, quod non credo.

“Consimilis etiam opinionis fuit Avicbron . . .”

his part he has no positive contribution of his own to make regarding spiritual composition, identifying himself with the opinion of St. Thomas. There are two relevant kinds of composition, one from matter and form, and this is not in the angels; another is composition from essence and existence. This is the sort of composition found in the angels, and the sort that would be in whiteness, if by the power of God whiteness were to be separated from its subject. John ends by perfunctorily mentioning the Thomistic argument from intellection.²⁸⁴

III.3. Conclusion

At the end of this long chapter it seems appropriate to give a summary of the positions on spiritual matter taken up by the ten thinkers examined here. The six Franciscans presented in the first part all affirm a matter-form composition for spiritual creatures. Among these, John Pecham and Matthew of Aquasparta both hearken back to St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas Aquinas. Each of them work within a broadly Bonaventurian framework and reject approaches to spiritual composition which rely on arguments from a principle of existence.

John Pecham argues for spiritual matter based on the common properties of all substances. Since the first principles of substance as such are matter and form, spiritual as well as corporeal substances must be constituted from both. His account of matter is superficially similar to Bonaventure's but has important differences from it: he changes the

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 42-3: "Propter hoc alii dicunt melius, quod duplex est compositio: una ex materia et forma, et haec non est in angelis; alia est compositio essentiae et esse. Talis est compositio in angelis, et esset in albedine, si virtute Dei esset separata a suo subiecto. Hoc autem probatur sic: quia ipsa actio angeli est intelligere; materia autem intellectionem impedit. Ergo etc."

threefold grade of matter from sublunar, celestial, and spiritual to corporeal, mathematical, and spiritual matter, in the process apparently undermining the foundation for affirming the ultimate generic unity of matter. Also unlike Bonaventure, Pecham posits that matter has some actuality of its own apart from form and could be made (by God) to exist apart from any form. While affirming that matter and form are the principles of all substance equally, he seems to reject the view that the two principles are intrinsically interrelated and mutually complementary.

Matthew of Aquasparta follows Bonaventure more closely. He rejects the coherence of the notion of a subsistent form, and insists that the active and potential principles of spiritual substances must be form and matter. None of the compositions that we might find in spiritual substances are sufficient to account for the properties which demand a hylomorphic composition there as well. Matthew critiques the Thomistic approach to the problem from within a solidly Bonaventurian metaphysics, and finds it wanting. Considering the distinction between essence and existence, he states that, even if it might be real distinction, it falls outside the structure of a spiritual creature's quiddity and so does not make an adequate substitute for composition within the essence itself. Like Pecham, Matthew insists that matter and form are the fundamental principles of all true substances, but unlike Pecham considers these principles in a more Bonaventurian way, as inherently correlative. Every form needs a subject to inhere in and to provide it stability. In addition to their status as true substances, spiritual creatures have really inhering accidents, which require matter for them to inhere in; they are also really passible, requiring a principle of passivity. Matter is required for the individuation of spiritual creatures; the body cannot individuate human souls, since the soul is *hoc aliquid* even apart from the body.

William de la Mare's *Correctorium fratris Thomae* was a standard Franciscan anti-Thomist textbook and provided a template for other thinkers' approach to the spiritual matter controversy, including Nicholas of Ockham's. William insists that Aquinas' rejection of spiritual matter makes it impossible to explain how angels and separated souls can suffer from hellfire, perform volitional acts, acquire virtues and vices, and so forth. Since spiritual creatures are the subjects of accidents they must have a real potential principle other than their essence, and this must be matter. The immateriality of cognition does not exclude the materiality of intellectual creatures, since even the senses receive their objects immaterially, although they require a corporeal organ. Although the intellect receives universal and abstract forms, it is itself a singular concrete object: it need not have every property belonging to its objects. William affirms the interdependence of matter and form and the equivalence of subjective potency and matter. So far William is followed closely by Nicholas of Ockham. However, in his *Sentences* commentary William gives an ambivalent response to the question of the unity of matter, though eventually indicating that matter is only analogically identical between corporeal and spiritual things. Nicholas affirms more strongly that spiritual and corporeal matter are only "equivocally or analogously" the same.

Richard of Middleton takes the possibility of a real composition of essence and existence more seriously than any of the other Franciscans in this chapter. In a careful examination of the subject, he concludes that existence can neither be understood as simply identical with the essence of a thing *per se*, nor as some separate absolute reality which perfects or informs it as a quasi-accident. Richard affirms that existence is a real relation to God insofar as he is the giver of being, and insofar as this real relation is distinct from the absolute essence itself, there is a real composition of the two. Nevertheless this is not a

composition of two positive and absolute elements and so cannot account for the various properties that are explained by hylomorphic composition. While an essence/existence distinction is sufficient to account for a spiritual creature's non-simplicity and distance from God, it does not account for its internal potentiality to accidental change and intellectual and volitional alteration. Pagan philosophers thought of intellectual substances as immutable and lacking all possibility, and so it's no wonder that they denied matter to them, but this is impossible given the Christian conception of angels and human souls. While, however, affirming spiritual matter, Richard denies that it can be homogeneous with the matter of corporeal things, given the lack of extension and quantitative dimensions in spiritual substances, the radically different natures of spiritual and corporeal acts (and therefore the respective potencies which undergird them), and the fact that spiritual and corporeal things are not transmutable. Richard denies, consequently, that matter is pure potency: rather it holds the lowest grade of actuality. Spiritual matter has a higher grade of actuality than corporeal matter, proportionate to the higher degree of actuality in spiritual forms.

Peter John Olivi gives the longest and most complex defense of spiritual matter found in this chapter. He examines the nature of matter as such and the reasons for positing it in any substance. Rejecting, like Richard of Middleton, the account of matter as pure potency, Olivi claims that matter must have some actuality and properties of its own apart from form in order to provide a foundation for the latter. Matter is distinguished from form by having indeterminate and determinable being, as opposed to the more perfect and determining being of form. He denies, therefore, what other Franciscans claim, that matter is equivalent to potency and form to act, since matter has its own actuality in addition to being determinable by form, and form is a specific kind of act which is determinative of matter. Nevertheless he

denies that matter can exist without any form whatsoever. Matter is necessary for all substance because a substance by its nature is capable of accidental change, which requires a subject in passive potency distinct from its essential form. The essential form itself is indeterminate with respect to accidental modification and neither determines nor is determined by the accidents of the substance. Since spiritual substances undergo real accidental change, matter is posited in them by the metaphysician on the same grounds that a physicist posits matter in corporeal things. The lack of potency to substantial transformation in them does not remove their need for a subject of change or a foundation for the determinate substantial form. Even some corporeal bodies are or can become naturally incorruptible, but if these have matter, incorruptibility in the angels is no bar to their materiality. Olivi connects the denial of spiritual matter to an unchristian conception of angels and human souls, influenced more by pagan philosophy than the data of revelation. He admits that Aristotle did not accept spiritual matter, but thinks this irrelevant, since Aristotle and other pagans reasoned from incorrect premises about the spiritual world.

The four non-Franciscans in the second part all reject spiritual matter. Henry of Ghent takes as his governing principle that the presence of matter is indicated by the possibility of substantial transformation, and never otherwise. If there were spiritual matter, it could not be homogeneous with the matter of corporeal things, since the two kinds of substances are not mutually transformable. In fact, however, there is no real transformation in spiritual substances, not even between different spiritual forms. Intellectual and volitional changes in them are not of the same kind as accidental change in corporeal things. Like most of those who reject spiritual matter, Henry invokes the immateriality of cognition as evidence for a lack of matter in intellectual substances. He affirms that they have some kind of composition

out of two principles, which he calls “something similar to matter and something similar to form.” What these are supposed to be, however, is obscure. He asserts that these principles are *quod est* and *quo est*, but it is unclear what these are meant to correspond to. Henry’s account of the distinctions between essence and existence, nature and suppositum, or potency and act all fail to reveal two really distinct principles which are capable of entering into a real composition with each other. In the end Henry may not have a coherent position on spiritual composition.

Giles of Rome’s refutation of universal hylomorphism is thorough and carefully thought out. Unlike some of the position’s opponents, he gives the arguments in its favor their due weight before finding them lacking. He denies that potentiality can be equated with matter: there are different kinds of potentiality which are wholly equivocal. For Giles a prime consideration is that matter is intrinsically connected with quantity, so that whatever has a material component is *ipso facto* subject to quantitative dimensions, which cannot be attributed to spiritual substances. Matter without quantity could not have differentiated parts, and the quantitative diversity and partibility of matter is what allows there to be more than one material thing. Giles denies the coherence of an account of spiritual matter which lacks quantity. If there were a material substance without quantity, it would exhaust all of matter’s potentiality, and thus there could only be one such substance. Additionally, since matter is pure potentiality and *prope nihil*, it does not befit the nobility of spiritual natures to be mixed with it. Giles also invokes the impossibility of transformation in spiritual creatures and the immateriality of cognition, though in a more complex and sophisticated way than many others. Significantly, Giles does not employ the distinction between essence and existence to explain spiritual composition, even though he affirms a very strong version of it. Rather, in

an unusual move, Giles suggests that the distinction between the intellect and the will can suffice to account for really diverse potencies in a spiritual nature, since each can move the other and so can be both actual and potential with respect to the other.

Dietrich of Freiberg takes an approach to the denial of spiritual matter based thoroughly on considerations from physics rather than from metaphysics. Matter is essentially bound up both with quantitative extension and with substantial change. Like Henry of Ghent and Giles of Rome he emphasises the lack of potentiality to substantial change in spiritual creatures: we are justified in positing matter only where such a potentiality exists. Matter was discovered as a principle of nature *in physics* precisely as the best way to account for substantial change. Not even the heavenly bodies contain matter univocal with the matter of terrestrial things, since celestial objects are not subject to substantial change either. Much less, then, can matter be found in spiritual substances which do not even contain an inherent potency to change of place; rather the form itself of a spiritual creature serves as a quasi-“material” subject for spiritual accidents and their privations. Matter is pure potency, in the lowest grade of nature, and so is utterly undifferentiated. Therefore there cannot be more than one kind of matter, and so if spiritual creatures had matter it would be the same kind as belongs to generable and corruptible things, and so they too would be generable and corruptible, which is false.

John of Paris defends the teaching of Thomas Aquinas against the attacks of William de la Mare in his *Correctorium* as well as making his own attack on the common Franciscan position. According to him, the essence of a spiritual creature is simple and does not contain internal composition. Positing matter in them destroys the order of the universe, which requires for its perfection both necessarily material, potentially immaterial, and necessarily

immaterial substances. Spiritual matter makes intellectual activity impossible. The claim that God could not make a form without matter detracts from the divine power and is rash.

Granted, *per impossibile*, the existence of spiritual matter, John insists that it would have to be homogeneous with corporeal matter, for the idea of different sorts of prime matter is incoherent. The diversity of things comes from the diversity of forms, not a diversity of kinds of matter. Form can satisfy the natural inclination of matter and so be incorruptible, as in the case of the heavenly bodies. But there can be no spiritual matter, for all matter is quantitatively divisible, and *ex hypothesi* spiritual matter is not. But a matter which is not quantitatively divisible has no principle of diversity or individuation and so could not support more than one individual form. John denies that spiritual creatures have passive potency properly speaking; rather they have receptive potency. Accidental change in them is not univocal with that of bodies. Through this receptive potency the essence of a spiritual creature enters into composition with the accidental forms it receives as a kind of quasi-matter, and for this reason the spiritual substance is not purely simple. He also affirms a composition of essence and existence and of genus and difference.

The present chapter has presented a view of the history of the debate over spiritual matter between St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas Aquinas, on the one hand, and Gonsalvus of Spain, on the other, through a series of fairly detailed snapshots of the subject as treated by ten important and representative thinkers in the interim period. In the next chapter I give a very thorough examination of the topic of spiritual matter as it appears in the writings of Gonsalvus himself.

Chapter 4

Spiritual Matter in Gonsalvus of Spain

In his book *Hylémorphisme et devenir chez Saint Bonaventure*, cited more than once in a previous chapter, P. Robert notes that in the first generation of Bonaventure's disciples we find many energetic and convinced defenders of his doctrine of spiritual matter, such as John Pecham, William de la Mare, Walter of Bruges, Matthew of Aquasparta, and “the ardent” Peter-John Olivi, but that it was abandoned soon enough by their successors to the chair of Paris.¹ While correct as far as it goes, this is not quite the end of the story. Just before the advent of Scotus onto the philosophical scene, universal hylomorphism was still being vigorously defended.² Having examined most of these figures in the last chapter, along with a handful of prominent dissenters, I turn now to Gonsalvus Hispanus, or Gonsalvus of Spain, whose treatment of spiritual matter is as complex, detailed, sophisticated, and (with the exception of Olivi) as long as that of anyone presented so far. Robert's omission of Gonsalvus from his list is not surprising, given that Gonsalvus was at the time practically unknown—the text of Gonsalvus' *Quaestiones disputatae et de Quodlibet*³ was published only the year before Robert's book—but Gonsalvus has been given scarcely more attention in the decades since. Standing both at the end of the thirteenth century and at the end of the

¹ P. Robert, *Hylémorphisme et devenir chez Saint Bonaventure* (Montréal: Librairie St. François, 1936), 9-10: “En ce qui concerne particulièrement son hylémorphisme universel, s'il trouva, dans la première génération de ses disciples, des défenseurs énergiques et convaincus, tels Jean Pecham, Guillaume de la Mare, Guathier de Bruges, Matthieu d'Aquasparta, et l'ardent Perre-Jean Olivi, il fut néanmoins abandonné de bonne heure par leurs successeurs à la chaire de Paris.” Robert goes on to assert that the problem is simply ignored by Scotus. This is largely though not entirely true, as the final chapter of this study shows.

² Martel, *La Psychologie de Gonsalve D'Espagne* (Montréal: Institute D'Etudes Médiévales, 1968), 79: “Cette étude de la structure hylémorphique de l'âme d'après Gonsalve d'Espagne nous montre que, tout juste avant l'avènement de Duns Scot, la doctrine de l'hylémorphisme universel était encore vigoureusement défendue.”

³ Gonsalvus Hispanus. *Quaestiones disputatae et de Quodlibet*, ed. L. Amoros (Quarachi, 1935).

Franciscan “Augustinian” tradition, before it was revolutionized by John Duns Scotus, Gonsalvus is an important but neglected figure in the history of the transitional period in which he thought. Nevertheless, only a single book⁴ and a small handful of substantial articles have ever been devoted to him.

The present chapter will examine Gonsalvus’ writings on spiritual matter in detail, after providing some background information and a brief survey of the available scholarship on him.

IV.1. Gonsalvus of Spain’s Life, Works, and Thought

Gonsalvus was probably born around 1255, in Galicia (in the north-west of Spain).⁵ It is unknown when he entered the Franciscan Order or where he conducted his early studies in Spain, but by 1288 he had obtained his Bachelor’s degree at Paris. After a brief period as a papal legate he became provincial minister for the Franciscan province of Santiago of Compostela, and seems to have spent much of the decade on “official business” before returning to his academic career in Paris about 1297. There he was regent Master in 1302-3, by which point he had lectured on the Sentences and held his disputed and quodlibetal questions. Here was the end of his scholarly career. When the Franciscans were expelled from France during the quarrels between Pope Boniface VIII and King Philip of France in

⁴ Martel, B. *La psychologie de Gonsalve d’Espagne* (Montréal: Institute D’Etudes Médiévales, 1968).

⁵ For general and biographical information on Gonsalvus of Spain the best sources are the introduction to Gonsalvus Hispanus, *Quaestiones disputatae et de Quodlibet*, ed. L. Amoros, xiii-lxxviii; Martel, *La Psychologie*, 16-23. See also A.G. Traver, “Gonsalvo of Spain,” in *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jorge J.E. Gracia and Timothy B. Noone (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), 281-282; Benoît Patar, *Dictionnaire abrégé des philosophes médiévaux*, 94-95.

1303, Gonsalvus went with them; he was soon elected Provincial Minister of Castella and then, on 17 May 1304, Minister General of the Franciscan Order, a position which he held until his death in 1313 of natural infirmity.⁶

Gonsalvus was described by his contemporary Alvarus Pelagius as an almost ideal Franciscan master and theologian, learned, pious, humble, penitent, poor, and mendicant.⁷ As a governor of his Order he had to steer a way between the excesses of the “Spirituals” on the one hand and the growing laxity of discipline on the other.⁸ Similarly, in the philosophical and theological works which have come down to us we see him striving for a path between a rigid traditional “Augustinianism” and a secularising Aristotelianism.

While it is certain that Gonsalvus lectured on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, whether his commentary was ever committed to writing is in doubt. No trace of it has been discovered.⁹ To date only two works relevant to this study survive.¹⁰ The first is a curious work called *Conclusiones metaphysicae*,¹¹ long thought to be by John Duns Scotus but

⁶ Amoros, *ibid.*, xxxvii-xxxviii: “Causa ergo eius mortis, iuxta testimonia allegata, fuit naturalis infirmitas.”

⁷ See Amoros, xxviii: “Fateor autem me numquam magistrum vidisse, in quantum ut homo scire potui, maxime in sacra theologia, ex maxime religiosum mendicantem, humilem, patientem, pauperem, oratorem, despectum mundo, mortificatum, nec penitentiam agentem, nec verum magistrum Christum in virtutibus sectantem, nec propterea magisterium appetisse, nisi magistrum Gonsalvum, sacre theologie professorem, hispanum, generalem Ministrum Ordinis Fratrum Minorum, qui me Assisii recepit ad Ordinem.”

⁸ *Ibid.*, xxxix: “Gonsalvus in serie Ministrorum Generalium proculdubio insignem occupat locum. Tempora in quibus munus suum exercere debuit valde misera et turbulenta erant, tum ratione simultatum ‘Spiritualium’, pluribus locis Ordinem perturbantium, tum ratione disciplinae religiosae ubique collabescentis. Gonsalvus autem, ante et post Concilium Viennense, huiusmodi difficultates magna dexteritate et prudentia superare studuit, quibus in laboribus ad felicem exitum non semel pervenit. . . .”

⁹ *Ibid.*, lxiv-lxv.

¹⁰ Besides the works studied here Gonsalvus wrote various things pertaining to the government of his order. See Amoros, xli: “De Scriptis Fr. Gonsalvi Hispani per longum tempus tantum minima pars nota erat. Solummodo de his quae ad gubernationem Ordinis pertinent scripta quaedam, veluti epistolae, ordinationes Capitulum Generalium, declaratio *Regulae*, cognoscebantur. Scripta tamen philosophica et theologica omnino in oblivionem venerant.”

¹¹ Gonsalvus of Spain, “*Conclusiones Metaphysicae*.” In *Duns Scoti Opera Omnia. Editio nova, juxta editionem Waddingi XII tomos continentem*. Paris: Vivès, 1891. Vol. VI, 601-667.

attributed to Gonsalvus in manuscript.¹² This is a kind of manual or guide for students first getting acquainted with Aristotelian philosophy, compiling the conclusions asserted by Aristotle in the *Metaphysics* but leaving out most of the arguments establishing them. Most of the work is a bare rehearsal of propositions together with the barest justification for each, except for a single significant digression on Gonsalvus' part, which happens to be about spiritual matter.

The second (and major) surviving work is Gonsalvus' series of *Quaestiones disputatae et de quodlibet*. The chief portion of this is the collection of thirteen disputed questions which form a single set, containing internal references to each other and each ostensibly contributing to the theme of the divine praise, although in fact ranging over a wide variety of "hot topics" of the day.¹³ The eleventh of these will be the focus of the greater part of the present chapter.

Gonsalvus' thought as revealed in these works places him solidly within the Franciscan "school" as it was at the end of the thirteenth century.¹⁴ A student of Olivi, he follows Olivi's opinion on many subjects,¹⁵ while combatting the prominent Aristotelianism of Godfrey of Fontaines.¹⁶ His *Conclusiones metaphysicae*, however, shows that he does not share Olivi's extreme distrust of Aristotelianism, and a profound respect for Aristotle

¹² Amoros, *ibid.*, xli. The work was both copied and attributed to Gonsalvus some time in the early fourteenth century by James of Ascoli. See *Catalogue of the Collection of Medieval Manuscripts Bequeathed to the Bodleian Library, Oxford, by James P.R. Lyell*, compiled by Albinia de la Mare (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 242: "Expliciunt collectiones conclusionum set et me.orum metaphysice secundum Magistrum Gulsalvum tunc Parisiensem lectorem et demum ordinis minorum Generalem atque Rectorem. Dei laus cordis et oris spiritus in mente scriptoris Esculi nati Iacobi Nicole sic vociferati." I am grateful to Dr. Timothy Noone for drawing my attention to this reference.

¹³ See Amoros, lix.

¹⁴ O. Boulnois, "Ce dont Dieu n'a pas idée. Problèmes de l'idéalisme médiéval (XIIIe-XIVe siècles)," in *Le contemplateur et les idées, modèles de la science divine, du néoplatonisme au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Vrin, 2002), 77.

¹⁵ Amoros, *ibid.*, xxv; See Patar, *Dictionnaire*, 94.

¹⁶ Amoros, lxix.

permeates his disputed questions. He attributes to Aristotle the doctrine that the agent intellect is separate and identical with God, and finds it probable, although conceding that Christians must hold that the agent intellect is intrinsic to the human soul.¹⁷ His doctrine on the plurality of forms attempts to reconcile the Aristotelian and Augustinian sides of the debate, pointing out the merits of each.¹⁸ According to Patar, his thought is midway between Aristotelianism and Bonaventurian Augustinism. He affirms the plurality of forms in the human composite and a real distinction between the soul and its powers, and he emphasises the freedom of the soul and the primacy of the will over the intellect.¹⁹ In fact, Gonsalvus is probably most well-known on account of his debate with Meister Eckhart on the primacy of the will.²⁰

¹⁷ E.P. Mahoney, "Reverberations of the condemnation of 1277 in Later Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy," in *Nach der Verurteilung von 1277* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2001), 906.

¹⁸ Martel, *La Psychologie*, 50-51: "En présentant de la sorte sa doctrine de la pluralité de formes dans le composé humain, Gonsalve concilie deux opinions, deux conceptions qui avaient cours au moyen âge: celle des augustiniens et celle des aristotéliens. Pour les premiers, l'âme intellectuelle ne peut être forme d'un corps. Le seul mode d'association qu'ils admettaient était celui de moteur à mobile. Le principal souci de ces maîtres était de sauvegarder la substantialité de l'âme. Au contraire, les aristotéliens, qui représentent le second point de vue, plus soucieux d'assurer l'unité du composé humain, concevaient la relation de l'âme au corps sur le mode hylémorphique: l'âme est forme du corps et forme unique. Mais, par le fait même, ils compromettaient l'indépendance et la substantialité du l'âme. En admettant une forme de corporéité, antérieure à l'âme, les pluralistes sauvegardaient mieux, semble-t-il, la substantialité et la dignité de l'âme spirituelle; d'autre part, en conservant à l'âme sa qualité de principe informateur du corps, ce que est rendu possible par la théorie de la hiérarchie des formes, ils sauvegardaient en même temps l'unité ontologique de l'homme. Gonsalve s'insère donc dans le mouvement doctrinal que tend à infléchir les théories platoniciennes dans un sens aristotélien."

¹⁹ Patar, *Dictionnaire*, 94-95: "La pensée de Gonzalve d'Espagne est à mi-chemin entre l'aristotélisme et l'augustinisme bonaventurien. Il prend position pour la pluralité des formes dans le composé humain, à l'encontre de saint Thomas et à l'instar du courant de pensée franciscain. Il soutient le caractère hylémorphique de l'âme, et pose en même temps une distinction réelle entre l'âme et ses puissance opératoires. Par ailleurs, pour lui, la capacité de liberté de l'âme ne tient pas à sa fonction essentielle, mais au principe d'agir qu'elle possède. Toutefois, la volonté prime sur la raison: en cela il s'oppose à Maître Eckhart, aux yeux de qui l'intelligence, en Dieu comme en l'homme, est première, et s'aligne sur une opinion largement répandue dans les milieux franciscains." See also Zavalloni, *Richard de Mediavilla*, 311.

²⁰ See Gonsalvus of Spain, *Utrum laus Dei in patria sit nobilior eius dilectione in via (contra Echardum de Hochheim.)*, ed. M. Grabmann, Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaft 32, (Munich, 1927), 106-111. (Reprint *Gessamelte Akademieabhandlungen I* [Veröffentlichungen des Grabmann-Institutes, N.F. 25] Paderborn-Munich, 1979, 366-371.); "Utrum laus Dei in patria sit nobilior eius dilectione in via. (Solutio Equardi)", ed. J. Koch, Maître ECKHART, *Lateinische Werke V*, (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1936), 64-71; "Quaestio magistri Gonsalvi continens rationes magistri Echardi utrum laus Dei in Patria sit nobilior eius dilectione in via. Les 'quaestiones parisienses' n.1 et n.2", Latin text and French translation by A. de Libera, in *Maître Eckhart à*

Gonsalvus does not simply identify himself either with every common Franciscan position as such nor with Aristotle's thought. According to J. Gracia, "Gonsalvus in spite of his position as General of the Franciscan Order does not accept a doctrine of illumination or an identification of God with a separate agent intellect such as the one proposed by Matthew of Aquasparta and others."²¹ Gracia goes on to note Gonsalvus' "more sober position" in between the "two opposing views" of trying to agree with Aristotle, or to make Aristotle agree with oneself, as much as possible (e.g. Aquinas), and rejecting Aristotle as a pernicious influence (e.g. Nicholas of Autrecourt).²² On the other hand, according to Martel, Gonsalvus does always attempt to interpret Aristotle in a sense favorable to his own doctrines.²³ For Martel, Gonsalvus' mastery of Aristotle gives him an advantage over his Franciscan contemporaries and predecessors in defending their doctrines. Gonsalvus is "Augustinian" in his intention, but is open to Aristotle and tries to reconcile traditional "Augustinian" doctrines with Aristotelian principles. He constantly refers to the axioms, principles, definitions, and distinctions of Aristotle's metaphysics in defense of his theses.²⁴ Thanks to this impulse, "his argumentation is more rigorous [and] more technical than that of his predecessors of the same school."²⁵

Paris. Une critique de l'ontothéologie, E. Zum Brunn, Z. Kaluza et al. eds. (Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études. Section des Sciences religieuses 86) (Paris: PUF, 1984), 200-223.

²¹ Jorge Gracia, "The Agent and Possible Intellects in Gonsalvus Hispanus' Question XIII", *Franciscan Studies* 20 (1969), 25 n.106.

²² Gracia, *ibid.*, 26 n.108.

²³ Martel, *La Psychologie*, 114: "Or, nous savons que Gonsalve cherche toujours à se concilier Aristote en l'interprétant dans un sens favorable à ses propres doctrines."

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 185: "Autre trait, la connaissance parfaite de la métaphysique aristotélicienne que dénotent les *Questions*. Il suffit de se référer aux pages précédentes pour constater combien souvent il recourt aux axiomes, principes, définitions, distinctions de la métaphysique d'Aristote dans la défense de ses thèses." See also 104: "Si sa doctrine est d'inspiration augustinienne, son argumentation emprunte largement à la métaphysique aristotélicienne."

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 184: "Cependant, les traces les plus notables d'aristotélisme se trouvent dans les procédés d'argumentation de Gonsalve. Son argumentation est plus rigoureuse, plus technique que celle de ses prédécesseurs de la même école."

Martel suggests several times that Gonsalvus represents a crucial link in the continuous development of the Franciscan school from the latter half of the thirteenth century to Scotus at the beginning of the fourteenth. In particular he is an intermediary between Olivi and Scotus; what are often thought to be the most “audacious” theses of Scotus are already found in germ form in Gonsalvus.²⁶ We can see in Gonsalvus an anticipation or sketch of Scotus’ formal distinction.²⁷ Scotus expresses the same opinion as Gonsalvus on the distinction of the agent and possible intellects, but more precisely.²⁸ Where Scotus’ doctrine is similar or identical to Gonsalvus’ the former’s thought can explicate the latter’s where information is scarce.²⁹ The point that Gonsalvus’s writings provide a link between Scotus and earlier Franciscan thought is also made very forcefully by Longpré.³⁰

Gracia’s appraisal of Gonsalvus as a thinker seems so correct to me that I cannot resist quoting it at some length:

... it must be granted that although Gonsalvus is not a thinker of the caliber of an Augustine or Thomas yet he is a very shrewd one. Here he has been able to synthesize all the most important elements of the question[s] debated during his time. He has shown a rather good historical sense in his judgment of philosophical theories prior to or contemporary to him. And most of all, learning from the experience of others, he has avoided some of the most important dangers, both theological and philosophical, into which some of his predecessors fell. . . .

Moreover, he has proved to be a mature thinker in his attitude towards authority such as that of Averroes, the *Augustinisme-avicennisant*, and Aristotle, rejecting their ideas whenever they seemed incompatible with some of his convictions and synthesizing them in a coherent whole whenever possible. Most of all, however, Gonsalvus is important to us as a good example of the transitional period between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. He shows particularly in his attitude towards Aristotle both a certain respect and an ability for a critical examination of his

²⁶ Ibid., 185 sq. See also 135-6: “Pour clore cet exposé à la connaissance de la quiddité des choses sensibles, soulignons que Gonsalve se situe doctrinalement entre Olivi et Duns Scot. Il accentue un peu plus qu’Olivi le rôle de l’objet, mais sans aller aussi loin que Duns Scot . . .”

²⁷ Ibid., 104.

²⁸ Ibid., 117 n.59.

²⁹ Ibid., 89 n.44.

³⁰ Efreim Longpré, “Gonsalve de Balboa et le Bx Duns Scot.” *Études Franciscaines* XXXVI (1924), 640-645.

doctrines. In this point he mirrors the attitude of men such as Thomas Aquinas and Albert the Great who greatly revered Aristotle's opinion and foreshadows that of those such as Nicholas of Autrecourt and John of Mirecourt, who after him set out to criticize and reject the Philosopher.

Moreover, his thought and perspicacious insights, celebrated during his own times, did not die with him but influenced others and especially those of his great pupil Duns Scotus. Thus the student who approaches his writings is not only rewarded with clarity and acumen of thought but also with historical insight into Gonsalvus' times and successors. What better excuse can be found by the scholar for the study of a figure in the history of philosophy?³¹

I hope that the remainder of the present chapter will help to provide additional evidence to support these generous comments.

IV.2. Spiritual Matter in Gonsalvus of Spain

The question of spiritual matter occupies a surprisingly prominent place in Gonsalvus' small surviving corpus. Besides the long and comprehensive Q.XI he brings the problem to the attention of his audience with unusual frequency, and twice embarks on long and uncharacteristic digressions on the subject in unexpected contexts. Leaving Q.XI for a section of its own, this section presents and examines the other places where the problem, or issues closely associated with it, are mentioned in the *Conclusiones metaphysicae* and in *Quaestiones disputatae et de quodlibet*, beginning with the former.

³¹ Gracia, "The Agent and Possible Intellects," 35-36.

IV.2.1. Spiritual Matter in the *Conclusiones metaphysicae*

As noted earlier, the *Conclusiones metaphysicae* consists almost entirely of very brief descriptions of Aristotle's conclusions in the *Metaphysics*. The only digression of any length on Gonsalvus' own part shows his concern to prove that Aristotle's philosophy does not exclude spiritual matter. The subject arises as follows. In the section *Conclusiones Libri IX* he discusses the proposition that "in incomposite or immaterial substances there is neither truth nor falsity, as [there is] in composites." The reason for this is that, since in incomposite or immaterial substances there is no composition, whether of form with matter, or even of accidents with a subject—the sort of composition implied, for instance, when I say "white wood"—the conditions for truth and falsity about them are not met. For strictly simple things can only be understood by understanding their simple quiddity in the mind, and representing this simple understanding with the voice, not by affirming (or denying) one thing of another. Not to attain this kind of quiddity in the mind is to be ignorant about it; but being ignorant is different from being deceived or holding a falsehood. Deception and falsehood can only be about those complexes which truth and falsity are concerned with. Such a complex does not belong to the definition of a thing, and therefore cannot belong to the quiddity of anything whether simple or composite—there is no truth or falsity in essences: one either grasps them or fails to do so. About quiddities then there is no deception, except *per accidens*, namely when the mind incorrectly combines a quiddity and something else into a complex.

Given all this, when one examines the text of the *Metaphysics* carefully and sees that according to Aristotle immaterial substances are incomposite substances, one will see that

angels and souls cannot be called immaterial, in the sense of lacking all matter whatsoever. For Aristotle claims that there is neither truth nor falsity about wholly immaterial things in themselves, nor affirmation about them. But when our intellect thinks about an angel or a soul, it does indeed think of them as a complex, a subject for affirmation and denial or truth and falsity, since there are many and diverse habits and acts belonging to them, all of which are accidents. The only possible “immaterial substance” about which Aristotle’s claim might be true is the first cause, since only that is subject to no composition whatsoever; his remark, then, does not apply to spiritual creatures.³²

This argument has some serious philosophical difficulties. For one thing, it conflates the logical with the ontological order, assuming that what is simple in the mind is simple in reality, and what is composite in the mind is composite in reality. As we may recall from Chapter 2, Aquinas accuses Avicbron of this very mistake in arguing for material composition in spiritual creatures.³³ In addition, if we took this passage at face value as

³² Gonsalvus of Spain, *Concl. meta.*, 628-9, # 29: “Conclusio ibi: Circa incomposita vero, t.c.22. est, quod In substantiis incompositis sive immaterialibus, nec est veritas, nec falsitas, sicut in compositis. Medium duplex. Primum ibi: non enim est, compositum scilicet, quia non est ibi compositio, sicut in istis, ut compositio formae cum materia, vel etiam accidentium cum subjecto, ut cum dico lignum album. Secundum ibi: Aut sicut nec verum, est quia non similiter se habent adesse, quae autem diversimode se habent ad esse et ad veritatem, ut patet ex 6. conclusione 2. huius; et ostendit ibi: Sed est verum quidem, qualiter se habeat veritas illarum, non affirmando unum de alio, sed solum intelligendo mente simplicem quidditatem earum, et repraesentando voce; non attingere vero huiusmodi quidditatem est eam ignorare, non tamen ignorare, est falsitas vel deceptio; non enim est deceptio, nisi circa illa complexa, circa quae consistit veritas et falsitas. Talis autem complexio non est in definitione, et ideo circa quidditatem rerum substantiarum simplicium, vel etiam compositarum, non est deceptio nisi per accidens, scilicet in quantum fit complexio ipsius definitionis cum aliqua re composita non recte; et cum substantiae incompositae hinc vocentur substantiae immateriales, si diligenter inspicias ea quae in littera dicuntur, videbis quod Angeli et animae non penitus possunt dici immateriales, quasi carentes omni materia. In talibus enim scilicet penitus immaterialibus, non est veritas secundum Philosophum hinc, sed secundum compositionem et divisionem, nec est ibi affirmatio unius de alio. Constat quod cum intellectus noster Angelum vel animam cognoverit, vere potest componere, et ita affirmare unum de alio, cum in eis sint multi et diversi habitus et actus, quae omnia sunt accidentia; unde quod hinc dicitur, videtur quod non possit salvari, nisi de prima causa tantum.”

³³ Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* P.I.Q.50.A.2: “Respondeo dicendum quod quidam ponunt angelos esse compositos ex materia et forma. Et hanc opinionem astruere nititur Avicbron in libro *Fons Vitae*. Supponit enim quod quaecumque distinguuntur secundum intellectum, sint etiam in rebus distincta. . . . Non est

representing Gonsalvus' position, he would have serious trouble reconciling it with theology, since this argument implies either that we can only have one simple concept of God, neither true nor false, or else that God is composite as well as human souls and angels. Surely Gonsalvus would reject either point. At any rate, he does not return to this argument in his other surviving discussions of spiritual matter, and perhaps the passage should be read only as arguing that, if souls and angels are known to have accidents, Aristotle's principles imply that they have material composition as well, without implying that Gonsalvus himself endorses this line of thought in all its details. In any case there may be some irony in the fact that Gonsalvus attributes to Aristotle the same line of thought which Aquinas attributes to Avicbron and finds so unacceptable.

Philosophical merits aside, however, this digression is typical of the attitude of many Franciscans we have seen: while not asserting that Aristotle affirms spiritual matter, Gonsalvus is concerned to show that Aristotle's principles do not exclude it; given the Christian conception of angels and souls as having accidents, these principles even support it. The fact that Gonsalvus chooses to make this digression at all is also significant. It is, as mentioned above, the only time he makes a digression in the present work. When other controversial matters come up Gonsalvus abstains from arguing with either Aristotle or his contemporaries. For instance, when Aristotle uses the sempiternity of motion to prove the existence of a perpetual mover, Gonsalvus notes that, while Aristotle's premise is incorrect, it would take too long to start a dispute about it.³⁴ Nevertheless, immediately after this

autem necessarium quod ea quae distinguuntur secundum intellectum, sint distincta in rebus: quia intellectus non apprehendit res secundum modum rerum, sed secundum modum suum."

³⁴ Gonsalvus, *Concl. meta.*, 654: "Et nota quod haec conclusio est vera, sed eius medium falsum est, sicut et medium aliquarum conclusionum sequentium verarum, de quarum tamen falsitate disputare brevitatis inchoata non sinit."

Gonsalvus argues that matter cannot be excluded from spiritual creatures on the grounds that they are not subject to substantial corruption. Aristotle says that a substance of this type—i.e. intellectual—is immaterial, because it is sempiternal. But one can only conclude that, on Aristotle’s premises, spiritual creatures do not have that matter which is subject to generation and corruption, or else one would have to argue on the same grounds that there is no matter in the heavenly bodies, which Aristotle does not hold.³⁵ Gonsalvus’ willingness to argue about spiritual matter where he is not willing to argue about the eternity of the world shows the comparative importance which the former subject has in his mind.

One further place Gonsalvus argues with Aristotle might be worthy of note, although it does not concern spiritual matter directly. Aristotle argues that there is only one world, for if there were many worlds, specifically the same but numerically different, they would have to have numerically different first principles. But this is impossible, for whenever things are specifically the same but numerically different, they have matter. Gonsalvus admits the conclusion that there is only world, but denies the principle that many worlds would need many first principles: from one God could come many worlds.³⁶ More important for us is Gonsalvus’ silent acceptance of the other principle: that specifically identical but numerically distinct things must have matter. This is, of course, an important principle for adherents of spiritual matter, especially when it comes to human souls, and Gonsalvus uses it in Q.XI.

³⁵ Ibid., 654 #23: “*Huiusmodi substantia est immaterialis, quia est sempiterna. Medium, quia non potest non esse, ut patet ex decimaquinta septimi huius; si diligenter attendas huius veagesimamtertiam conclusionem et eius medium, non excludit omnem materiam a substantiis spiritualibus, sed solum illam, quae est subiectam generationis et corruptionis: si enim de omni materia hanc cum suo medio conclusionem intelligas, sequeretur nullam materiam esse in corporibus supercoelestibus, quod est contra tertiam huius.*”

³⁶ Ibid., 659 # 56: “*Tantum unus est mundus, qui coeli nomine designatur. Quia si essent plures in specie convenientes, differentes autem numero, videtur quod eodem modo oporteret esse plura principia prima differentia numero; hoc autem est impossibile, quia quaecumque convenient in specie, et different in numero, habent materiam. Licet autem quinquagesima sexta conclusio sit vera, medium tamen non est efficax; non enim oportet multiplicare prima principia propter multiplicationem mundorum, quia ab uno possunt esse plures.*”

Gonsalvus also lists without comment Aristotelian theses which his contemporaries used to argue against spiritual matter. For the thesis “Form is not generated,” he notes the argument that form is not itself composed of matter and form, for if it were there would be an infinite regress of composition in a single form.³⁷ As we have seen, this argument was used to disprove the possibility of the human soul having both matter and form, since the soul is itself the form of the body. Gonsalvus does not allude to this problem here, but responds to it, again, in his Q.XI. The same is true for passages in which Aristotle seems to imply that even the heavenly bodies do not have matter, since they are not subject to substantial change.³⁸

IV.2.2. Spiritual Matter in Q.XIII

Gonsalvus’ other lengthy digression on spiritual matter is found in *Quaestiones disputatae* XIII. This question is concerned with whether or not the agent and possible intellects are really distinct, but in the middle of it Gonsalvus includes a substantial discussion about the materiality of the soul, an issue which seems to be only distantly connected. As Gracia says in his article about Q.XIII,

From the length of these five objections and counterobjections [about spiritual matter] it is clear that Gonsalvus attaches to them a vital role in this question concerning the status of the human intellect. However, their connection with the previous line of argument is rather tenuous. All of them are directed towards proving that it is acceptable to include in the intellect active and passive principles, a doctrine that was

³⁷ Ibid., 616 #21: “Conclusio est, quod *Forma non generatur*. Medium est, quia non habet materiam et formam; quod autem generatur habet materiam et formam, quod patet ex secunda divisione posita in principio huius quintae partis: Si enim forma haberet materiam et formam, tunc quaeritur idem de illius forma, et sic infinitum.”

³⁸ Ibid., 622 #16: “Conclusion ibi: *In naturalibus quidem*, t.c.12, est quod *In substantiis ingenerabilibus et perpetuiis, cuiusmodi sunt corpora supercoelestia, non oportet materiam aequaliter quaerere vel assignare, sicut in generabilibus*. Medium est, quia non est ibi talis materia, qualis in his inferioribus. . . #18: *Non omnia communicant in materia*. Medium est, quia non omnia ad invicem transmutantur.”

doubted by no one, but that their apparent materiality and formality did not imply their real distinction, Gonsalvus' own opinion. . .³⁹

Without concerning myself with the role this digression plays in the context of the question of the agent and possible intellects, I will here examine it in the light of the spiritual matter debate.

Gonsalvus, having concluded that in the soul action must come from one principle and passivity from another, concludes furthermore that the intellect must have both matter and form, since action comes from form and passivity from matter, and the intellect both acts and suffers. This allows him to assert that there are two really distinct principles in the intellect without having to posit two diverse intellects in the soul. Now Gonsalvus goes on to examine several objections to this solution relying on spiritual matter.⁴⁰

1) The first objection is the familiar one from the immateriality of cognition. The sort of potency a thing has is known from its act; since the intellect has an immaterial act, it must have immaterial potency, and therefore it has no matter as a part of itself. Gonsalvus notes that he has already dealt with this objection in his full-length treatment of spiritual matter in Q. XI, but now will show its inadequacy again. He accuses this argument from intellection of committing the fallacy of the consequent, since according to him it uses the term “material” in two distinct senses. When an act is called immaterial, this cannot mean that it does not have matter as a part of itself, since an act, and especially an operation like understanding, which is an accident, never has matter as a part of itself: an operation is not a composite

³⁹ Gracia, “The Agent and Possible Intellects,” 34-35.

⁴⁰ Gonsalvus, *Quaestiones disputatae et de quodlibet*, Q. XIII, 266: “Dicendum quod ratio concludit quod ab alio sit passio et ab alio actio, quia passio ratione materiae et actio ratione formae; et ideo quia intellectus agit et patitur, concludit quod intellectus habeat materiam et formam, sed non oportet quod agens et patiens sint realiter diversa, licet materiam et formam, ut patet de composito, in quo sunt materia et forma. Sed contra hoc et dicta in quaestione determinatione de compositione intellectus, arguit quidam multipliciter.”

substance! Rather understanding is called immaterial “objectively,” that is, because it has an immaterial object. For if a potency is known by its act, an act is known by its object. If, therefore, the argument used a univocal sense of “immaterial” one could infer correctly that the intellect has an immaterial potency objectively, since its object is what is abstracted from matter in the mind (*secundum rationem*), even if it is material in its being. The intellect does not act directly on material things, but only on thoughts. The argument, however, does not want simply to conclude that the intellect is immaterial *objectively*, but also that it is immaterial *subjectively*, that it has no material substrate. Gonsalvus insists that this conclusion is reached only by equivocation.⁴¹

In addition to this Gonsalvus notes that the argument from cognition is too hasty in concluding that the intellect lacks all matter whatsoever, when at best it can show that cognition is free from the sensible matter which is subject to sensible dispositions. But the debate has never been about whether the intellect acts without a corporeal organ, which is granted by all. The argument from cognition does not remove “the essence of matter in itself” from the intellect; matter as such does not impede the act of understanding, but rather promotes it, since the act of understanding is the act of something existing *per se*, and every such creature has matter, since it is a composite. Recognizing that the intellect’s activity is

⁴¹ Gonsalvus, Q. XIII, 266-267: “Primo, sic: potentia cognoscitur per actus; ergo illa potentia est immaterialis cuius actus est immaterialis; sed actus intelligendi est actus maxime immaterialis; ergo intellectus erit potentia immaterialis; non ergo habet materiam partem sui. —Respondeo quod in praedicta quaestione ostensum est convenienter quod ista ratio non concludit. Modo autem ostendo dupliciter quod non concludit: primo, quia peccat per fallaciam consequentis, quia quando arguitur quod si actus sit immaterialis, potentia est immaterialis, ibi aequivocatur materialitas, quoniam actus non dicitur materialis quia habet materiam partem sui—sic enim nec actus nec operatio, cum sit accidens, est materialis—sed dicitur materialis obiective, quia scilicet est circa obiectum materiale, quia actus cognoscitur per obiecta; ergo, per oppositum, actus dicitur immaterialis per privationem materialitatis in obiecto. Si ergo arguitur uniformiter [ex] immaterialitate, talis immaterialitas solum debet concludi in potentia, et tunc est conclusio vera, nam intellectus est potentia immaterialis obiective, quia obiectum suum est abstractum a materia secundum rationem, licet non secundum esse. Si vero concludatur materialitas intrinseca in potentia intellectiva, non accipiatur uniformiter materialitas in antecedente et consequente, quia in antecedente accipitur materialitas obiectiva, et in consequente immaterialitas subiectiva.”

incorporeal does not remove the much more profound metaphysical truth that every creature as such is a composite of form and matter.⁴²

2) The second objection Gonsalvus examines claims that all form flees matter. This can be seen in the order of beings, since the more perfect a form is the more it flees matter; therefore the intellect, since it is a most perfect form, altogether flees matter as a part of itself. Naturally this objection is unlikely to appeal to Gonsalvus, who has just aligned himself with the Bonaventurean notion that matter and form are essentially correlative in creatures. An argument which assumes that matter and form are natural enemies has no place in a metaphysics which holds as a fundamental principle that matter and form are as necessary to each other as husband and wife.

Unlike the first argument, as Gonsalvus understands it, this argument can prove nothing at all. He declares that the claim that form flees matter can only be understood in three ways. First, it might be said that form flees matter in the sense that it “desires” not to be matter, and in this sense a composite having matter also flees matter, since a composite does not desire to be (merely) matter. This is true of everything, in the sense that everything “desires” to be itself and not something else, and therefore “flees” everything else. In this sense form can “flee” matter while still forming a composite with it. Second, one might say that form flees matter in the sense “that it does not have matter as a part of itself, and this is true of a form which is not able to exist *per se*; but if this is understood of a form which is able to exist *per se*, then there is a *petitio principii*.” In other words, it is the case that forms,

⁴² Ibid., 267: “Secundo, dico quod ratio deficit, quia intellectus dicitur immaterialis, non per privationem cuiuslibet materiae, sed materiae sensibilis quae est subiecta dispositionibus sensibilibus, et non per privationem essentiae materiae in se, quia haec materialitas non impedit actum intelligendi, sed potius promovet, cum actus intelligendi sit actus entis per se, et omne tale creatum habet materiam, cum non sit omnino simplex ex immaterialitate. Ergo [per] actus solum concluditur immaterialitas potentiae per privationem materiae sensibilis, et non aliter.”

precisely as distinguished against matter, do not have a material part. But this does not imply that they do not need to be united to matter! If the whole dispute is about whether there can be a subsistent form, you cannot assume that there can simply on the grounds that forms are not matter. Third, one might say that form flees matter in the sense that it flees union with matter. But this is just false.⁴³

Again, far from it being the case that the more perfect a form is the more it flees matter, according to Gonsalvus the more perfect a form is the stronger is its inclination to matter, and the stronger its union with matter, just as the heavier something is the more ardently it desires to reach its proper place. Since, contrary to the objection's assumption, the desire to be united to matter is natural to form, a form is more perfect precisely insofar as it desires more strongly to be united to matter and insofar as it is more perfectly so united. The soul itself shows this, since the blessedness of a blessed soul is delayed by its appetite for and inclination to the body, and is extremely saddened by its separation from the body, as is clear in man's death.⁴⁴

3) According to the third objection, every agent intends, precisely, being [esse]; just as God intends being in the act of creation, so creatures imitate him in their intentions. And

⁴³ Ibid., 267: "Praeterea, arguit sic: omni forma fugit materiam; et hoc patet in ordine entium, quod quanto forma est perfectior tanto magis fugit materiam; ergo cum intellectus sit forma perfectissima, omnino fugit materiam partem sui. –Sed nec ista ratio in aliquo videtur concludere, quia cum dicunt quod forma fugit materiam, hoc non potest intelligi nisi tripliciter: uno modo quod forma dicatur fugere materiam quia non vult esse materia, et sic compositum habens materiam fugit materiam quia non vult esse materia; et universaliter sic: quia quaelibet res habens esse fugit aliam, et isto modo stant simul quod forma aliqua fugiat materiam, et tamen quod habeat materiam partem sui. –Alio modo potest intelligi quod materiam fugiat forma quia non habet enim partem sui, et sic verum est de forma quae non potest esse per se; si vero intelligitur de forma quae potest esse per se, tunc est petitio principii. –Tertio modo potest intelligi quod forma fugiat materiam quia fugit unionem cum materia, et sic falsum dicunt . . ."

⁴⁴ Ibid., 267-268: "Item, quanto forma est perfectior tanto inclinatio eius ad materiam est fortior, et unio eius cum materia est fortior; sicut quanto grave perfectius participat formam gravitatis tanto fortius appetit et inclinatur ad esse deorsum; cum ergo appetere uniri materiae sit naturale ipsi formae, tanto perfectius appetit unionem eius cum materia quanto in se est perfectior, et tanto perfectius unitur ipsi materiae; et hoc patet de anima nostra, in tantum quod . . . anima beata retardatur a sua beatitudine propter appetitum et inclinationem ad corpus, et maxime tristatur de separatione eius a corpore, ut patet in morte hominis."

since being comes from form, every agent intends directly the form to which its action leads, and not matter, since matter in itself is purely a being in potency and so is strictly speaking non-being and nothing. One should not, therefore, posit in angels and in the soul something which God does not intend and which is not a being. This objection, again, presupposes a metaphysics wholly foreign to Gonsalvus and the Franciscan tradition. He denies that matter is nothing: on the contrary, as we learn from Augustine, matter really exists and is really good. “Otherwise, if matter is nothing, how can it be called the foundation of nature, and [how could it be] a part of the composite, when [then] the composite would be composed from being and nothing?” If matter is called non-being in comparison to form, this is *not* because it lacks all entity, but rather because, unlike form, it is in potency to a more perfect and greater entity (which form provides). But matter itself both exists and has a certain diminished being—otherwise it could not be a *per se* principle of a composite substance. Therefore, just as a composite includes both matter and form, so the being of a composite is from the being of matter and form, and includes the being of each.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Ibid., 268-269: “Praeterea, arguitur sic: omne agens intendit esse praecise, quia hoc solum intendit primum agens in quod effectus sibi assimilatur, et secundum agens non agit nisi imitando primum agens, nec agens agit nisi intendendo ipsum esse; sed secundum Boethium, in libro *De Trinitate*, esse est a forma; ergo solum intenditur ab agente ipsa forma et non materia; materia enim, cum sit purum ens in potentia, secundum se est non-ens et nihil; ponere autem in anima et in angelis aliquod agens primum quod non intendit nec est ens, inconueniens est; ergo non est ponenda materia in angelis et in anima. –Respondeo: quod vero Boethius dicit quod esse est a forma, dicendum quod hoc verum est principaliter et complete, non tamen totaliter est a forma, et hoc patet per eundem in libro *De Unitate et uno*, ubi replicat eandem propositionem, et dicit quod ‘nullum esse est a forma nisi cum est in materia’; esse ergo est ex unione formae cum materia. –Quod autem dicunt quod materia nihil est, hoc falsum est contra intentionem Augustini, XIII *Confessionum*, et in libro *Contra adversarium*, ubi dicit quod materia non est nihil, de qua legimus Deum mundum fecisse ex informi materia, Sap. XI. Unde expresse dicit ibi quod materia habet verum esse et bonum; aliter enim, si materia nihil est, quomodo posset dici fundamentum naturae et pars esset compositi, ubi compositum componeretur ex ente et nihilo? Unde materia non dicitur non-ens in potentia quia caret omni entitate, sed quia est in potentia ad perfectiorem et maiorem entitatem; ipsa tantum de se ens est et esse aliquod diminutum habet, aliter enim non esset per se principium compositi. Unde sicut compositum complectitur materiam et formam, ita esse compositi est ex esse materiae et formae, et esse utriusque complectitur.” Note the acceptance as authentic and the use of *De unitate et uno* along with the genuinely Boethian *De Trinitate*.

Gonsalvus also takes pains to deny the premise that an agent intends only the form in his production of a thing; if God's intention is primarily, as seems likely, to produce the whole composite, then all the essential parts of the composite must fall under the intention to produce it. Granted that the form is intended "more principally" than the matter, still the matter is intended too, not for its own sake, but for the sake of the composite being. It would detract from the divine goodness to claim that God produces something without intention; it makes no sense to claim that God produces matter without intending it.⁴⁶

4) The fourth objection is reminiscent of the second. Matter is the dregs of all things, and exists only for the sake of the degraded (*declivas*) species and forms which are at the tail end of the hierarchy of complete species. To suggest that God in producing something must begin from the dregs is unfitting. Again, this objection suggests a metaphysical stance in basic opposition to Gonsalvus', who retorts immediately that for a creature to be composed of matter and form is not the same as for it to have dregs, nor is it repugnant to a creature's beauty. In fact, he claims, being created from nothing (*de nihilo*) is more repugnant to a creature's perfection than to be from matter (*ex materia*), since a creature receives no perfection at all from the fact that it comes from nothing, but rather all the imperfection which it has. Matter on the other hand is to some extent an entity and enters into the composition of a thing and contributes to its completeness. If, then, a creature is not said to

⁴⁶ Ibid., 269: "Quod etiam dicunt quod materia non intenditur, dico quod hoc falsum est, quia si compositum per se intendatur et primo necessario, quaelibet pars eius essentialis per se intenditur, licet principalius forma intendatur quam materia; unde materia per se intenditur, licet non propter se, sed propter esse compositi. Quod etiam Deus facit aliquid sine intentione, hoc multum derogat bonitati divinae; quod Deus materiam producat non intendendo eam, inconueniens est."

be made from dregs on account of its coming from nothing, much less can it be said to be from dregs on account of being from matter.⁴⁷

It seems to me that in this reply Gonsalvus somewhat misses the point of the objection. While correctly pointing out that something receives no perfection from its arising out of nothing, he apparently overlooks the fact that nothing, while being a complete absence of good, is at least not the presence of something objectionable. The image of dregs, *feces*, suggests that form is *soiled* by coming into contact with matter, and that only the basest of kinds need to be manured with it in order to thrive. As a bare workbench is not as offensive as a filthy one, so being made on a clean bench will not render an artifact distasteful as would being made on a filthy one. To Gonsalvus, however, the argument must seem like objecting that the workbench is soiled precisely by being *wooden*, which is absurd.

At any rate, after having answered the argument as a whole, Gonsalvus now attacks the main premise directly, as he does with the other objections. If opponents say that matter is dregs, this can mean three things. First, that matter is simply filth; second, that matter is that which remains in something which must be purged, like dross in gold or silver; or third, that “dregs” means simply imperfection. The first case is unacceptable, since after the general resurrection at the end of time our glorious bodies will have matter, and heaven will be full of glorious bodies: we should beware of suggesting that heaven will be full of filth. But the second case is unintelligible, for if matter is dross, then one of the elements of the

⁴⁷ Ibid., 269-270: “Praeterea, arguit sic: materia est fex omnium rerum, et est propter species et formas declivas quae sunt in cauda specierum perfectarum; sed ponere quod Deus in producendo quodcumque necessario incipiat a fece est inconueniens; huiusmodi autem est materia; ergo etc. –Respondeo quod creaturam componi ex materia non est ipsam habere feces, nec eius pulchritudini repugnat. –Probatio: plus repugnat perfectioni creaturae esse de nihilo quam esse ex materia, quia ex hoc quod est de nihilo non habet aliquam perfectionem, immo omnis imperfectio quam habet, propter hoc quod est de nihilo sibi accidit; sed materia est aliqua entitas et facit ad compositionem rei et ad eius complementum; si ergo creatura non dicitur esse ex fecibus propter hoc quod est de nihilo, multo fortius non dicitur esse ex fecibus quia ex materia est.”

composite will have to be purged from it. But to purge the matter of gold itself from the form of gold is to destroy the gold! But if by “dregs” his opponents simply mean imperfection, Gonsalvus concedes that in a certain sense one might say that there are dregs in all creatures, since the whole universe has some imperfection. Still, this way of speaking is “improper” (*improprie est dictum*), for “dregs” is properly speaking a term of corruption, not of composition. The dregs of something is that into which something is corrupted first of all, as, in animate things, a cadaver is called the “dregs” of the living being. But matter is more properly that *from* which things are composed rather than that *into* which they are corrupted, and to call it “dregs” is to abuse the word.⁴⁸

5) The fifth and last objection states that if matter were present in the soul it would be subject to quantity, since matter is always accompanied by quantity. As with the first objection, Gonsalvus again notes that he has dealt with this objection in the earlier Q.XI, denying that quantity necessarily follows upon matter. Matter in itself does not have quantitatively determined parts, but essentially rules out all quantity—which is after all a form.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Ibid., 270: “Unde quod dicunt quod materia est fex, aut intelligunt per feces sordes, aut illud quod remanet purgandum de aliquo, ut dicitur fex auri vel argenti, aut per fecem imperfectionem; si primo modo, tunc cum corpora gloriosa habebunt materiam post resurrectionem, et caelum erit plenum huiusmodi corporibus gloriosis, tunc caelum est plenum sordibus, quod cavendum est nominare. Secundo modo non potest intelligi, quia materia pertinet ad complementum compositi, et per consequens non tamquam aliquid purgandum a composito. Si intelligant, tertio modo, per feces imperfectionem, sic concedendum est, licet improprie, quod fex sit in omni creatura, quia totum universum imperfectionem habet; sed illud improprie est dictum, et ideo valde improprie loquuntur qui dicunt quod materia est fex omnium rerum; illud enim proprie est fex alicuius rei in quod primo corrumpitur, ut in animatis cadeaver est fex vivi. Materia autem est principium ex quo omnia primo fiunt, et ideo dicere materiam esse fecem, est nimis abuti vocabulo. –Quod etiam dicunt quod Deus non incipere possit producere nisi a fece inconveniens sit, patet quomodo est verum et quomodo non; si intelligitur per fecem ens imperfectum, verum est quod sic omne quod producitur ex ente imperfecto, producitur ex habente fecem, hoc est, imperfectionem; alio modo non est verum.”

⁴⁹ Ibid., 270: “Praeterea, arguit sic: si anima haberet materiam non esset tota in qualibet parte, quia ubi est materia ibi est quantitas. –Respondeo, sicut supra in alia quaestione dictum est, quod quantitas non necessario consequitur materiam, nec materia partes habet formatas per quantitatem, immo haec materia distinguitur ab illa circumscripta omni quantitate.”

Gonsalvus concludes with a few extremely interesting remarks. As far as this issue is concerned, Aristotle is not on the side of the Franciscans' opponents, but is against them. "For if the Philosopher had thought about angels as the Catholic faith thinks, namely that they were certain individuals having accidents, he would certainly have posited matter in them." Alluding to *Metaphysics* 9, Gonsalvus notes that Aristotle clearly believes that spiritual substances are wholly simple and not subject to truth and falsity, continuing:

Therefore it's no wonder if he denies [that there is] matter in them; and therefore what [Gonsalvus' opponents] say, that in the angels there are accidents, and not matter, concedes the Philosopher's first antecedent and denies his consequent; and therefore they contradict the Philosopher more than we do who deny the Philosopher's antecedent, which—according to Catholic truth—is false; and therefore consequently we have to posit matter in the angels, just as the Philosopher would have posited [it] if he had understood that in them there was a compound [of substance] with accidents.⁵⁰

Besides clearly echoing Olivi's similar remarks and his own digression in his *Conclusiones metaphysicae*, which we examined earlier, in this passage Gonsalvus sums up the common Franciscan attitude on the question ever since Bonaventure. It's better and more reasonable to admit Aristotle's reasoning (that change implies a material substrate, while an absence of change implies an absence of matter) while denying his premise (that intellectual substances are unchanging) and his conclusion (that intellectual things have no matter), than to deny his premise and his reasoning while holding to his conclusion. The Franciscans, in applying the

⁵⁰ Ibid., 270-271: "Nec Philosophus est pro eis in hac parte, sed potius est contra eos; si enim Philosophus sensisset de angelis sicut sensit fides catholica, scilicet quod essent quaedam individua accidentia habentia, utique in eis materia posuisset . . . ideo non est mirum si neget in eis materiam; et ideo quid dicunt quod in angelis sint accidentia et non materia concedunt antecedens primum et negant consequens Philosophi, et ideo plus contradicunt Philosopho quam nos qui negamus antecedens Philosophi, quod secundum veritatem catholicam falsum est; et ideo consequenter habemus ponere materiam in angelis, sicut Philosophus posuisset si intellexisset quod in eis esset compositum cum accidentibus." Note that, though he began talking about this question in the context of the agent and possible intellects in the soul, Gonsalvus ends up talking about the angels—an indication of which debate he's really interested in.

logic of philosophy to the data of revelation in order to reach a coherent solution—even if this means rejecting philosophy’s conclusions—are better philosophers than those who, clinging to the conclusions of philosophy in the face of revelation, are forced to deny its logic.

Although the present discussion is a digression from the central topic of Q.XIII, and although it is later than and refers to the full-length treatment of spiritual matter in Q. XI, still it provides an excellent introduction to Gonsalvus’ thought on the subject. In five objections and responses Gonsalvus reveals the fundamental metaphysical differences on the nature of matter which separate him—and the Franciscans generally—from their opponents. The first and fifth both serve to clarify that matter in itself is distinct from corporeality, separating matter as sensible and quantified from matter purely conceived, and distinguishing between subjective and objective materiality. The three central arguments highlight in stark terms the divide between Gonsalvus’ positive conception of matter and opposing negative ones. For Gonsalvus matter is the complement of form, contributes to a thing’s being a being, has being of its own, and is intrinsically good. Matter is not form’s natural enemy, or the dregs of creation, or nothing. Such fundamental metaphysical commitments, so explicitly presented, are helpful to keep in mind when wading through the thickets of arguments in more detailed treatments of the issue, and help to reveal the ultimate stakes in the debate.

Before moving on at last to Q.XI, I must not omit to note that in the other questions of his small surviving corpus, Gonsalvus uses the doctrine of spiritual matter to make a point about more or less unrelated topics with unusual frequency.⁵¹ It is clear that the subject was

⁵¹ See Gonsalvus, Q. III, 44: “Item, scio me considerare actum, quo considero angelum habere materiam, cum angelum habere materiam non est objectum actus reflexi, quia quamvis sciam me habere talem actum, tamen non scio angelum habere materiam.” Ibid., Q. X, 172: “. . . actus animae qui est actuare corpus non est aliud ab

of especial concern for Gonsalvus' metaphysics. One occasion on which he does this merits special attention. In his Q.XII Gonsalvus asks whether the "laudative power" is free through its essence. On this topic he notes particularly a "singular" opinion, which according to him is found to be said only by one doctor.⁵² This opinion states that the intellect is free through its essence, and not only the intellect but also whatever pertains to an intellectual nature, such as the essence of the soul and the will; their acts are formally—not only virtually—free, and liberty pertains equally to one immaterial power as much as to another.⁵³ Against this Gonsalvus argues that this opinion would not only imply that, if there were spiritual matter (as Gonsalvus himself thinks), spiritual creatures could not be free; it would also imply that if the heavens were considered to be immaterial, then they *would* be free, which is unacceptable. But "immateriality is not the cause of liberty, because then a potency including matter would not be free; but according to what was determined and proved in the preceding question [i.e., Gonsalvus' Q.XI], no creature is simply simple, lacking matter, but [rather] the intellect and will include matter as a part of themselves." According to the opinion in question, then, even the will could not be free if there were spiritual matter. But since those holding the opposed opinion deny spiritual matter, Gonsalvus goes on to formulate an

essentia animae; actus potentiae est alius realiter a natura potentiae . . . ideo licet essentia animae semper sit in actu suo et sit eadem essentia cum potentia sua, non sequitur quod potentia semper sit in actu suo." Ibid., Alt. Q. II, 356: "actus qui invenitur vere in corporalibus et spiritualibus, verius invenitur in spiritualibus quam in corporibus, ut patet de illuminare, purgare, et perficere . . ." Ibid., Quod. I, 391, on number not being derived from the continuum: "Praeterea, verius videtur numerus esse in immaterialibus quam in quantis, quia numerus congregatur ex unitatibus; ergo quanto sunt veriores unitates tanto est verior numerus; sed unitates verius sunt in separatis a materia, quia sunt simpliciores de aliis; unde dicunt, ut de privationibus et respectibus etc., quod non habent ideas." See also Ibid., Quod. XII, 405.

⁵² This one doctor is Godfrey of Fontaines, in his Quod. VI.7 (III, 206 sqq.), Quod.VIII.16 (IV, 140).

⁵³ Gonsalvus, Q. XII, 227: "Circa secundum est sciendum quod tres sunt opiniones in ista quaestione, quarum una est singularis, quae non invenitur dicta nisi ab uno doctore, scilicet quod intellectus per essentiam suam est liber, et non solum intellectus sed etiam quicquid pertinet ad natura intellectualem, ut essentia animae, voluntas, intellectus et actus eorum sint formaliter liberi et non solum virtualiter, et quod libertas aequaliter convenit uni potentiae immateriali sicut alii."

argument which does not presuppose it.⁵⁴ Nevertheless in refuting this position Gonsalvus removes an objection to spiritual matter, namely that it would impede freedom. If such were the case, immateriality would not explain freedom either.⁵⁵ Even if matter did impede freedom, immateriality would only be a necessary condition of it, and not a sufficient condition.

IV.3. Gonsalvus of Spain: Q.XI

Gonsalvus' set of *Quaestiones disputatae* belongs to the years 1301-1303.⁵⁶ Q.XI is entitled "Whether the laudative power whereby God is praised is in a nature having matter."

This is in keeping with the theme of the set, each question of which refers in some way to the praise of God. Amoros notes that this theme is more stylistic than anything:

If anyone meant to discover from the titles of the questions the nature of the arguments therein contained, he would be completely deceived, for at first glance they seem to deal more with spiritual matters [no pun intended!] than with philosophical or theological ones. Nevertheless all the questions are eminently philosophical or theological, as is immediately apparent to the reader.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Gonsalvus, Q.XII, 230-231: ". . . immaterialitas non est causa libertatis, quia tunc potentia includens materiam non esset libera; sed secundum quod determinatum est et probatum in quaestione praecedente, nulla creatura est simpliciter simplex carens materia, sed quod intellectus et voluntas includunt materiam partem sui; ergo nec voluntas esset libera. Sed quia assumptam negarent, ideo alia via arguendum est contra eos . . ."

⁵⁵ Ibid., 232-4, and especially 237: ". . . cum arguit quod esse immateriale et indeterminatum [et] sui ipsius determinativum est causa libertatis, dicendum, uno modo, quod voluntas non est immaterialis, ut dictum est in quaestione praecedente. —Aliter dicendum est, quod, licet immaterialitas et esse indeterminatum et sui ipsius determinativum requiratur ad libertatem, hoc tamen non sufficit, ut dicetur in alia quaestione."

⁵⁶ Amoros, lxi: "Huic ergo tempori, annis scilicet 1301-3, *Quaestiones* Gonsalvi sunt assignandae."

⁵⁷ Amoros, lxxiii: "Ut supra diximus, Gonsalvus modum omnino proprium inscribendi quaestiones habet, eas scilicet generatim ad laudem divinam referendo. Si quis tamen ex titulis quaestionum, earum argumenti naturam eruere intenderet, omnino deciperetur, nam primo intuitu de rebus spiritualibus magis quam de philosophicis vel theologicis agere videntur. Nihilominus quaestiones omnes sunt eminenter philosophicae vel theologicae, sicut legenti statim apparet."

This is true of the present question, which, although it takes examples and illustrations from theology, is eminently metaphysical in its argumentation.

Again like most of the other questions in the set, Q.XI is extraordinarily complicated.

What Gracia notes of Q.XIII is applicable here as well:

It is set up in a rather elaborate fashion of arguments and counter-arguments so that it becomes difficult sometimes to follow the line of thought. This method of presenting the *aporia* was typical of the disputed-question genre not only as a result of the verbal discussion which it proposed to represent, but also because it sought to dramatize the problematic under inspection.⁵⁸

Although Gonsalvus' method here might be "typical," however, the result is untypically thorny. Part of the reason is the length of the question—over thirty-five pages in the printed text, with five dozen arguments and counter-arguments *besides* those presented in the *solutio*—but much of the complexity must be attributed to accurate reporting. The text which comes down to us is an unusually detailed *reportatio*, which follows the debate as it took place live, sometimes identifying the participants and providing explicit "stage directions," but also preserving the intricacy of the dispute as it unspooled on the spot, so accurately that it could be held up as an exemplar of the disputed question form.⁵⁹

Q.XI falls into three main sections. The first is the opening debate, in which the "reporter" identifies four participants: Gonsalvus himself (called in the text simply the *magister*), his anonymous student bachelor (the *respondens*), John of Paris, and an unnamed

⁵⁸ Gracia, *ibid.*, 18.

⁵⁹ Amoros, lxii-lxiii: "Quaestiones omnes videntur esse ab auditoribus in scholis reportatae. . . . Natura reportationis apparet non semel in decursu quaestionum . . . ubi reportator proprias animadversiones quandoque proponit. . . . In q. XI, 186, notat finem disputationis Magistri cum Respondente sic: *Usque huc magister cum respondente. Consequenter arguebant alii* . . . Omnes huiusmodi indicationes stucturam quaestionum luculenter manifestant, ita ut tamquam typicum exemplum quaestionum disputatarum, maxime quaestiones Trecenses, proponi possint."

“someone else” (*alius*).⁶⁰ The second section is Gonsalvus’ determination or *solutio* of the question, which is itself divided into sections and subsections.⁶¹ The third section consists of the concluding arguments or *solutio obiectorum*, in which Gonsalvus makes additional responses to a selection of the arguments made in the opening debate, restricted to those which touch on his own position and not merely that of his Respondent.⁶²

In the following outline I present the structure of Q.XI in detail, exposing its divisions and assigning to each argument a unique label which identifies both the speaker and the earlier argument, if any, to which it is responding. First, a letter is assigned to each participant: C=Contra, for the initial contrary arguments (it is not made clear who proposes them); M=Magister, or Gonsalvus; R=Respondens; J=John of Paris, or John Quidort; A=Alius. Then I assign a label to each argument in the opening debate indicating who makes it and its position in the debate. For instance: <R(C1)> is the Respondent’s argument against the first argument made at the beginning of the question; <M4> is the Master’s fourth argument against the position taken by the Respondent; <M{A[M(A1)]}> is the Master’s response to Alius’ response to the Master’s response to the first original argument made by Alius. At the beginning of each line are the page numbers in the printed text where each argument is found. In brackets and italics I note where an argument in the opening debate has a response by Gonsalvus in the *solutio obiectorum* at the end.

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⁶⁰ For the possibility that this someone else is actually John Duns Scotus, see section V.2 in the next chapter.

⁶¹ See Wippel, “The Date of Quodlibet 15,” 308: “In terms of context, Gonsalvus begins his resolution of this question by noting that three things must be done: 1) the different opinions must be listed and the more probable indicated; 2) the foundations for the contrary arguments must be removed; 3) direct arguments must be presented for the view he himself has espoused.”

⁶² Gonsalvus, Q.XI, 225: “Alia argumenta facta in disputatione non sunt contra hanc viam, sed contra dicta respondentis, ideo non est ad ea respondendum.”

184 Utrum potentia laudativa qua laudatur Deus sit in natura habentis materiam. Quod non videtur.

184-185 2 arguments against the position (C1-2). [*sol. ob. 1,2*]

185 Contra

186 Ad quaestionem dixit respondens:

186 (R1-2).

187 2 arguments responding to (C1-2): R(C1), R(C2).

187-189 6 arguments against the Respondent's position:

187 M(R1)1 [*sol. ob. 5*]

188 M(R2)

188 M3

188 M4

189 M(R1)2 [*sol. ob. 3*]

189 M5 [*sol. ob. 4*]

189-191 6 responses:

189 R[M(R1)1]

190 R[M(R2)]

190 R(M3)

190 R(M4)

191 R[M(R1)2]

191 R(M5)

191 Usque huc magister cum respondente. Consequenter arguebant alii, quorum primus Ioannes Parisiensis, iacobita.

191-193: 3 contrary arguments by John of Paris

191 J(R1)

192 J1 [*sol. ob. 6*]

192 J2 [*sol. ob. 7*]

193-194: Gonsalvus' responses

193 M[J(R1)]

194 M(J1)

194 M(J2)

195 Praeterea, arguebatur contra positionem ab alio sic:

195 A(R1); response M[A(R1)]

195 A1; [*sol. ob. 8*] response M(A1)

response A[M(A1)]; [*sol. ob. 9*]; response 195-196 M{A[M(A1)]}

196-197: A's 3 responses (renumbered for simplicity)

196 Aa [*sol. ob. 10*]

196 Ab

196 Ac

197-199 Gonsalvus' responses to these

197 M(Aa) (with additional contra and dicitur)

198 M(Ab)

199 M(Ac)

199 A2; “sed ad hoc responsum est prius”. [*sol. ob. 11*]199 A3; no response. [*sol. ob. 12*]199 A4; [*sol. ob. 13*]; response 199-200 M(A4)200 A5; [*sol. ob. 14*]; response M(A5)200 A6; [*sol. ob. 15*]; response M(A6)

200 Solutio: Ad quaestionem dictum fuit determinando quod circa eam tria sunt facienda: Primo, recitandae sunt opiniones circa hanc quaestionem ut eligatur quae magis probabilis videtur. –Secundo, removenda sunt fundamenta opinionum contrariarum. –Et tertio, directe arguitur pro opinione assumpta.

200: I. Critical Overview of Opinions.

200 A. Matter is only in generable and corruptible substances.

201 B. Matter is in both corruptible and incorruptible corporeal substances.

204 C. Matter extends to all created beings.

204: II. Removal of Opponents’ Foundations.

204 A. Incorruptibility does not remove matter.

211 B. Matter does not imply (dimensive) quantity.

212 C. Immateriality of cognition does not remove matter.

213 D. The soul’s matter does not inform the body’s matter.

213: III. Direct Argument for the Assumed Position.

214 A. Arguments for matter in spiritual creatures.

219 B. Arguments for the unicity of matter in spiritual and corporeal substances.

221: Solutio obiectorum (15).

* * *

As this outline shows, at the beginning of the debate Gonsalvus allows his respondent to defend his own position, while he plays the devil’s advocate and supplies the arguments attacking spiritual matter. After they have explored the issue together for some time, John of Paris speaks up with three arguments of his own against spiritual matter; at this point Gonsalvus takes over the defense of his position from the respondent, who drops out of the debate. After Gonsalvus has replied to John of Paris, the anonymous someone else breaks in

with objections, and he and Gonsalvus exchange ripostes in a complex and rapid-fire debate of their own. Finally, after his very thorough treatment of the question in the *solutio*, Gonsalvus returns to the opening debate, providing additional responses where his respondent's or his own immediate responses are deemed in hindsight inadequate.

IV.3.1. Q.XI: The Opening Debate

In my discussion of the opening debate I present the arguments in their logical, rather than chronological, sequence, i.e. with each argument I give the responses and counter-responses to it, even if these came later in the course of the actual discussion. Each argument is given with its label from the above outline so that its place in the course of the debate can be quickly ascertained.

The opening two arguments are staples of the anti-spiritual matter position. The first <C1> states that matter is indeterminate with respect to both being and not-being, and as such is a principle of corruption; but an intellectual nature is incorruptible, and so cannot contain matter.⁶³ The second <C2> is a variation on the familiar argument from cognition. Everything *per se* intellectual, that is everything which understands and has an intellectual nature, is separate from matter, because the understanding of material things occurs by an abstraction of the form from its matter. But an intellectual nature understands itself by self-reflection, and therefore must itself be immaterial.⁶⁴

⁶³ Gonsalvus, Q.XI, 184-185: "Omne habens materiam est corruptibile; sed natura intellectualis, cuius est potentia laudativa, est incorruptibilis; igitur etc. –Minor est evidens. –Probatio maioris: . . . materia de se in potentia est contradictionis ad esse et non esse; sed omne tale est principium corruptionis . . ."

⁶⁴ Ibid., 185: "Praeterea, omne intellectuale per se est separatum a materia; sed ex hoc quod aliquid est intelligibile per se, est secundum se intelligens habens naturam intellectualem; igitur ex hoc quod aliquid est

IV.3.1.1. Master and Respondent

Replying to the first of the opening arguments, the Respondent <R(C1)> denies the premise that everything having matter is corruptible, for “even those holding the opposite part [i.e. those denying spiritual matter] agree that there is matter in the heavens, nor are the heavens corruptible.” It is one thing to be in potency and privation to form, and another—more restricted—thing to be in potency to contraries: so matter in the heavens is in potency to the being and non-being of forms, but not contrary forms. Only matter in potency to contraries is the principle of corruption, and this is the matter which belongs particularly to generable and corruptible things; but the matter in angels and in the soul is “spiritual matter of another sort” (*materia spiritualis alterius rationis*). The Respondent appeals to Augustine for the distinction between the two matters, and asserts that if spiritual and corporeal matters were of the same sort, there would be nothing but corporeal matter.⁶⁵ In this the Respondent does not give the position of Gonsalvus, who argues for the unicity of matter later in the question. However, Gonsalvus does not allude to this in his own response <sol. ob. I>, where

naturae intellectualis est a materia separatum . . . forma rei materialis de se non est intelligibilis, quia concernit materiam; fit autem intelligibilis per abstractionem eius a materia; unde si formae materiales de se essent intelligibiles non esset necesse ponere intellectum agentem secundum Commentorem. Eo ipso igitur est aliquid intelligibile per se quod est a materia separatum . . . ex hoc ergo quod aliquid est per se stans, et per consequens per se intelligibile, est rediens ad essentiam suam ipsam cognoscendo.”

⁶⁵ Ibid., 187: “Ad primam rationem dicitur quod maior est falsa, quia secundum etiam tenentes partem oppositam, in caelo est materia, nec tamen caelum est corruptibile. Ad probationem dicitur quod aliud est esse in potentia ad formam et privationem formae, et aliud est esse in potentia ad formas contrarias ut ad contraria, nam materia in caelo, ex quo secundum se nullam formam sibi determinat, secundum se est in potentia ad formam et ad non esse formae; non tamen est illa materia in potentia ad formas contrarias, sed solum materia quae sic est in potentia ad formam, est principium corruptionis, et talis est materia rerum generabilium et corruptibilium; materia autem in angelis et in anima est materia spiritualis alterius rationis, quod patet per Augustinum, VII *Super Genesim*, ubi distinguit duplicem materiam: spiritualem et corporalem; si autem materia esset eiusdem rationis hic et ibi, non esset nisi materia corporalis . . .”

instead he gives an alternate reason, also taken from his own solution to the question, for why spiritual matter does not imply spiritual corruptibility. “For matter is not the principle of corruption because of this, [namely] that it is in itself in the potency of contradiction to being and non-being, but because it is united dissolubly to a form having a contrary.”⁶⁶ This distinction between a dissoluble and an indissoluble union of matter and form will be presented at length in its place.

To the argument <C2> from the immateriality of cognition, the Respondent replies <R(C2)> by granting that every *per se* intelligible is abstracted from matter. Nevertheless, it does not follow that intelligibles must therefore be abstracted from the kind or mode of matter which is posited in the soul; it only follows that they are abstracted from the matter of generable things.⁶⁷ Gonsalvus himself replies <sol. ob. 2> by distinguishing between something abstract by nature and something abstract by the operation of the intellect. If an intelligible were abstract by nature, it would also be intelligent *per se*, and naturally immaterial; but intelligibles abstracted by the mind and then understood by it need not make the mind itself immaterial.⁶⁸

For his own part the Respondent opens with an argument defending spiritual matter, confirming his position on the authority of (pseudo-) Boethius. After this Gonsalvus presses the Respondent with six counter-arguments, each of which receives its own reply from the

⁶⁶ Ibid., 221-222: “Ad primum argumentum principale patet responsio per dicta; non enim materia est principium corruptionis per hoc quod est secundum se in potentia contradictionis ad esse et non esse, sed quia unitur formae dissolubiliter habenti contrarium.”

⁶⁷ Ibid., 187: “Ad secundum dicitur quod omne per se intelligibile est abstractum a materia; sed non sequitur: ergo a tali materia vel a quocumque modo materiae quam ponimus in anima, sed solum sequitur quod sit abstractum a materia generabilium . . .”

⁶⁸ Ibid., 222: “Ad secundum, quando arguitur quod esse intelligibile per se et esse intelligens convertuntur, sed esse intelligibile per se est abstractum a materia, dicendum quod esse intelligibile abstractum a materia contingit dupliciter: aut conditione naturae aut operatione intellectus; quod est intelligibile abstractum primo modo, est per se intelligens, sed non oportet de intelligibili per se abstracto secundo modo.”

student, half of them also receiving Gonsalvus' own responses in the concluding arguments. This opening argument <R1>, after some perfunctory complication to connect the question of spiritual matter with the theme of the divine praise, argues from spiritual creatures' composition of potency and act. Real composition, of any kind so as to produce a "unity of conjunction," is consistent with a composition from matter and form. In any conjunction of parts or elements to form a real unity one must be potential and the other actual with respect to one another—otherwise the unity produced would be merely accidental—but (since matter is coextensive with potency and form with act) anything which is one by conjunction is composed from matter and form, and this includes spiritual creatures.⁶⁹ For his assertion that angels and the human soul are one by a unity of conjunction, the Respondent alludes to *De unitate et uno*. This tract is the authority for his "confirmation" <R2>, which takes from "Boethius" the notion that there are three ordered kinds of unity: the unity of simplicity, the unity of conjunction, and the unity of continuity. The first is the greatest unity, and can exist without the second, and the second is a greater unity than the third and can also be separated from it. Therefore a unity of conjunction (that is, a composition from really distinct elements) does not imply a unity of continuity (a composition of spatially discrete parts). "Consequently something can be one composite from conjoined matter and form, although it is not continuous or corporeal."⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Ibid., 186: ". . . quia cui non repugnat unitas coniunctionis ei non repugnat compositio ex materia et forma: primo, quia unitas coniunctionis non est nisi aliquorum ad invicem coniunctorum; sed quae ad invicem faciunt unum per coniunctionem oportet quod sic se habeant quod unum sit potentiale et reliquum actuale, quia si utrumque essent actuale aut utrumque potentiale non facerent unum per se; sed quidquid est unum, est ex coniunctione potentiae cum actu, est unum ex materia et forma; igitur patet quod quidquid est unum coniunctione, est compositum ex materia et forma; sed anima et angelus habent unitatem coniunctionis, secundum Boetium, *De unitate et uno*; igitur etc."

⁷⁰ Ibid., 186: "Confirmatur per Boethium, ibidem, quia istae tres unitates se habent secundum ordinem: unitas simplicitatis et unitas coniunctionis et unitas continui; sed prius potest separari a posteriori; igitur sicut prima unitas potest esse sine secunda, sic secunda sine tertia. Non ergo oportet quod ubi est unitas coniunctionis

The Respondent's opening presents an excellent summary of the core of the Franciscan position, distinguished only by the unusual emphasis put on the *De unitate et uno*. It remains essentially Bonaventurian. The Master, looking for its weak points, begins the objections <M(R1)1> by attacking the authority. Gonsalvus is well aware of the doubts raised by St. Thomas and others that the *De unitate* is not by Boethius, and that the work is held in low esteem by thinkers on St. Thomas' side of the question. Since, then, in other works Boethius denies or seems to deny that matter is present in an intellectual nature, either he contradicts himself or he did not write *De unitate et uno*.⁷¹ To this the Respondent replies <R[M(R1)1]> that when an author's words seem to contradict each other, then one must follow either the more true statement or else explain the discrepancy by making the relevant distinctions. Now, not only Boethius says that an angel has spiritual matter, but also Augustine, and since the weight of authority is for this position, we should consider it the true one; in order to explain the discrepancy in the texts of Boethius we should make distinctions about matter. Boethius' purpose in denying matter in spirits is to deny that bodies can be changed into spirits and *vice versa*. If spirits and bodies shared the same kind of matter they would be mutually transmutable, which is false. What he denies, therefore, is that spirits contain *corporeal* matter, not that they contain any matter whatsoever. This is why we must say that there is a different kind of matter for spirits and bodies.⁷²

aliquorum quod ibi sit unitas continui, et per consequens aliquid potest esse unum compositum ex materia et forma coniunctis, licet non sit continuum aut corporeum.”

⁷¹ Ibid., 187-188: “Contra dicta in positione arguitur: 1. Primo, quia videtur quod non sit multum adhaerendum dicto illi, in lib. *De unitate et uno*, quia Boethius, in lib. *De duabus naturis et una persona Christi*, dicit expresse quod in natura intellectuali non est materia; igitur vel oportet dicere quod Boethius sibi ipsi contrarietur, vel quod illum librum *De unitate et uno* non fecerit.”

⁷² Ibid., 189-190: “Ad primum dicitur quod quando aliquis auctor in verbis suis videtur sibi contrarius, tunc sequendum est sententiam veriorem aut distinguendum est; nunc, quod in angelo sit materia spiritualis non solum dicit Boethius, sed Augustinus, et ideo est sententia verior, et ideo Boethius, ne contradicat sibi ipsi, distinguendum est de materia. Quod in uno loco concedit materiam spiritualem in angelo, et alibi negat

Since, as I have already noted, Gonsalvus will later affirm the unicity of matter, he offers his own alternative to the Respondent. Assuming that the discrepancy in the texts can be explained, he believes that we can accept the Boethian authorship of the *De unitate*. Boethius cannot believe that angels are simple, since he denies that simple forms can be the subjects of accidents, and angels clearly have accidents. His apparent denial of spiritual matter can, then, have two causes: either he is arguing in the particular case from his opponent's premises—Gonsalvus offers several examples of Boethius using this technique— or else when he says “incorporeal” he means God alone, as that alone which is purely simple. Here Gonsalvus refers to John Damascene's dictum that, compared with God, all things are material, a text which has been on the periphery of the spiritual matter debate since Robert Grosseteste, but which he probably takes from William de la Mare.⁷³

Against the Respondent's “confirmation” of his position, Gonsalvus suggests <M(R2)> that the greater unity cannot necessarily dispense with the lesser, and so the “unity of conjunction” with creatures cannot dispense with the “unity of continuity.” Essence, potency, and operation are also ordered to one another, and yet it does not follow that the prior can dispense with the posterior; and if potency could exist without operation, this would

materiam corporalem ibi esse, ut in lib. *De duabus naturis et una persona Christi*, contra: Boethius vult ibi probare quod impossibile est materiam corporalem transmutari in ipsum; sed si in natura spirituali esset materia sicut in natura corporali, tunc materia naturae corporalis posset exui a sua forma et indui forma spirituali, et sic transmutari in ipsum si forma naturae spiritualis perficiat materiam. –Dicitur quod materia est aliterius rationis utrobique, et ideo materia unius non est in potentia ad formam alterius, et ideo non potest unum in aliud transmutari.”

⁷³ Ibid., 222-223: “Ad illud quod arguitur de Boethio, quod substantia incorporea nullius materiae innititur fundamento, dicendum quod ne Boethius sibi contradicat, oportet ipsum exponere, quia cum dicit in libro *De Trinitate*, quod ‘forma simpliciter nullius accidentis subiectum esse potest’, et manifestum est quod angeli subiiciantur accidentibus, sequitur quod non sunt formae simplices. Dupliciter ergo potest responderi salvando ipsum: quod hoc non dicit a se, sed capit ab adversario . . . Alio modo potest dici quod ipse accepit incorporeum sicut Damascenus accipit, II *Sententiarum*, quod angeli sunt incorporei respectu inferiorum, sed etiam respectu Dei, qui non est nisi ipse Deus [qui] nullius materiae innititur fundamento. Unde quod est incorporeum, secundum omnem modum caret materia.” See Chapter 2, n. 33; Chapter 3, n.67.

not imply that essence could dispense with potency. Similarly it does not follow that, if the unity of simplicity can dispense with the unity of conjunction, then the unity of conjunction can dispense with the unity of continuity.⁷⁴

In his reply to this <R[M(R2)]> the Respondent denies that there is a relevant analogy between the two orders examined. Essence, potency, and operation are ordered as the prior to the posterior because of the chain of derivation, i.e. operation is derived from potency and potency from essence; while the kinds of unity are ordered as being greater and lesser unities, without essential dependence. Unity of conjunction can exist without the unity of continuity, not because the former gives rise to the latter, but because it is an inherently greater and prior kind of unity. Against this someone—unidentified, but presumably still Gonsalvus—attempts to present a counterexample. The unity of a matter-form composite is greater than that of a composite of subject and accident, as a *per se* being is more truly a being and one than a being *per accidens*. Nevertheless the prior and greater unity of the subject cannot exist without the posterior and lesser unity, for it is impossible for there to be a substance composed of matter and form without there also being a composition of subject and accident, since every hylomorphic substance is subject to accidents. “But the Respondent said that he did not see why it is not possible for God to make such a substance without any accident, with no adverse consequences.”⁷⁵ This exchange is interesting, given the importance for the

⁷⁴ Ibid., 188: “Contra confirmationem positionis arguitur: ista tria se habent secundum ordinem: essentia, potentia et operatio, et tamen non sequitur quod prius potest absolvi a posteriori; nec sequitur, si secundum potest absolvi a tertio, ut potentia ab operatione, quod propter hoc primum possit absolvi a secundo, ut essentia a potentia; ergo similiter non sequitur, si unitas simplicitatis possit absolvi ab unitate coniunctionis, quod propter hoc unitas coniunctionis possit absolvi ab unitate continui.”

⁷⁵ Ibid., 190: “Ad secundum, quando arguitur quod tunc essentia posset esse sine potentia, dicitur quod argumentum factum in positione concludit non primi et secundi, sed ratione maioris unitatis et minoris, quia cum maior unitas potest separari a minori, ex quo non dependet ab ea, sequitur quod unitas coniunctionis, quae est maior et prior secundum Boethium quam unitas continui, possit esse sine unitate continui, sicut unitas simplicitatis sine unitate coniunctionis. —Contra: unitas compositi ex materia et forma maior est quam unitas ex

entire spiritual matter discussion of the assertion that spiritual creatures as well as corporeal ones are subject to accidents. The Respondent here suggests that having accidents is not a necessary property of creatures as such—even if, in fact, all creatures do have accidents—in order to maintain the broader metaphysical principle that the greater and prior unity can be present in something without the lesser and posterior. Contrast this with Olivi, who considers a capacity for accidents as intrinsic to the notion of a created substance.

Gonsalvus bases his next objection <M3> on the point at which he actually differs from the Respondent, on the unity of matter. When the Respondent says that in the soul and in an angel there is matter of another sort (*alterius rationis*) than the matter of lower things, he seems to contradict Aristotle, who does not speak of two kinds of matter, except perhaps of the matter of generable and corruptible things and the matter of the heavens. But a spiritual nature is more removed from the nature of any body than the nature of any body is from the nature of any other body. So if there is matter in spiritual creatures, much more is there matter in the heavens, and this matter is different from the matter of generable and corruptible things, because the principle of corruption is not in the heavens. But spiritual matter must also be of a different sort from heavenly matter, because of the distance of their natures, and consequently we will have to posit three kinds of prime matter, “which is not good physics” (*quod non est physicum*).⁷⁶ Positing three kinds of matter had Franciscan

subiecto et accidente, sicut ens per se verius est unum quam ens per accidens, et tamen prior unitas quae maior est, non potest esse sine posteriori quae minor est, quia non potest esse substantia composita ex materia et forma sine compositio ex subiecto et accidente, cum talis substantia non possit esse sine omni accidente. –Sed respondens dixit quod non videbat quare hoc non est possibile Deo facere talem substantiam sine omni accidente absoluto consequente.”

⁷⁶ Ibid., 188: “Praeterea, contra aliud dictum, quando dicitur quod in anima et in angelo est materia alterius rationis a materia istorum inferiorum, ex hoc videtur falsum, quia Philosophus numquam invenitur locutus fuisse nisi de duplici materia, scilicet generabili et caelesti. –Consequentia probatur: quia plus distat natura spiritualis a natura corporali quam quaecumque corporalis natura a quacumque corporali; sed si in angelo sit materia, multo fortius in caelo materia erit, et illa erit alterius rationis a materia generabilium, quia ibi non est

credentials going at least as far back as the *Summa fratris Alexandri*, but for those who object even to two kinds of matter, of course, three seems especially extravagant and repugnant.

The Respondent replies that there are two primary kinds of matter, spiritual and corporeal, but that corporeal matter has in itself a “diversity” in the heavens and in the elements, so that there are in one sense two and in another sense three kinds of matter.⁷⁷ This clearly inadequate response indicates the need for Gonsalvus himself to consider the matter more carefully later on.

Gonsalvus is well aware that spiritual matter’s opponents generally have no patience for essentially different kinds of prime matter, and he pursues this point in his fourth objection <M4>, expressing a doubt which seems always lurking in the background of the spiritual matter debate. Matter is the principle of corruption, and in itself it has no differences or distinctions. If, therefore, matter is in an angel, then the angel will be corporeal.⁷⁸ The Respondent insists <R(M4)>, on the contrary, that matter *does* have distinctions, being distinguished by its dispositions and aptitudes to different forms; so that spiritual matter has a view to spiritual form, and corporeal matter another view to its own form. But Gonsalvus objects to this that disposition and aptitude are consequents of, not preconditions for, the presence of a nature; essentially different kinds of matter cannot be distinguished precisely by the presence of the different kinds of nature to which they are supposedly apt. Scrambling, the Respondent replies that, it’s true, the different matters are not distinguished by their

principium corruptionis; ergo similiter, materia in angelis erit alterius rationis a materia caeli, et per consequens erunt ponendae tres materiae primae, quod non est physicum.”

⁷⁷ Ibid., 190: “Ad tertium dixit quod in genere sunt duae materiae: spiritualis et corporalis, quas ponit Augustinus; sed tamen materia corporalis in se diversitatem habet in caelo et in elementis . . .”

⁷⁸ Ibid., 188: “Praeterea, contra illud dictum arguitur quod si materia est in angelo, quod erit corporalis, quia materia secundum se dicta non habet differentiam, quia sic [non] distinguitur; sed materia secundum se dicta est principium corruptionis, sicut patet per Philosophum; ergo si in angelo sit materia, sequitur quod sit corporalis.”

dispositions and aptitudes, which serve rather to manifest the difference which is already there. The difference is produced by the agent—i.e. God, who creates matter—and is characterized formally by the matters themselves, “as there is a formality there.”⁷⁹ Again, the Respondent’s performance here is clearly inadequate.

Gonsalvus’ next argument <M(R1)2> seems rather garbled. Briefly, it states that if an angel or a soul has matter, this must be either on account of its being intellectual, or on account of its being created, and denies that it must have matter for either of these reasons.⁸⁰ The Respondent replies <R[M(R1)2]> “that matter is in the angel and in the soul, but not because [they are] created nor because [they are] intellectual, but because [each] is a fixed created nature standing *per se*, able *per se* to have an operation.”⁸¹ In his closing arguments <sol. ob. 3> Gonsalvus himself clarifies: a spiritual creature has matter, in fact, just because it is a creature, “for every creature if it is *per se* subsistent has matter as a part of itself; and if it inheres in another, then it has the matter in which it is and which it informs.”⁸² This is a straightforward endorsement of Bonaventurean principles.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 190: “Ad quartum, quando arguitur quod materia de se non distinguitur nec habet differentiam, dixit quod materia in corporalibus et spiritualibus distinguitur per habitudines et aptitudines ad formas, ut per hoc quod materia spiritualis alium aspectum habet ad formam spiritualem, et materia huius alium aspectum ad suam formam. –Contra: habitudo et aptitudo consequuntur naturam rei, ergo diversae habitudines et aptitudines ad diversa praesupponunt habentia habitudines [et] aspectus esse diversa; ergo per huiusmodi aspectus et habitudines non possunt materiae distingui. –Dicitur quod verum est quod formaliter per habitudines et aspectus materiae non distinguuntur, sed solum per illos distinctio manifestatur; formaliter autem se ipsis prout ibi est formalitas; effective autem per agens.”

⁸⁰ Ibid., 189: “Praeterea, ad propositum arguitur sic: . . . quia natura intellectualis angeli aut animae, ut habeat materiam, aut ergo in quantum creatum est aut quia in infinitum, quia forma habebit formam et materiam in infinitum; nec etiam quia intellectualis est ideo habet materiam, quia non est materia; igitur in materia erit anima vel angelus in quantum est intellectualis [aut] in quantum creatum est; si ergo non propter hoc quod creata est habet materiam, nec propter hoc quod intellectualis est habebit materiam.”

⁸¹ Ibid., 191: “Ad quintum dixit quod in angelo et in anima est materia, sed non quia creata nec quia intellectualis, sed quia est natura creata fixa stans per se, potens per se habere operationem.”

⁸² Ibid., 222: “Ad aliud, quando arguitur quod si angelus habeat materiam, aut in quantum est creatura aut in quantum est spiritualis, dico quod in quantum creatura est habet materiam vel est materia, nam omne creatum si est per se subsistens habet materiam partem sui; si vero alteri inhaerens, tunc habet materiam in qua est et quam informat.”

The final argument Gonsalvus offers against the Respondent <M5> is an acknowledgment of the position held, for instance, by Dietrich of Freiburg (for which see section III.2.3 in the previous chapter), that, since even the heavens contain no matter, much less can spiritual creatures, which are far more perfect.⁸³ The Respondent replies <R(M5)> simply by asserting that the heavens do indeed have matter, although, as he claimed earlier, a different kind than that of generable and corruptible things.⁸⁴ In his closing arguments Gonsalvus recognizes <sol. ob. 4> that some pagans held the position that the heavens had no matter. But the authorities of the Saints should be credited more than such falsity.⁸⁵

IV.3.1.2. Gonsalvus of Spain and John of Paris

Up to this point the debate has been fairly perfunctory. The Respondent has presented a defense of spiritual matter broadly consistent with the Franciscan tradition in the latter thirteenth century, and Gonsalvus has prodded him with arguments commonly raised by the opponents of that tradition. Now the disputation takes an unusual turn, as John of Paris takes it upon himself to speak up, offering three long and complex arguments against spiritual matter. Faced with an established and well-known theologian, the Respondent is clearly out

⁸³ Ibid., 189: “Praeterea, natura spiritualis maioris perfectionis est quam natura corporalis; sed privatio materiae competit naturae corporali ut caelo ex perfectione sua . . . ergo multo magis carere materia convenit naturae spirituali, cuius est potentia laudativa Dei. Igitur etc.”

⁸⁴ Ibid., 191: “Ad sextum dicitur quod in caelo est materia; et . . . distinguendum est de materia sicut prius.”

⁸⁵ Gonsalvus, Q.XI, 222: “Ad aliud de Commentatore, quod in caelo nulla est materia, credo quod illa fuit intentio sua, nec habeo pro inconsequenti ipsum mentiri; magis enim credendum est auctoritatibus Sanctorum praedictis quam sibi.”

of his depth, and Gonsalvus now ceases to play devil's advocate and defends his own position in response to John.

John's first objection <J(R1)> attacks the Respondent's opening argument, and especially its assumption that a composition of real essential parts must be a composition of matter and form. Composition of possibility and actuality is prior to and has a wider scope than matter-form composition. Admitting, therefore, that in an angel there is a unity of conjunction (i.e., a composition) of possible and actual, it does not follow that there is in an angel a unity of conjunction from matter and form. The Respondent's position, then, commits the fallacy of the consequent, since potency and act are in more things than are matter and form, since potency and act divide all being (*ens*) between them, and are the first *differentiae* of being, whereas matter and form are not. To argue, therefore, from a composition of possible and actual to a composition of matter and form is to argue from the superior to the inferior.⁸⁶ Although he does not mention it here, our look at John's own writings on spiritual composition in the previous chapter should satisfy us that what he has in mind as an alternative to matter-form composition in spiritual creatures is essence-existence composition.

In the course of making this argument John protests that in order to identify potency with matter, "it would be necessary to make a new metaphysics." In one way this remark seems very penetrating, and in another very obtuse. Such a "new metaphysics" had been

⁸⁶ Ibid., 191: "Primo, contra rationem positionis, quoniam ibi videtur esse fallacia consequentis; non enim sequitur: in angelo est unitas coniunctionis ex possibili et actuali, ergo in angelo est unitas coniunctionis ex materia et forma; sicut non sequitur: animal currit, ergo homo currit, quoniam compositio ex possibili et actuali prior est quam compositio ex materia et forma. –Probatio: quoniam potentia et actus sunt in plus quam materia et forma, quia potentia et actus dividunt omne ens, et sunt primae differentiae entis . . . materia autem et forma non consequuntur omne ens nec sunt primae differentiae entis; tunc enim oporteret facere unam novam metaphysicam. Igitur arguere ex compositione ex possibili et actuali compositionem ex materia et forma, est arguere a superiori ad inferius."

around at least since St. Bonaventure had formulated it fifty years before, and is no more “new” than the broadly Thomist framework within which John is thinking. It is almost astonishing that in the intervening half-century thinkers should have written and debated metaphysical questions constantly without, apparently, realizing that not every contemporary thinker worked within the same metaphysical edifice. Perhaps there had already grown up among the followers of St. Thomas that tendency, sometimes apparent even in modern Thomists, to regard the system of Thomas as so normative, expressing both the authentic mind of Aristotle and the truths of Reason, that all other metaphysical positions must be seen as greater or lesser aberrations from it. On the other hand, as we have seen, Franciscan thinkers (such as Matthew of Aquasparta), responding in detail to Thomist positions, had done so without necessarily realizing that they were contending with a different metaphysics, rather than merely refuting mistakes made in a single shared system. In any case John of Paris deserves credit for his insight that the spiritual matter debate involves not merely sorting out the good arguments and destroying the bad ones, but deciding between (at least) two fundamentally divergent and incompatible sets of metaphysical first principles.

At the end of Chapter 2 above I offered some reflections on the differences between these divergent metaphysical structures, in terms of competing conceptions of the natures of matter and form and existence. Here I note, however, that there is something more fundamental at play than different ways of defining key terms, so that the disagreement is not, as St. Thomas occasionally suggests, merely a matter of words. Rather there is also a difference of basic philosophical orientation, which becomes perhaps more clear as the debate progresses. One thing shared in common in the objections to spiritual matter made here (as we shall see in a moment) by John of Paris, as well as by Dietrich of Freiberg (who

is not mentioned by name but who seems to be a silent presence in the disputation) and others, is the use of the principles of physics to evaluate metaphysical claims. A frequent refrain is that admitting different kinds of prime matter is not good physics. Recall as well that St. Albert the Great rebuked Avicenna for attempting to do metaphysics without paying any attention to its foundations in physics.

In Chapter 2, again, I suggested that in St. Thomas' metaphysics the universe seemed to be divided rather into those substances which are subject to the laws of physics and those which are not, whereas in St. Bonaventure's the universe is primarily divided between God and what is not God.⁸⁷ For Thomas what metaphysics is *about* is primarily the separate substances, those things which are separated from matter and physics, and secondarily *ens commune*, (finite) being as being, distinguished precisely against being as mobile or changing. For Bonaventure, in contrast, what metaphysics is *about* is all beings, insofar as they are either God or have God as their origin, exemplar, and end.⁸⁸ Even down to the present debate, then, there is a rift between those with a more "Aristotelian" perspective, on the one hand, for whom metaphysics is the architectonic and more general science of being, coming both in conception and in practise *after* physics—even if physics is transformed within it, so that form, the principle of actuality in physics, becomes a potential principle in metaphysics—and those we might roughly call "Platonists", "Augustinians", or simply

⁸⁷ This is not at all to deny that in Thomistic metaphysics there is also a clear and vital dividing line between the divine and the non-divine, but for Thomas this is accomplished by the unique identity of God's existence with His essence, and by the distinction between unparticipated *esse* and participated *esse*, rather than by any principle common to created essences as such. It might be better, therefore, to say that while Bonaventure divides being once, between God and everything else, Thomas divides it twice, between pure and participated being on the one hand, and between immaterial and material on the other, and that it is this *second* division which constitutes the subject-matter of metaphysics. For Thomas material things are considered in metaphysics only insofar as they have *ens commune*, which in itself is able to be without matter. Matter is excluded from metaphysics in principle. See note 89 below.

⁸⁸ Again, it is also true for Thomas that all things other than God have God as origin, exemplar, and end—but this does not provide for him the primary orientation of metaphysics as distinguished from the other sciences.

“Bonaventurians,” on the other hand, for whom metaphysics takes place outside of and *beyond* physics, in an apprehension of God as originating, exemplar, and final cause of all creation equally in its *exitus* from and *reditus* to Him. As we shall see later on (see section IV.3.2.2. below), in the *solutio* to the present disputation Gonsalvus takes special pains to resist the intrusion of physics into the debate: since physics has an intrinsically narrower scope than metaphysics we cannot allow the former to dictate conclusions to the latter. It is no doubt this tendency of the Franciscans’ opponents to regard matter from the perspective of physics—the science of bodies, the lowest and basest items in the universe—which is responsible for the conception of matter as the filthy dregs of the universe (a conception seen in the digression in Gonsalvus’ Q.XIII and about to be encountered again), rather than as the natural complement and support of form in every creature retaining vestiges of the divine imprint.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ See St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Metaphysicam Aristotelis commentaria* (Taurini: Marietti, 1935), *Proemium*, 1, where much of the “Aristotelian” orientation of metaphysics is laid out: “Eiusdem autem scientiae est considerare causas proprias alicuius generis et genus ipsum: sicut naturalis considerat principia corporis naturalis. Unde oportet quod ad eandem scientiam pertineat considerare substantias separatas, et ens commune, quod est genus, cuius sunt praedictae substantiae communes et universales causae. . . . Quamvis autem subjectum huius scientiae sit ens commune, dicitur tamen tota de his quae sunt separata a materia secundum esse et rationem. Quia secundum esse et rationem separari dicuntur, non solum illa quae nunquam in materia esse possunt, sicut Deus et intellectuales substantiae, sed etiam illa quae possunt sine materia esse, sicut ens commune. . . . Haec enim [scientia] transphysica inveniuntur in via resolutionis, sicut magis communia post minus communia.” We see here that metaphysics is conceived from the beginning as being especially concerned with separation from matter, as coming after physics, and as dealing with being as a whole, but especially with intellectual substances: *both* God *and* intellectual creatures as distinguished from the objects of physics. In contrast compare St. Bonaventure, *Collationes in Hexaemeron* (Quaracchi, v.5) I.17: “Per primariam veritatem omnes redire debent, ut, sicut Filius dixit: Exivi a Patre et veni in mundum; iterum relinquo mundum et vado ad Patrem; sic dicat quilibet: Domine, exivi a te summo, venio ad te summum et per te summum. –Hoc est medium metaphysicum reducens, et haec est tota nostra metaphysica: de emanatione, de exemplaritate, de consummatione, scilicet illuminari per radios spirituales et reduci ad summum. Et sic eris verus metaphysicus.” And see also St. Bonaventure, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, II.12: “Significant autem huiusmodi creaturae huius mundi sensibilis invisibilia Dei, partim quia Deus est omnis creaturae origo, exemplar et finis, et omnis effectus est signum causae, ex exemplatum exemplaris, et via finis, ad quem ducit . . . Omnis enim creatura ex natura est illius aeternae sapientiae quaedam effigies et similitudo . . .” Cf. St. Bonaventure, *De reductione artium ad theologiam* 4: “[M]etaphysica [est] circa cognitionem omnium entium, quae reducit ad unum primum principium, a quo exierunt secundum rationales ideales sive ad Deum in quantum principium, finis et exemplar . . .”

To return to the present point in the debate, Gonsalvus responds <M[J(R1)]> to John by making a distinction between objective and subjective potency. He admits that being is divided between potency and act, but asserts that in one way this potency and act are coextensive with matter and form, even if in another way they are not. Objective potency expresses something like real possibility. If something is able to exist but does not actually exist, it is in objective potency; and this kind of potency, together with act, exhausts the realm of being. Gonsalvus admits that the scope of objective potency is wider than the scope of matter. My potency to become a Greek scholar is not itself matter. On the other hand, “potency” can mean subjective potency, that which is perfected by an act, which is subject to transmutation, “and which, together with its act, becomes one by a certain union and natural conjunction.” Potency in this sense—i.e. as a subject and a substratum for a formal actuality—is coextensive with matter, and a composite of act and potency in this sense is indeed the same as a composite of form and matter.⁹⁰ Thus Gonsalvus recognizes potencies other than material substrata without admitting that some other kind of composition can take the place of matter-form composition in creatures.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Gonsalvus, *ibid.*, 193-194: “Ad primum istorum, quando arguitur quod compositio ex potentia et actu in plus est quam compositio ex materia et forma, respondeo quod potentia accipitur dupliciter: uno modo pro potentia quae sit res, et haec est potentia obiectiva, et haec potentia cum actu dividit ens, et sunt eadem res prout eadem res prius est in potentia et postea in actu; et isto modo manifestum est quod potentia et actus in plus sunt quam materia et forma. Alio modo accipitur potentia pro potentia subiectiva quae perficitur per actum, et subiicitur transmutationi, ex qua actu fit unum per quamdam unionem et coniunctionem naturalem; et sic verum est quod omne quod componitur ex potentia et actu componitur ex materia et forma, nec sic potentia est in plus quam materia.”

⁹¹ Compare John Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super Libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis* IX.1-2.39-60, where Scotus develops a similar account of subjective and objective potency. Unlike Gonsalvus, however, Scotus subdivides subjective potency into substantial and accidental. See paragraph 46: “Dividitur ista secunda similiter secundum diversos modos quibus aliquid est informabile illo quod est in potentia primo modo. Aliter enim materia est informabilis a forma inducenda per generationem, aliter subiectum ab accidente inducendo per motum, ita quod potentia materiae ad esse communicatum sibi a forma potest dici substantialis: et quia ad esse substantiale in se, et quia illud cuius est illud esse per se facit unum cum materia quae est in potentia. Potentia autem subiecti ad esse sibi communicandum ab accidente potest dici accidentalis: et quia ad esse in se accidentale, et quia illud non facit unum per se cum subiecto quod est in potentia.” Although Scotus does not

John now argues <J1> by attacking at the Respondent's weakest point: the question of the unity or diversity of matter. Having seen that the Respondent is willing to admit at least three kinds of matter, for spiritual creatures, for heavenly bodies, and for "elemental" bodies, John asks whether he would also admit a diversity of matter in the angels themselves. If so, John then adds up the kinds of differences to be found in angels: angels will be materially different, formally different, and numerically different. Numerical difference accounts for individuation, formal difference for difference in species, and material difference for difference in genus. If, therefore, different kinds of matter are found in the angels, it will follow that angels are generically different, or belong to different genera. But this is troublesome (*inconveniens*), not only for logic, but also for physics, since one of the advantages of spiritual matter is supposed to be that it allows for different angels belonging to the same species!

On the other hand, John continues, assume that only one kind of matter is to be found in angels. In this case, either 1) the form of each angel informs the whole of spiritual matter, or else 2) the form of one angel informs one part of spiritual matter and the form of another angel informs another part. 1) is impossible, for two angelic forms can no more simultaneously inform a single material substratum than can two corporeal forms. But if 2), then the partition of spiritual matter to accommodate the various angelic forms can only take place by means of quantitative division, which will produce the required number of

connect this distinction with the issue of spiritual matter here, one can easily see that on this account something with substantial subjective potency must have matter, while something with only accidental subjective potency perhaps need not.

individual substrates. Then “it follows that angels are quantified and corporeal, which is false.”⁹²

Gonsalvus responds to this dilemma twice, immediately and in his closing arguments. He asserts right away <M(J1)> that there is only one kind of matter for all the angels, and also that the whole of spiritual matter is not informed by one form at once, but that a given *indivisible* part is informed by a single form. It remains to explain why this multiplicity of spiritual substrata does not require quantity, and the key is in his word *indivisible*. “When it is said that particularity does not belong to matter except through quantity, I say that although this is true of divisible and quantified particularity, nevertheless it is not true of the particularity which attends indivisible parts.” The mistake which John of Paris and other opponents of spiritual matter make is to begin with the characteristics of matter in its corporeal state, and assume that the presence of matter would preclude the incorporeal properties of spiritual creatures; whereas the proper approach is to begin with the properties of incorporeal creatures, in order to conclude that matter in them is indivisible and the compound indissoluble. For matter takes all its characteristics from the form which informs it. Quantity, then, is only the cause of formal divisibility in quantitative and integral parts, i.e.

⁹² Gonsalvus, *ibid.*, 192: “Praeterea, ad propositum arguitur sic: si in angelis sit materia, aut ergo illa materia est eiusdem rationis in omnibus angelis, aut diversae rationis; si secundo modo, cum in rebus sit secundum ordinem differentia secundum potentiam sive materiam, et differentia secundum formam, et differentia secundum numerum, et differentia secundum materiam sive potentiam arguit differentiam secundum genus, sicut differentia secundum formam arguit differentiam secundum speciem, et differentia secundum numerum et quantitatem arguit differentiam secundum individua—propter quod Boethius dicit quod divisio speciei in individua est divisio secundum partes quantitatis—tunc sequitur quod si in angelis sit materia diversae rationis, quod ibi sit diversitas secundum potentiam, quae arguit differentiam secundum genus, et sic sequitur quod omnes angeli differunt genere, quod non solum est inconveniens de genere logico, sed etiam de genere naturali si in eadem specie possunt esse plures angeli. Si dicatur, primo modo, quod materia in angelis sit unius rationis, aut ergo secundum se totam perficitur forma cuiuslibet angeli, aut secundum partem sui per formam unius angeli, et secundum aliam partem sui per formam alterius angeli perficitur. Non primo modo, quia duae formae angeli sunt impossibiles in eadem materia sicut et duae formae corporales. Si secundo, cum partibilitas materiae secundum numerum in diversis non possit esse nisi per quantitatem, per cuius divisionem causatur numerus, sequitur quod angeli sint quanti et corporales, quod falsum est.”

in bodies, but not a cause of divisibility in every species containing matter whatsoever; “but rather every species has number proper to itself, and there is a proper number in any genus.” Again, the manner of numerability for a given sort of creature depends on the form, not on the matter.⁹³

In his concluding arguments <*sol. ob. 6*> Gonsalvus clarifies this somewhat. The matter which is present in the angels is in itself apt to be wholly perfected by the form of a single angel. It happens to be the case that there are many existing angels, and so part of “angelic matter” is present under one such form and part under another, just as is also the case with the individuals of these inferior realms. (This implies that even in the corporeal world there is not a certain fixed “amount” of matter available to be informed by bodies, but rather the “amount” of matter is determined by the “amount” of corporeal forms in the world—e.g., by the amount of the elements existing.) Gonsalvus wants to make it clear, therefore, that in metaphysics we should not think of matter as “bulk,” as a lump or mass portioned out amongst individuals. Matter is not divided into parts only by quantity; rather, aside from all quantitative considerations, the matter of one thing is distinguished from the matter of another *per se*, even in bodies.⁹⁴ The matter of *a* is divided from the matter of *b*

⁹³ Ibid., 194: “Ad secundum dicitur quod materia in omnibus angelis est unius rationis, et quod ipsa non per se totam perficitur ab una forma, sed secundum partem sui indivisibilem ab una forma; et quando dicitur quod particularitas non est ipsius materiae nisi per quantitatem, dicitur quod licet hoc verum sit de particularitate divisibili et quanta, non tamen est hoc verum de particularitate quae attenditur secundum partes indivisibiles; unde quantitas solum est causa formalis divisibilitatis in partes quantitativas in integrales, non autem omnium individuorum cuiuslibet speciei, immo quaelibet species habet proprium numerum sibi, et in quolibet genere est proprius numerus . . .”

⁹⁴ Ibid., 223: “Ad aliud, quando arguitur ad propositum quod si in angelis esset materia, aut secundum se totam perficitur per formas angeli, aut pars eius secundum unam formam, et alia pars secundum aliam, dico quod materia quae est in angelis nata est secundum se totam perfici a forma unius angeli; tamen, nunc est pars eius sub una forma et alia pars eius sub alia, sicut etiam est in individuis istorum inferiorum. –Et quando dicitur quod materia non habet partem et partem nisi per quantitatem, dicendum quod hoc falsum est, nam materia unius per se ipsam distinguitur a materia alterius, etiam in istis inferioribus.”

merely by the fact that each is the substrate for a different form, not because each was a certain mass carved off the primordial lump, prior to its being informed. This remark implies, though Gonsalvus doesn't draw the implication here, that an instance of matter has no individuality *per se*, but receives its individuality from form, and thus that matter cannot by itself serve as the principle of individuation for a substance. From remarks which we will see in the *solutio*, it appears as though Gonsalvus would accept an account of individuation more like Bonaventure's, in which both matter and form are required for individuation—though form takes the primary role—than one like Scotus', in which the principle of individuation is the individuating difference in the singular form as formally distinct from the specific essence.

John's final objection <J2> is similar, if more detailed, to the second objection in the Q.XIII digression examined earlier. Beings are ordered according to whether their forms are more or less immersed in matter. Among all beings an element holds the lowest place, since its form is altogether immersed in matter, and it acts only through the most primitive qualities. The form of mixed bodies is elevated above matter, since its proper operation is not through the first elemental qualities of hot and cold, dry and moist, but through the form of the specific mixture, as in the case of magnetic attraction, when steel draws iron through its own proper form. Beyond this kind of form is the vegetative, which is still more elevated above matter, and still above this is the sensitive form, since it receives the species of things without their matter, although still with the here-and-now "appendages" of matter. Further, the intellective form is still more elevated above matter, since it receives the species of a thing both without its matter and without the "appendages."

Having established all this, John argues thus: a given being is “elongated” from matter to the extent that it holds a more perfect grade in the universe; but the form of the intellectual soul is actually separable from matter, though naturally united to it, and the form of an angel will be even more separate, since its nature is not even apt to perfect a material substrate; angels at least, then, among creatures do not have matter perfectible by their forms.

John “confirms” these points with a final reflection: in the order of the universe there is some form which is inseparable from matter both according to its being and according to its species, namely corporeal form; and there is some form which is separable from matter according to its being, if not according to its species, namely the human soul; and so it should be conceded that there must be a third form which is separable from matter both according to its being and according to its species, namely the form of an angel.⁹⁵ This whole argument is very similar to one made by Giles of Rome, presented in the preceding chapter.

As we saw earlier, of course, this line of argument is wholly foreign to Gonsalvus’ entire conception of the nature of matter and its relation to form. John’s imagery of forms

⁹⁵ Ibid., 192-193: “Praeterea, ordo in entibus attenditur secundum quod forma eorum plus vel minus sunt immersae materiae, sicut in genere entium elementum tenet gradum infimum, quia eius forma omnino est immersa materiae, quod non agit nisi per qualitates primas; forma vero mixti elevata est supra materiam, quia eius operatio propria non est per qualitates primas elementares, sed per formam mixti, ut adamans [*sic*; read *adamas*?] trahit ferrum; ultra mixtum est vegetativum cuius forma adhuc est magis elevata supra materiam, sicut vivere, substantia esse; ulterius, forma sensitivi est adhuc magis elevata, quia recipit speciem rei sine materia, tamen cum appendiciis materiae hic et nunc; ulterius, forma intellectiva est magis elevata, quia recipit speciem rei sine materia et sine appendiciis materiae quae, licet sit separabilis a materia secundum esse, non tamen secundum speciem, quia per se non constituit speciem, sed secundum suam speciem perficit materiam. Tunc arguitur sic: quanto aliquod ens tenet gradum perfectiorem in universo, tanto forma eius est a materia magis elongata; sed ultra animam intellectivam est angelus habens gradum entis perfectiorem; ergo eius forma est magis elongata a materia; sed forma animae intellectivae est a materia separabilis secundum esse, licet non secundum speciem; ergo forma angeli magis erit separata, et per consequens non solum forma angeli erit separata a materia secundum esse, sed secundum speciem, ita quod de se perfectam speciem constituit sine materia, et per consequens non est nata perficere materiam; ergo saltem in angelis non erit materia perfectibilis a forma angeli. –Et confirmatur ratio sub hac forma: in ordine universi est aliqua forma inseparabilis a materia secundum esse et secundum speciem, ut forma corporalis, et aliqua separabilis secundum esse, sed non secundum speciem, ut anima intellectiva; ergo erit tertia forma quae est separabilis et secundum esse et secundum speciem, quae non est nisi forma angeli.”

being “immersed” in matter or “elevated” above it shows that for him matter is the dregs or muck at the bottom of the universe, which sullies form the closer it comes down to it, and which form strives to avoid by erecting ever more complex formal structures to climb above the base properties of matter. Nothing could be further from Gonsalvus’ Bonaventurean conception of matter as the complement and handmaid of form, to which it offers stability and subsistence, and from which it takes every quality and property which belongs to the composite, whether noble or base.

Gonsalvus addresses the last part of John’s argument first. He denies <M(J2)> that there are forms wholly immersed in matter, and forms which are naturally bound to matter but separable in existence, and therefore that there ought to be forms which have no ties to matter. John’s framing of the issue assumes that the only matter to which the soul is bound is the matter of the body, so that when the soul and body are separated at death the soul becomes an immaterial form. In a metaphysics in which form cannot exist without matter, however, this would be impossible. Consequently Gonsalvus replies that the soul has a double matter: an intrinsic matter, which the form of the soul informs insofar as the soul itself is, or is capable of being at death, an individual spiritual substance, and an extrinsic matter, the matter of the body. The soul then is separable from its extrinsic matter in its being [*esse*], if not in its nature—since man naturally has a body even if his soul subsists after death—but it is *not* separable from its intrinsic matter at all. Accordingly, an angel is separate from all extrinsic matter by nature and in its actual existence, since it has no natural body: it is not, as the soul is, naturally perfective of something other than itself.⁹⁶ But this does not

⁹⁶ Ibid., “Ad tertium, quod anima intellectiva est separabilis a materia secundum esse, non secundum speciem, ergo angelus qui est perfectior in entitate debet esse separabilis et secundum esse et secundum speciem, dicitur quod anima habet duplicem materiam: unam intrinsecam et aliam extrinsecam, ut corpus quod perficit anima;

remove the necessity of the angel's form being united to intrinsic matter insofar as it is a substance and a subject for accidents.

In his concluding arguments <*sol.ob. 7*> Gonsalvus returns briefly to the earlier part of John's argument. The order of beings does not come from the degrees of forms' immersion in matter—for all existing forms are equally immersed in matter—or from a form being more or less separable from matter. Rather a being is called more or less perfect insofar as its form is more or less immersed in matter disposed by sensible qualities, i.e., by other formal properties.⁹⁷

IV.3.1.3. Gonsalvus and “Alius”

At this point John of Paris leaves the stage and the unnamed someone else, henceforth referred to as “Alius,” takes up the argument. This final section of the disputation's opening debate is by far the most complex. In it Gonsalvus responds to objections primarily concerned with two issues: first, how the human soul, being the form of the body, can also be the form of some other matter; and second, epistemological problems with spiritual matter. The first issue is responsible for most of the complexity. For thinkers affirming spiritual matter there had always been an implicit tension between the notion of the soul as a substance in its own right, a *hoc aliquid* which could exist apart from the body and needing

ergo est separabilis secundum esse et non secundum speciem a materia extrinseca, sed non a materia intrinseca naturaliter, et sic concedendum est quod angelus separatus sit a materia extrinseca secundum esse et secundum speciem, quia non est forma perfectiva alterius.”

⁹⁷ Ibid., 223: “Ad aliud, quando arguitur quod ordo in entibus attenditur secundum quod formae eorum plus vel minus sunt immersae materiae, aut magis et minus a materia separabiles, dicendum quod forma dicitur esse perfectior, non quia minus immersa materiae secundum se consideratae, sed attenditur ordo in entibus secundum quod eorum formae sunt magis vel minus immersae materiae dispositae qualitibus sensibilibus.”

its own composition, and the notion of the soul as the form of the body. If the soul were a substance in its own right, how could it form a real substantial unity with the body? But on the other hand, if the soul were the form of the body, how could it be both form and matter apart from the body? Previous thinkers had been satisfied with showing that, even if the soul was the form of the body, it was necessary to posit spiritual matter in it apart from the body's corporeal matter; but, oddly enough, Gonsalvus seems to be the first to consider in some detail the relation between the two matters of the soul. As we just saw, in his final response to John of Paris he had casually asserted that the soul has a double matter, without further explanation. Now Alius presses him on the subject, forcing him to clarify and explain, allowing us to witness the birth of a real philosophical innovation as he thinks the matter through in the midst of the live debate.

First, however, Alius begins with one more attack on the Respondent's opening argument about the "unity of conjunction." He gives here <A(R1)> the only argument in the debate made on theological, rather than merely philosophical, grounds (theological considerations will return in Gonsalvus' *solutio*). It cannot follow that if there is a unity of conjunction in an angel, then there must be a unity of composition from matter and form. For in the Incarnation the divine nature was united and conjoined to the assumed human nature with a unity of conjunction; but the divine nature is not related to the human nature as form to matter, and the hypostatic union is not a hylomorphic composition.⁹⁸

Gonsalvus grants <M[A(R1)]> that this is true, but distinguishes between two different kinds of unity of conjunction, namely the unity formed by the conjunction of

⁹⁸Ibid., 195: "Quod non sequitur: 'in angelo est unitas coniunctionis, ergo unitas compositionis ex materia et forma', quia in natura divina est unitas coniunctionis cum uniatur et coniungatur naturae assumptae in Christo, nec tamen est ibi unitas compositionis ex materia et forma."

intrinsic parts and the unity formed by the conjunction of one thing with an extrinsic thing.

The conjunction in an angel must be a unity of essential intrinsic parts, and these can only be matter and form. But the divine nature has no intrinsic parts, and its union with human nature is a union with something extrinsic to it.⁹⁹

Alius now begins to argue <A1> against Gonsalvus' double matter. Matter is distinguished from form such that matter has no form as a part intrinsic to itself from which it is composed (rather it makes a composite *with* form); therefore, similarly, form is distinguished from matter such that it has no matter as a part of itself. Matter and form are each understood in opposition to the other, so that matter is as foreign to form in itself as form is to matter in itself. "But the soul, in its entirety, is the form of the body; therefore it has no material part of itself."¹⁰⁰

Gonsalvus admits <M(A1)> that in a sense Alius' point is valid. Prime matter in itself is not composed of some other matter, and has no formal part of itself, just as that form which is the other part of a composite (besides prime matter) has no matter as a part of itself. But by "matter" we sometimes mean material, something other than mere prime matter, compounded with a form to make a composite, but which is itself composed from matter and form. For instance, the lumber from which a house is made has its own matter and form. Similarly, Gonsalvus claims, the intellective soul which is the form of the body can in itself

⁹⁹ Ibid., "—Dicitur quod unitas de coniunctione, quia quaedam est coniunctio partium alicuius intranea; alia est coniunctio alicuius cum alio extrinseca. De prima tenet consequentia quae est in angelo, secundum Boethium; et in Deo, de alia coniunctione quae convenit naturae divinae, non tenet consequentia."

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., "Praeterea, ad propositum arguitur sic: materia sic distinguitur a forma quod materia nullam partem formae habet intrinsecam sibi ex qua componitur; ergo similiter, forma sic distinguitur a materia quod non habet materiam partem sui, quia tantum distat materia a forma quantum e converso; sed anima secundum se totam est forma corporis; ergo nihil materiale habet partem sui."

be a certain composite from its own intrinsic matter and form.¹⁰¹ In his concluding arguments <sol.ob. 8> he elaborates a bit. It is not the case with all matter whatsoever that it has no form as a part of itself, because if we posit (as many Franciscans do) that there is a plurality of forms in one and the same composite, then the proper matter of the last form is something composed of prime matter and another form. Again, a house is composed of lumber, which is itself composed of prime matter and the form of wood. And so the contrary can also be true, that something can be in itself a composite thing, and yet its whole be the form of something else.¹⁰²

But Alius objects <A[M(A1)]>. According to Gonsalvus' position, the intellective form will perfect both the matter of the soul and the matter of the body, and so one and the same form will give actuality to two prime matters and two perfectible subjects. But this is impossible, for each perfectible subject has its own perfection corresponding to it.¹⁰³ To say that there is one form for two matters seems to say that there is both one thing and two things. Gonsalvus, however, denies <M{A[M(A1)]}> that it is incoherent to say that the form of the soul, in its perfecting power, exceeds its own proper matter so as to also perfect another matter. After all, the soul perfects one portion of matter in one part of the body and

¹⁰¹ Ibid., “—Dicitur quod si loquamur de materia et forma uniformiter, tunc tenet argumentum; sicut enim illud quod est materia prima in se non est composita ex alia materia, nihil [enim] formale partem sui, sic illud quod est forma quae est altera pars compositi non habet materiam partem sui, sicut cum illud quod est materia non prima, sed respectu alterius forma potest esse in se compositum, ita anima intellectiva quae est forma corporis potest in se esse quoddam compositum ex propria materia et forma intrinsece.”

¹⁰² Ibid., 223: “Ad aliud, quando arguitur quod materia non habet formam partem sui, ergo nec e contra, dicendum quod antecedens est falsum de quacumque materia, quia si ponantur plures formae in eodem [composito], tunc illud quod est propria materia ultimae formae est aliquid compositum ex materia prima et alia forma; ita potest esse e contra, quod aliquid potest esse in se quid compositum, et tamen secundum se totum forma alterius.”

¹⁰³ Ibid., 195: “Sed contra hoc arguitur: quia tunc eadem forma dabit actum duabus materiis primis et duobus perfectibilibus, quod est impossibile, cum cuilibet perfectibili respondeat propria perfectio. —Consequentia patet: quia secundum dicta, materia animae et materia corporis perficiuntur ab eadem forma, quae est forma intellectiva.”

another portion in another part; why should it be incoherent to say that the soul perfects yet more matter in addition to all the matter in the body? In a similar way, Gonsalvus claims, it is not incoherent that matter, whose appetite for form exceeds the actuality of the form which it presently supports, can simultaneously have an appetite for a form other than its own.¹⁰⁴ One might doubt, however, the relevance of this last point, for matter's *appetite* for an additional form seems different from matter actually underlying two forms at once, which would be the truly analogous case.

Against Gonsalvus' assertion that the perfective power of the soul's form, overflowing its own spiritual matter, spills into the corporeal matter of the body and perfects that also, Alius offers a series of objections. First <Aa> he says that one and the same form cannot be a perfection proportioned to diverse perfectible subjects. This is contradictory, for if some form is proportioned to this perfectible subject, then the whole actuality of the former perfects the latter; if it did not, then it would not be proportioned to it. If a form could perfect something else besides the subject to which it is proportioned, why could it not also perfect a third thing, and so on infinitely? But in fact the soul is a perfection proportioned to the body, since whatever is the first perfection of something is proportioned to it.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 195-196: "—Dicitur quod non est inconveniens quod illa forma quae in perficiendo excedit suam materiam, quod perficiat aliam materiam; sicut, e contra, non est inconveniens quod materia, cuius appetitus excedit actualitatem formae, appetit simul aliam formam; talis autem forma quae in perficiendo excedit ipsam materiam est anima intellectiva. Unde perficiens materiam in una parte corporis, idem perficit materiam in alia parte corporis, et ideo non videtur inconveniens quod simul perficiat plures materias." See also <sol.ob. 9> Gonsalvus, Q.XI, 224: "Ad aliud, quando arguitur quod si anima habeat materiam tunc perficiet duo perfectibilia, dicendum quod non est verum aequo primo, nam forma animae perficit propriam materiam suam, et illa non perficit corpus, sed tota anima perficit corpus, ratione tamen formae suae, sicut dictum est."

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 196: "Eadem forma non potest esse perfectio adaequata diversis perfectibilibus; hoc enim includit contradictionem, quia si aliqua forma sit adaequata huic perfectibili, secundum actualitatem suam totam illud perficit, et si hoc non perficit aliud, tunc enim non adaequaretur priori perfectibili; et etiam qua ratione aliud perfectibile, et tertium; potest et sic in infinita. Sed forma animae est perfectio adaequata corpori, quia quod est prima perfectio alicuius est [ei] adaequata; anima non est huiusmodi cum sit primus actus corporis etc."

For Gonsalvus <M(Aa)>, however, this argument has something of a *petitio principii* in it, since the whole point of his assertion is that the form of the intellective soul is *not* a form proportioned to its matter, and precisely because of this it is able to perfect another matter. When Alius argues that the soul is the primary act of the body, in a sense of course this is true; the form by which the body is first perfected is the intellective soul (according to Gonsalvus, insofar as the soul is form, and not according to its matter). On the other hand, the intellective soul does not first and primarily perfect the body; its perfection of its own spiritual matter is naturally prior to its perfection of the body.¹⁰⁶ Gonsalvus is not perfectly clear here, since this formulation sounds as though *the soul* is perfecting spiritual matter, rather than the form of the soul perfecting its matter in order to constitute the complete soul; he will refine his presentation later to make his point more clear.

This position, it seems, could go a long way towards explaining how the soul subsists when separated from the body, but that is precisely the ground on which Alius attacks it. According to Gonsalvus' position, he argues, the form of the intellective soul will perfect its own matter according to one grade, and perfect the body according to another. Therefore, when the soul is separated from the body, it will perfect its matter only according to one grade, and according to the other grade it will perfect no matter at all, and then there will be some grade of the soul which will not be the perfection of the matter in which it is. In other words, all the soul's "formalities" which perfect the body will be left hanging in metaphysical thin air, not correlated to any matter at all, while the soul's incorporeal side will

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 197: "Ad primum horum dicitur, sicut prius, quod forma animae intellectivae non est forma adaequata suae materiae, et ideo potest aliam formam [*sic*; read *materiam*?] perficere. Et quando dicitur quod anima est primus actus corporis, dicendum quod hoc verum est, nam forma a qua perficitur primo corpus est forma animae intellectivae; non tamen anima intellectiva primo perficit corpus; prius enim per naturam perficit propriam materiam quam corpus perficiat."

still be grounded in matter. Furthermore, Alius objects, this state of affairs implies that the grade of the soul which perfects the body will be nobler than that which perfects its own matter, since when it is separate from the body it will exist entirely without matter.¹⁰⁷ This last remark suggests that Alius may, like John of Paris, also think of matter as dregs or muck to escape from, since something will be noble if it can escape from its connection with matter.

At any rate, Gonsalvus denies that he must admit different degrees or grades in the soul in order to perfect different matters. The intellective soul is certainly not perfectly proportioned to any one part of the body—since it also perfects all the other parts—and yet it does not perfect one part of the body according to one grade and another part according to another grade. Rather, the whole soul (according to its formal part) at once perfects each part of the body, and in its entirety exceeds the capacity of any given part. In the same way, the whole soul (again, Gonsalvus means the whole intellective form, not the whole form *together* with its matter—but he is imprecise here) perfects both the spiritual and the corporeal matter of the whole man, and in its entirety exceeds each one of its matters.¹⁰⁸ Later on *<sol. ob. 10>* Gonsalvus realizes that this still sounds as though he thinks that the form of the soul is partly proportioned to its spiritual matter and partly proportioned to the matter of the body, and in his closing arguments he clarifies that the form of the soul is entirely proportioned to

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., “–Contra: si forma animae intellectivae non sit perfectio adaequata materiae, ergo secundum unum gradum perficit suam materiam, et secundum alium gradum perficit corpus; ergo quando anima est separata a corpore, tantum secundum unum gradum perficit suam materiam, et secundum alium gradum non perficit materiam, et ita tunc erit aliquis gradus animae qui non erit perfectio materiae in qua est. –Praeterea, sequitur quod secundum nobilitatem graduum [magis] perficiet corpus quam suam materiam, quia ille gradus remanens in anima separata, si non perficiat materiam, sic erit gradus perfectior.”

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., “–Dicitur quod non sequitur, si non sit forma adaequata uni materiae, quod propter hoc secundum unum gradum perficit unam materiam, et secundum alium gradum aliam materiam, sicut anima intellectiva non est perfecta adaequata uni parti corporis et tamen non perficit unam partem corporis secundum unum gradum, et aliam partem secundum alium gradum, immo ipsa tota secundum totum sui perficit utramque materiam, et secundum totum sui excedit materiam unius.”

its spiritual matter. The form of the soul and its spiritual matter together compose the whole soul, and the whole soul goes on to perfect the body, albeit through its form, not through its matter.¹⁰⁹

Before Gonsalvus had produced these latter elaborations, however, Alius had continued to object to the notion of a double matter for the soul. After <Aa> he objects <Ab> that it is impossible for one numerically identical form to be the substantial perfection for generically diverse perfectible subjects. A real diversity of perfecting forms must follow upon a generic diversity of perfectible subjects. But according to the position laid out by the Respondent, the matter of the body and the matter of the soul are generically different and belong to different sorts; it is impossible, then, that they should both be perfected by the same form.¹¹⁰

Strangely, Gonsalvus ignores the fact that his position (unlike the Respondent's) does not require him to admit that spiritual and corporeal matter are in themselves generically different. Perhaps this is because of his willingness to admit a plurality of forms in substances, which will mean that proximate matters, although not prime matter itself, may be generically different. In that case Alius' objection may still be relevant; in the same way that the proximate matter of a marble statue is generically different from that of an animal

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 224: "Ad aliud, quando arguitur quod forma animae aut est adaequata suae materiae in perficiendo eam aut non; si sit, ergo non perficit corpus; si non sit adaequata suae materiae, igitur in anima separata forma eius secundum unum gradum perficit materiam, et secundum ulteriorem gradum non perficit materiam suam; ille autem gradus secundus qui remanet in forma animae separatae est perfectior quam prior; ergo forma animae secundum gradum nobiliorem erit [magis] perfectio corporis quam propriae materiae. –Dicendum per praedicta quod forma perficiens materiam propriam ipsius animae est adaequata ei, et illa, ut dictum est, non perficit corpus, sed tota a se, ratione tamen formae suae, ut dictum est."

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 196: "Praeterea, impossibile est quod eadem forma numero sit perfectio substantialis diversorum perfectibilium genere, quia ad diversitatem perfectibilium genere sequitur diversitas realis ipsius formae perficientis; sed secundum dicta, materia corporis et materia animae differunt genere et sunt alterius rationis, ergo impossibile est quod eadem forma animae perficiantur." This argument has good Thomistic credentials; see Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis*, a.9, ad 9.

without there being an absolute difference in corporeal matter itself, so the spiritual and corporeal perfectible subjects of the soul's form might be generically different. In any case, Gonsalvus admits <M(Ab)> that one and the same form cannot be the perfection of generically diverse perfectible subjects—except when these subjects are ordered to one another. Since human nature is a unique case in creation, being both corporeal and spiritual, so the soul straddles the line between body and spirit, with one foot in each: it is the horizon of both. The soul is a spiritual substance, a *hoc aliquid*, like an angel, and at the same time disposed by its nature to be substantially embodied, whereas any body assumed by an angel would necessarily be accidental to it. The soul's own matter then, even though spiritual, nevertheless is ordered in a certain way to corporeal matter, so that a single form can inform both.¹¹¹ This makes a man a metaphysical oddity, indeed a microcosm, something like an angel and something like an animal, but embracing more of the nature of the universe than either. An emphasis on the soul as *hoc aliquid* focuses on how a soul is like an angel; an emphasis on the soul as the form of the body focuses on how it is like an animal. The goal is to show how both are true at once.

Having objected on the basis of the soul's being the form of the body, that is, on its similarity to animal souls, Alius now objects on the basis of the soul's similarity to the angels. If there is indeed spiritual matter as well as corporeal, then the matter in an angel will be more similar to the matter in a soul than the matter in a soul will be to the matter of the body, since both angelic and soul matter are spiritual, and must therefore be more similar to

¹¹¹ Ibid., 198: “Ad aliud, quando arguitur quod eadem forma non potest esse perfectio diversorum perfectibilium genere, dicitur quod hoc verum est quando non sunt ordinata illa perfectibilia. Nunc autem, quia anima est sicut natura materiae inter pure corporalia et pure spiritualia, quasi in confino et horizonte utriusque, materia sua quodammodo se habet in quodam ordine ad materiam corporalium, magis tamen spiritualis existens, et ideo una forma potest utriusque materiam informare.”

each other than to corporeal matter. Since, therefore, one and the same form of the soul can perfect the matters both of the the soul and of the body, surely one and the same form could perfect the matter of an angel and the matter of a soul. Furthermore, since, according to Gonsalvus, the form perfecting the matter of the soul is itself the form of the body, “it follows that the same form could perfect the matter of an angel and the matter of the body, and so it follows that an angel could be the form of a body.” But this again misses the uniqueness of human nature. The soul is not able to be the form of the body just because it is a spirit, but because, in addition to being a spirit, it is by nature ordered to being united with a body, which an angel’s nature is not.¹¹²

At this point Alius offers a few objections which, for the sake of brevity, I will not discuss here; they are not of particular interest in themselves and do not provoke interesting responses from Gonsalvus. Nevertheless I give the texts in a footnote. They correspond in the outline to <Ac> , <A2>, and <A4>; Gonsalvus’ responses are <M(Ac)>, <sol.ob. 11>, <M(A4)>, and <sol.ob. 13>.¹¹³

¹¹² Ibid., 198-199: “–Praeterea, plus convenit materia in angelo, si ibi sit, et materia in anima quam materia animae et materia corporis, quia in angelo et in anima, si sit materia illa, est spiritualis, et plus convenit materia spiritualis cum spirituali quam cum corporali; si ergo eadem forma potest perficere materiam animae et corporis, multo fortius videtur quod eadem forma potest perficere materiam angeli et materiam animae; et ulterius, cum forma perficiens materiam animae sit forma corporis, sequitur quod eadem forma potest perficere materiam angeli et materiam corporis, et ita sequitur quod angelus potest esse forma corporis. –Respondeo ad hoc quod eadem forma perficiat duas materias simul, hoc non est propter unitatem naturae earum, sed propter unitatem ordinis quam habent.”

¹¹³ Ibid., 196-197 <Ac>: “Praeterea, forma accipitur dupliciter: uno modo pro forma quae consequitur compositum, et est forma totius et tota quidditas rei, ut humanitas respectu hominis; alio modo pro forma quae est altera pars rei quae non est quidditas tota. Secundum Avicennam, V *Metaphysicae*, differunt istae acceptiones formae, quia forma secundo modo dicta est forma materiae primo et non primo totius individui; tunc enim perficeret totum individuum ut suam materiam; sed forma primo modo dicta, quae est tota quidditas rei, est forma totius individui, sicut species forma est respectu individui, et individuum ut materia respectu speciei. Ex hoc igitur accipitur quod forma quae consequitur totum et est quidditas totius, non est forma materiae, sed ipsius individui; sed si anima sit composita ex materia et forma sua, tunc ipsa tota quidditas animae est forma consequens compositionem, quod est anima; ergo secundum totam suam quidditatem non erit perfectio materiae, sed tantum individui, quod falsum est.” Ibid., 199 <M(Ac)>: “Ad tertium, quando arguitur quod forma quae consequitur totum non est perfectio materiae sed individui, dicitur quod si illa forma sit

After the discussion about the relation of the soul to its corporeal and spiritual matters, Alius makes objections about how to reconcile spiritual matter with intellectual activity. The first of these <A3> is odd. If matter is necessary in an angel and in the soul, it is required there either for their existence (*esse*) or for their operation. But it is not necessary for their existence, because even in corporeal beings matter does not provide for a thing's being (*nec . . . facit ad esse*). That which in itself makes for a thing's non-being (*facit rem non esse*), or that which is indifferent to being and non-being, does not provide for a thing's being, but this is what matter is like, since it is that by which a thing is able both to be and not be.¹¹⁴ To me it seems very strange to claim both that matter is that by which a thing both is able to be and not to be, and at the same time to claim that matter is not necessary for a thing's being. If matter is that by which a thing can not be, does this obliterate the fact that it is also that by which a thing can be? Surely Alius does not think that a corporeal form, at least, can exist without matter? Perhaps, at the end of a long debate, he is grasping at straws.

compositi per se habentis speciem, verum est; si vero sit rei perficientis aliud, non est verum, et talis res est compositum animae.” Ibid., 199 <A2>: “Praeterea, ad propositum arguitur sic: si in angelo aut in anima sit materia, aut ergo constat ex tota sua materia aut non; si constat ex tota sua materia, igitur erit tantum unus angelus in una specie . . . Si vero non constat ex tota sui materia, ergo pars suae materiae est sub forma unius angeli, et pars alia sub forma alterius angeli; sed partibilitas materiae non est nisi per quantitatem; igitur etc. – Sed ad hoc responsum est prius.” Ibid., 224 <sol.ob. 11>: “Ad aliud, quando arguitur: aut angelus constat ex tota sua materia aut non, dico quod non constat ex tota materia sua, sed ex parte; ista tamen partibilitas materiae non est per quantitatem, sed per agens effective et per se ipsam formaliter, ut praedictum est.” Ibid., 199 <A4>: “Praeterea, si in anima esset materia, in ipsa non poterunt species contrariorum recipi . . . –Consequentia patet, quia formae contrariorum in materia sunt contrariae.” Ibid., 199-200 <M(A4)>: “Dicitur quod similitudines contrariorum, ut albi et nigri, compatiuntur se in medio et in eodem puncto medii ut est materia, nec tamen sunt contrariae.” Ibid., 225 <sol.ob. 13>: “Ad aliud, quando arguitur quod species contrariorum non possunt esse in eodem habente materiam, dicendum quod hoc est falsum de formis contrariis habentibus esse diminutum, aut altera esse completum et altera esse diminutum habente, nam in eadem parte medii possunt esse species albi et species nigri.”

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 199: “Praeterea, si materia sit in angelo et in anima necessario, aut ergo ibi requiritur materia propter esse eorum aut propter operationem eorum; non propter esse eorum, quia nec in corporalibus entibus materia facit ad esse, quoniam quod de se facit rem non esse, vel quod de se indifferens est ad esse et non esse, de se non facit ad esse; materia huiusmodi est, cum sit illud quo res potest esse et non esse.”

After claiming that matter is not necessary for a spiritual creature's being, Alius then denies that it is necessary for its operation. For the proper operation of an angel or a soul is an operation of the intellect or the will, but matter is not required for either of these; indeed, matter hinders these kinds of operation. So—supposing that the soul has its own matter intrinsic to it—if it were separated from this matter, it would still understand, since it is an intellectual nature.¹¹⁵ Why then is the matter necessary for it?

Gonsalvus does not give an immediate answer to this objection. Perhaps he is himself tired at the end of the debate. On the other hand, given what has preceded, it should be clear that in terms of Gonsalvus' metaphysics the objection is specious. Forms *do* need matter to subsist, and to claim that not even corporeal forms need matter in order to be is absurd. However, he does return to the objection in his closing arguments <*sol.ob. 12*> and make this clear:

When it is argued that matter in an angel is required either for being or for operation, I say [that it is required] for both; it is required for the angel's being, because it is required as a complement [to form] in the substance of the angel, so that it may have perfect being; it is required also for its operation, because a perfect operation requires perfect being, and matter is required for the perfect being of an angel, as was said. — And when it is said that matter is not a principle of being, because it is indifferent to being and non-being, it must be said that when it stands under a form it is not indifferent to the being and non-being of the composite, but [rather] it is a *per se* principle of being, and [only] *per accidens* a principle of corruption, [only] because it stands under a form having a contrary . . .¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Ibid., “Nec etiam requiritur propter operationem eorum, quia operatio propria eorum est operatio intellectus et voluntatis, materia autem non requiritur propter huiusmodi operationem, sed magis impedit huiusmodi operationem. Unde si forma animae esset separata a propria materia intrinseca, adhuc intelligeret, cum sit natura intellectualis.”

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 224: “Ad aliud, quando arguitur: materia in angelo aut requiritur propter esse aut propter operationem, dico quod propter utrumque; requiritur enim propter esse angeli, quia requiritur ad complementum substantiae angeli, quod consequitur perfectum esse; requiritur etiam propter operationem, quia operatio perfecta requirit perfectum esse, et materia requiritur ad perfectum esse angeli, ut dictum est. —Et quando dicitur quod materia non est principium essendi quia est indifferens ad esse et non esse, dicendum est quod quando est sub forma non est indifferens ad esse et non esse compositi, sed est per se principium essendi, et per accidens principium corruptionis, quia subiicitur formae habenti contrarium; unde non se habet aequaliter ad omnia per essentiam suam.”

Again Gonsalvus makes the essential points that 1) matter is the essential complement to form, and 2) the corruptibility or incorruptibility of a substance is on account of its form, not its matter.

After the omitted <A4>, in <A5> Alius argues that if there were matter in the soul it would primarily understand singulars. “The received is in the receiver in the mode of the receiver; if then there be matter in the soul and in the intellect, therefore a species would be received in it materially, and thus in the mode of singularity.”¹¹⁷ Gonsalvus replies with the observation <M(A5)> that a species *is* singular insofar as it is a property belonging to the singular intellect understanding it, but that it is nevertheless universal “representatively.”¹¹⁸ What is more fascinating, however, is that, after Gonsalvus has had time to consider the subject, he returns in the closing arguments <sol.ob. 14> with the statement that he doesn’t see why the soul *shouldn’t* understand the singular in its first act (i.e. before abstraction). Otherwise there could be no real comparison of the thought to the sense-phantasms. The intellect must, after all, have some direct congress with the phantasms as well as with abstracted universals.¹¹⁹

Finally, Gonsalvus’ unnamed interlocutor makes one last attempt <A6> to associate matter with corruption. When matter is the subject of one form, while having an aptitude to receive some other form which is impossible with the form it currently has, it is in

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 200: Praeterea, si in anima esset materia primo intellegeret singulare, quia receptum est in recipiente per modum recipientis; si ergo in anima et in intellectu sit materia, igitur species reciperetur in illo materialiter, et ita per modum singularis.”

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 200: “Dicitur quod non sequitur, quia illa species, licet sit singularis in comparatione ad intellectum in quo est, est tamen universalis representative, sicut dicit Avicenna.”

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 225: “Ad aliud, quando arguitur quod tunc anima intellegeret singulare, dico quod hoc non videtur mihi inconueniens, licet in primo actu, quia aliter non esset comparatio vera intellectus ad phantasmata, sicut visus ad colores, nisi intellectus aliquem actum directum haberet circa phantasmata.”

privation to this second form. But when matter which has one form is in privation to another form for which it has an aptitude, it is an intrinsic principle of corruption. Therefore, if an angel has matter which in itself is in potency to the form of another angel, he has an intrinsic principle of corruption.¹²⁰ Once more Gonsalvus insists <M(A6)> that it is not the matter of a substance which is its principle of corruption, but the form which has a contrary form (i.e. a form which can be corrupted and replaced with an incompatible form).¹²¹ What is important is not whether a form has matter or not—since all existing forms have a material correlate—but whether that form is the sort which is united to its matter dissolubly or indissolubly.¹²²

IV.3.2. Q.XI: The Solution

If the opening debate of Gonsalvus' Q.XI is extraordinary for its length, complexity, and the number and variety of participants and arguments, its solution is also noteworthy for its unusual thoroughness. In three long sections, each with its own subdivisions, he gives 1) a critical overview of the various opinions on the extension of matter in created things; 2) an examination and refutation of the most significant objections by the opponents of spiritual matter; and 3) direct arguments for spiritual matter, together with arguments for the unicity of matter in spiritual and corporeal substances.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 200: “Praeterea, materia subiecta uni formae cum aptitudine ad aliam formam impossibilem formae quam habet, est habens privationem alterius formae ad quam est in potentia; sed materia subiecta privationi cum aptitudine habendi aliam formam est principium corruptionis intrinsecae; ergo angelus habet principium corruptionis intrinsecum si habeat materiam quae de se est in potentia ad formam alterius angeli.”

¹²¹ Ibid., 200: “—Dicitur quod materia subiecta privationi non est principium corruptionis nisi illa forma habeat contrarium.”

¹²² Ibid., 225 <sol.ob. 15>: “Ad aliud, quando arguitur quod materia subiecta uni formae cum privatione alterius est principium corruptionis intrinsecae, dicendum quod non est verum nisi sit subiecta formae habenti contrarium, ut ex hoc sibi dissolubiliter uniatur.”

One noteworthy omission throughout the question is the lack of any discussion of alternative theories of spiritual composition. The distinction between *quo est* and *quod est* has disappeared from the discussion entirely, no doubt due to its inherent lack of clarity and the number of different ways it could be interpreted. Nor does Gonsalvus give any consideration to a composition of essence and existence, or anything similar. Perhaps this can be explained by the lack of interest in using an essence-existence composition to refute spiritual matter on the part of Gonsalvus' opponents. As we have seen, John of Paris, Dietrich of Freiberg, and Giles of Rome made little use of St. Thomas Aquinas' theory to refute the Franciscan position in their own writings, even if some of them accept some version of it for themselves. On the other hand, perhaps Gonsalvus can consider the inadequacy of any (quasi-) Thomistic position as an alternative to spiritual matter to have made plain already by predecessors such as Matthew of Aquasparta, Richard of Middleton, and Peter Olivi, who consider it at length. In any case the fact remains that Gonsalvus' opponents do not make use of alternative theories of spiritual composition in the course of the debate, and Gonsalvus does not go out of his way to consider them.¹²³

¹²³ For this section, see also Martel, *La Psychologie de Gonsalve d'Espagne*, 62-77, and Wippel, "Godfrey of Fontaines: the Date of Quodlibet 15," 307-332. Martel's examination of Gonsalvus' universal hylomorphism suffers from his lack of any such preliminary study as the one carried out in the previous chapters of the present work. He is unaware of the extent to which Gonsalvus reflects Franciscan thought at the time and so of the extent and limitations of Gonsalvus' own contributions. See *La Psychologie*, 77: "Ce mélange de sources diverses: aristotélicienne, néoplatonicienne et augustinienne, peut expliquer l'origine de cette conception de la matière, somme toute assez étrange." This remark is typical of his attitude. On the other hand, in his article Wippel is not concerned with Gonsalvus' doctrine itself so much as with the question of Godfrey's dependence on him in Godfrey's own work.

IV.3.2.1. Critical Overview of Opinions

Gonsalvus recognizes that there are in general three opinions about which created substances have a material substratum, which he considers in order from the most restrictive to the most inclusive.

A. The most restrictive confines matter to generable and corruptible substances alone. Gonsalvus acknowledges two reasons for this opinion. First is the conception of matter as that which is indeterminate to being and not being. According to the present position, it is this indeterminacy which makes matter the principle of corruption and allows for the transmutation of physical substances. Since whatever has matter has this indeterminacy and corruptibility, matter is restricted to such beings. The second reason is that, if matter were extended to incorruptible things, it would exist there in vain, since its potency to another form could never be actualized. According to this position, then, matter does not even belong in the incorruptible heavenly bodies, much less in incorporeal spiritual substances. This position, of course, is exemplified for us by Dietrich of Freiberg.¹²⁴

B. The second opinion is less restrictive, allowing matter to exist in all bodies, including the heavens, but denying matter to spiritual creatures. Despite being incorruptible,

¹²⁴ Gonsalvus, Q.XI, 200-201: “Circa primum sciendum est quod in ista quaestione sunt tres opiniones in genere, quarum: A. Prima magis arctat materiam, quae ponit quod materia solum est in generabilibus et corruptibilibus; cuiusmodi opinionis dupliciter est ratio: prima, quae tacta est in arguendo ad quaestionem, ex definitione materiae est, quae ex sua essentia est in potentia ad esse; quod autem est in potentia ad aliquid est indeterminatum ad illud, et per consequens materia est in potentia ad non esse, quia quod non determinat sibi unum oppositorum est in potentia ad reliquum . . . quod materia est in potentia ad esse et non esse, et ideo eius operatio propria est generatio et corruptio; si ergo esset materia in caelo aut in incorporalibus aliis, ibi esset sine propria operatione; res vero qualibet sine propria operatione est frustra; ergo si materia esset in incorporalibus, ibi esset frustra.” The presence of what we might call “Dietrichian” views raised more than once in the course of the disputation suggests the intriguing possibility that Dietrich himself or someone advocating his views was present at the debate. In the absence of confirming evidence, however, this is only speculation. A very similar view is also held by Godfrey of Fontaines, who targeted Gonsalvus on this topic, as we shall see in the next and final chapter. See Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey of Fontaines*, 285ff.

the heavens are allowed to have matter, since they are not pure act, but sensible things having an act.¹²⁵ This opinion, however, denies matter to spiritual things on account of the partibility and quantity which necessarily accompanies matter; Gonsalvus gives an argument here very similar to one of the arguments <J1> made in the opening debate by John of Paris,¹²⁶ as well as a version of the ubiquitous argument from the immateriality of cognition.¹²⁷ He also recognizes the problem raised in the debate about how the form of the soul informs both its spiritual matter and the matter of the body. “From these [arguments] it follows that matter is in all bodies and only in bodies.”¹²⁸

This is the common position among the opponents of spiritual matter. Gonsalvus recognizes that it has two varieties, depending on whether the matter of the heavens is held to be the same as or different from the matter of generable and corruptible things. Some hold that they must be different, or else the heavenly bodies could be transformed into elemental bodies and vice versa.¹²⁹ Gonsalvus himself names Henry of Ghent, citing his argument that, if the matter of the heavens in itself were in potency to elemental forms but lacked an agent whereby it could be transformed, such a potency would exist in vain. However, others hold

¹²⁵ Ibid., 201: “Secunda opinio magis extendit materiam in entibus, quae ponit quod materia non solum est in corporibus generabilibus et corruptibilibus, sed etiam in corporalibus incorruptibilibus; in solis tamen corporalibus existens et non in spiritualibus . . . caelum de se non est actus tantum, quia tunc non esset sensibilis; igitur est habens actum; sed omne habens actum habet formam in materia.”

¹²⁶ Ibid., 201-202: “Praeterea, secundo, ostendit quod materia sit in solis corporalibus et non in spiritualibus, materia divideretur in eis una pars eius sub una forma esset et alia pars eius sub alia forma; sed partibilitas materiae in partes eiusdem rationis non est nisi per quantitatem; ergo si in spiritualibus, ut in angelis et in animabus, esset quantitas sequeretur quod essent quanta, quod est impossibile.”

¹²⁷ Ibid., 202: “Praeterea, tertio, ostendit quod materia non sit in rebus spiritualibus, quia . . . nihil intelligitur nisi immateriale et a materia abstractum . . .”

¹²⁸ Ibid., “Ex istis sequitur quod materia sit in omnibus corporalibus et in solis corporalibus.”

¹²⁹ Amoros cites Giles of Rome, *Quod*. I.8., and Godfrey of Fontaines, *Quod*. V.2.

that the matter of all bodies must be the same, since matter as pure potency can have no intrinsic differences.¹³⁰

C. The third opinion is that which extends matter to all created beings whatsoever, whether corporeal or incorporeal. This opinion too comes in two varieties, those holding that there are three kinds of matter corresponding to the three kinds of beings which are not transmutable into each other—as we have seen, this position is exemplified by Richard of Middleton, and also held by Peter Olivi—and the Bonaventurean position holding that there is one and the same kind of matter for all creatures, which seems to Gonsalvus more probable.¹³¹

IV.3.2.2. Removal of Opponents' Foundations

Wanting to defend this latter position, that there is a single kind of matter existing in all creatures, Gonsalvus now goes on to present and refute the primary reasons his opponents reject it. He gives four: 1) the correlation of matter and corruptibility; 2) the correlation of matter and quantity; 3) the problem of the immateriality of cognition; 4) the problem of the relation of spiritual to corporeal matter in the human soul. By now each of these is quite familiar to the reader.

¹³⁰ Gonsalvus, Q.XI, 202-203.

¹³¹ Ibid., 204: “Opinio tertia materiam extendit in omnibus entibus, quae ponit quod omne creatum est materia aut materiam habens, ita quod materia sit tam in rebus corporalibus quam in incorporalibus, tam in corporeis quam in incorporeis creatis. Sed de numero istam opinionem tenentium, quidam dicunt quod materia est alterius rationis in isto triplici gradu entium propter eorum intransmutabilitatem ad invicem; quidam vero quod in omnibus sit unius rationis et eiusdem, quae videtur mihi probabilior.”

1. Gonsalvus first means to show that having matter is not incompatible with incorruptibility.¹³² This passage in the text is slightly mutilated,¹³³ and the argument requires a certain amount of reconstruction. A brief version is offered by Wippel:

That which from its very beginning is incorruptible according to its entire species (i.e., in terms of every individual member of its species) has a form which is naturally incorruptible and hence it is incorruptible by nature. But it is not repugnant for a material thing according to its entire species (i.e., in terms of every individual member of its species) to be incorruptible from the beginning.¹³⁴

Gonsalvus' argument here takes the form of a thought experiment which today would probably be expressed in terms of possible worlds. It is not incoherent or inconceivable that there should be naturally incorruptible bodies; God could have made a corporeal nature such that all its individual members would always have been incorruptible; therefore matter would not be repugnant to such a nature; therefore incorruptibility and materiality are not incompatible.

Gonsalvus points out that nature is what is uniformly the case, what occurs always or for the most part, according to an accustomed course, while what happens as an exception to this norm is by chance or fortune. In any given species, then, what always occurs in it is what is natural to it—even if what always occurs can only be effected by a supernatural agent. For instance, it is natural for man to have an immortal spiritual soul joined to a mortal corporeal body, although only God is able to cause this. If there were only one man, we would call him a miracle. Again, if the miracles of the saints happened all the time, we would call them

¹³² Ibid., 204-205: “Primum est ratio corruptibilitatis, propter quod aliqui negant univeraliter materiam esse in incorruptibilibus. . . . Ostendendum ergo est quod non repugnat incorruptibilitati alicuius rei habere materiam; et arguitur: 1. Primo, per syllogismum, existente maiori de in esse et minori de consequenti respectu conclusionis de consequenti pro possibili, sic: omne illud quod a principio suae conditionis est incorruptibile secundum totam suam speciem, ita quod a nullo agente creato potest corrumpi . . .”

¹³³ As Amoros notes. See 205 n.a; Martel, *La Psychologie*, 70, n.52.

¹³⁴ Wippel, “Godfrey of Fontaines: The Date of Quodlibet 15,” 312.

natural: if asses has always spoken, or if infants had always spoken from birth, a speaking ass or infant would not be a miracle. If men, similarly, had been so created that they always had incorruptible bodies (as would be the case had Adam never sinned), this would be natural to them as well, and having matter would not be incompatible with their incorruptibility.¹³⁵

It was possible for God so to make men that they would always have the kind of glorified bodies that they will have after the day of judgment. Furthermore—Gonsalvus strengthens his thought experiment with an appeal to the more solid data of revelation—after the day of judgment corruption in the corporeal world will cease, and it will then be natural for all bodies to remain without corruption. In fact, creation in its present state naturally longs for quiet and the state which it will have then. Those who use Aristotle, then, to prove that matter is *necessarily* bound up with corruption and substantial change, are as parochially-minded as he was, though with less excuse. “Whence if the Philosopher had seen back then [*a principio*] the elements having such a state that they will have then [i.e. after the last day], he would have said that this was natural to them.” It is possible, then, for something to be both wholly material and incorruptible.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ Gonsalvus, Q.XI, 205-6: “. . . illud in quo est susceptivum alicuius formae, si aliqua forma communicetur per modum naturae, semper vel frequenter dicitur illam formam participare secundum naturam et naturaliter, quamvis etiam illa forma imprimatur ab agente supernaturali, ut patet de corpore organico respectu animae intellectivae. –Hoc etiam patet de sanctis miraculis, quod si fierent semper, naturaliter fieri dicerentur, ut de asino loquente, si a principio quilibet asinus loqueretur diceretur hoc fieri naturaliter, sicut etiam de pueris si a principio omnes loquerentur. Unde patet proposito assumpta, scilicet quod illud quod a principio suae conditionis est incorruptibile habet formam incorruptibilem sibi communicatam per modum naturae, quia semper vel frequenter; ergo quod a principio suae conditionis est incorruptibile secundum totam suam speciem, habet formam naturaliter incorruptibilem, et per consequens est naturaliter incorruptibile.”

¹³⁶ Ibid., 206-207: “. . . potuit [Deus] omnibus a principio dedisse corpus gloriosum et incorruptibile; ergo possibile fuit aliquod materiale secundum totam suam speciem a principio suae conditionis fuisse incorruptibile. –Hoc etiam patet de aliis rebus materialibus, quoniam post diem iudicii, postquam motus caelestis cessaverit, non agerent elementa mutuo nec mutuo corrumpent se, et hoc est etiam naturale sicut stare sine corruptione . . . creatura appetit naturaliter quiescere et statum quem habebit post cessationem motus caelestis. Unde si Philosophus vidisset a principio elementa habere talem statum quem tunc habebit, dixisset quod hoc fuisset eis naturale. . . .”

At this point Gonsalvus makes a methodological objection against everyone who uses physics as the measure by which to judge metaphysical questions. We ought to be wary of hasty generalization, of making confident assertions about the whole universe on the basis of things learned from only a few of its members. Now, in the universe there are more incorporeal beings than corporeal ones; it is rash, therefore, to make confident judgments about the natures of all beings—for instance, about whether or not they have matter—on the basis of the natures of corporeal beings.¹³⁷ It was against just such reasoning that Aristotle argued when he refuted Heraclitus’ assertion that all things were in continuous motion. Heraclitus saw that the sensible corruptible things here below were in continuous motion, and extended this observation to all the universe. But since in fact the sensible and corruptible things here below are small and few compared with unchangeable things, it would be more correct to say that all things are unchangeable than to say that all things are changeable.¹³⁸ This argument is clearly directed against those like Dietrich of Freiberg who use arguments from the role of matter in physics against the notion of spiritual matter in metaphysics. More generally Gonsalvus seems to be wary of making physics the final arbiter of metaphysical

¹³⁷ For an interesting parallel, see Mahoney, “Reverberations of the condemnation of 1277 in Later Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy,” in *Nach der Verurteilung von 1277* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2001), 918: “Even though this [the possibility of other created worlds] cannot be proven from the sensible things from which Aristotle’s reasoning takes its start, nonetheless it must be firmly believed, respectfully assenting to the sacred teachers of the faith.

“The same statement of deference to the theologians is found in Jandun’s discussion of whether there can be many individuals separated from matter in the same species. We must speak differently from Aristotle, who could not demonstrate this starting from sensible things, and hold that God can do this.”]

¹³⁸ Gonsalvus, Q.XI, 207-208: “Secundo, hoc idem probatur sic: per illa quae sunt minora et pauciora in rebus universi non potest habere certum iudicium de pluribus rebus universi; sed in universo entia materialia sunt pauciora et entia corporalia quam entia incorporalia; ergo per huiusmodi entia non potest haberi certum iudicium de omnibus aliis quoad naturas eorum, an scilicet sint composita ex materia an non. Confirmatur haec ratio per hoc quod eodem modo arguit Philosophus, IV *Metaphysicae*, contra Heraclitum, qui dixit omnia esse in continuo motu, quia vidit ista sensibilia corruptibilia esse in continuo motu, contra quem arguit quod, cum ista sensibilia corruptibilia sunt parva et pauca respectu aliorum quae sunt intransmutabilia, magis esset dicendum quod omnia sunt intransmutabilia, magis quam quod omnia sunt transmutabilia.”

arguments (a fault all too common today), using the less general science to determine the more general, rather than vice versa. The present argument is also useful for pointing out the different roles that matter plays in physics and in metaphysics for many Franciscans from Bonaventure to Gonsalvus: in physics matter may be primarily the principle of change, but in metaphysics it is primarily the principle of subsistence, that which supports and lies under form, whether there is a change of form or not; and the metaphysical role is prior and more fundamental.

A third argument against the incompatibility of matter and incorruptibility seems to have been sparked by a moment in the preliminary debate (the first half of <A3>). Gonsalvus disputes the notion that incorruptible substances cannot have matter since they would tend towards non-being. According to him, a creature does not tend towards non-being on account of matter so much as on account of its intrinsic instability (*vertibilitas*). He seems here to be alluding to the doctrine that God's sustaining and creative power is necessary to keep any creature at all from falling into non-being. Even if, however, something in itself tends to non-being because of this intrinsic instability, it can still be called naturally incorruptible—an angel may need the continuous preserving act of God to exist and yet not be corruptible as a body is. The same, therefore, might still be true if the angel contains matter. The whole association of matter with the tendency of non-being is bound up with a confusion between matter (conceived as lacking its own act of being, and as *prope nihil*) and nothingness proper. The intrinsic instability of things in existence is on account of their contingent creaturely status. They come from pure nothing, and so tend towards pure nothing. A material composite *as such*, however, is not produced out of nothing, but out of something, namely out of matter; and insofar as it is material (rather than insofar as it is a

creature) it tends not towards nothing, but towards something, namely its components. Again, matter as such does not tend towards non-being any more than it tends towards being: matter does not yearn for corruption *per se*, but only admits of the dissolution of its present form because it has a tendency for the form which follows it.¹³⁹

This point leads straight into the next one, which emphasises that a substance's corruptibility comes from its form and not its matter. A form which is united to its matter dissolubly—i.e. in such a way that it can be replaced by a contrary form—is corruptible, while one united to matter indissolubly is incorruptible. It is the manner in which form and matter are joined that determine their dissolubility, and the nature of the form that determines the manner in which they are united. Matter in itself is logically prior to matter as united to form in a particular way; “therefore matter in itself is not determined to being the principle of corruption, and consequently is consistent with the incorruptibility of the composite.” If matter is indeterminate with respect to the forms which it receives, then it is indeterminate with respect to the manner of its union with form, and thus indeterminate with respect to corruptibility or incorruptibility, just as animality is indeterminate with respect to men or asses, or body indeterminate with respect to white and black. And if it is in itself indeterminate, then it is compatible with both.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Ibid., 208: “Praeterea, hoc idem, tertio, ostenditur sic: magis tendit creatura in non esse ratione vertibilitatis quam ratione materiae; sed non obstante quod res quantum est de se tendat in non esse ratione vertibilitatis, adhuc dicitur incorruptibilis secundum naturam; ergo sequitur, non obstante quod res habeat materiam, poterit tamen esse incorruptibilis secundum naturam. —Maior probatur per terminos vertibilitatis et corruptionis, considerando terminum ‘a quo’ illius quod est vertibile, quod est purum nihil, et etiam terminum ‘ad quem,’ quod est nihil; sed materiale unde materiale non est de nihilo sed de aliquo, ut de materia; nec etiam in quantum materiale tendit in nihil, sed in aliquid; immo, non tendit in non esse nisi quia tendit in esse; materia enim non appetit non esse formae praecedentis nisi quia appetit esse formae sequentis.”

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 208-209: “Quarto, sic: materia de se non est determinata ad hoc quod sit principium corruptionis vel incorruptionis; ergo potest stare cum utroque; ergo sibi non repugnat esse in re incorruptibili. —Praeterea, consequentia patet de se: quod enim est indeterminatum ad aliqua duo potest stare cum utroque illorum, ut si animal est indeterminatum ad homines et asinos, et corpus ad album et nigrum, poterit stare cum utrobique. —

The assumption of spiritual matter's opponents, namely that matter is the principle of corruption and so incompatible with spiritual and incorporeal things, is therefore false.¹⁴¹

Before going on to address matter and quantity, however, Gonsalvus makes some additional remarks about the way that philosophy, and theologians following philosophy, have addressed this question. He has already pointed out the dangers of using physics as the standard by which to judge metaphysics. Now he connects that with his earlier remarks about the nature of physical bodies themselves. According to his earlier "thought experiment," we can conceive of a world in which incorruptibility is natural to bodies. Furthermore, revelation teaches that at some point the corporeal world will in fact be incorruptible, and this will be natural to it. Gonsalvus denies, along with St. Anselm,¹⁴² that man is essentially corruptible. His present corruptibility is a result of the Fall, and this colors his view of his own nature. If we realize this we can also realize that man is not, strictly, mortal by nature, despite having a body: the traditional definition of man as a mortal rational animal should be regarded as provisional and limited to the present state of things. It was formulated by philosophers who regarded the state of man as they found him. So in the present case, with the widespread view of matter as a principle of corruption: Aristotle followed his senses, and he judged the natures of things according to what he could gather about them from the senses. Since he found that generation and corruption in generable and corruptible things took place in the material substrate, without which no substantial change is possible, he concluded that matter is the

Probatio antecedentis: incorruptibilitas non opponitur materiae compositi nec corruptibilitas eam consequitur unde est materia, sed in quantum est unita formae dissolubiliter; unde incorruptibilitas opponitur materiae dissolubili a forma. Sed prior secundum naturam est materia secundum se quam materia unita dissolubiliter; ergo materia secundum se non est determinata ad hoc quod sit principium corruptionis, et per consequens potest stare cum incorruptibilitate compositi."

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 209: "Sic ergo patet quod primum fundamentum eorum non est verum, scilicet quod materiae repugnat esse in rebus spiritualibus aut incorporalibus quia est principium corruptionis. Iam ostensum est quod secundum se non est principium corruptionis."

¹⁴² Anselm, *Cur Deus homo*, II.11.

principle of corruption, whereby a thing is able to be and not to be. But just because matter is a necessary *precondition* for substantial change, it does not follow that it is *sufficient* to allow for substantial change; it is also required that the form have a contrary form and be united to its matter dissolubly. Moreover, there must be a real power or agent able to introduce the contrary form into the matter. “But this contrariety and power of acting can naturally cease in material things, and this cessation is natural to them,” namely when the world has been remade. Just because it requires God to remake the corporeal world as incorruptible does not mean that it will be unnatural; when God infuses a spiritual soul into a body the result is a natural man. “What naturally follows upon something supernaturally done can still be natural, just as, although a blind man should receive his sight supernaturally, nevertheless once he has sight it is natural for him to see.”¹⁴³

It might be objected that with this line of argument, upon which he seems to lay great weight, Gonsalvus moves the debate out of philosophy into the realm of theology. In my opinion, however, the actual role of theological data here is to liberate metaphysics from the senses and thus from the parochialism of physics, by showing a metaphysical possibility for which we have no sensible analogue. If metaphysics is the science of being qua being, its conclusions should be valid at all times and places, even if the laws of physics were other

¹⁴³ Gonsalvus, Q.XI, 209-211: “Quando ergo arguitur quod materia est qua res potest esse et non esse, et est in potentia contradictionis ad esse et non esse . . . et discipulo suo quarenti quomodo philosophi definiverunt hominem mortale dicentes quod homo est animal rationale mortale, respondet [Anselmus] quod sic definiverunt quia in tali statu hominem invenerunt. Sic dico in proposito: Aristoteles secutus est sensum, et secundum quod poterat per sensum de rebus iudicare, secundum hoc aestimabat esse de natura earum; et quia invenit in rebus generabilibus et corruptibilibus generationem et corruptionem circa materiam, ut circa subiectum, qua ablata non posset esse transmutatio, ideo concludebat quod materia est principium corruptionis, quo res potest esse et non esse, cum tamen secundum veritatem, ad hoc quod aliquid sit corruptibile non sufficit quod habeat materiam, sed requiritur quod habeat materiam dissolubiliter unitam formae, et haec est materia unita formae habenti contrarium non solum in essendo sed in agendo . . . Sed ista contrarietas et potestas agendi naturaliter potest cessare in rebus materialibus, et ista cessatio est eis naturalis . . . quia quod naturaliter sequitur ad aliquid supernaturale factum, potest esse adhuc naturale, ut quamvis sit supernaturale quod caecus recipiat visum, habito tamen visu, naturale est caeco videre . . .”

than we observe them to be; we cannot, then, set up the (ultimately contingent) laws of physics as arbiters of metaphysics. Gonsalvus has plenty of purely metaphysical arguments to show that matter has a wider domain than merely as a principle of substantial change; his theological examples merely allow us to envision a world in which matter is present even with no substantial change at all, and so overcome the importunate objections of physics, which assumes that the role which matter plays in its own domain is its primary and indeed only role. But generation and corruption is neither the end of matter nor its proper operation in itself; rather it is intrinsically ordered to the integrity of the composite substance, and its proper operation is to underlie its forms.¹⁴⁴

2. Gonsalvus now considers the objection that matter cannot be in spiritual creatures because it would subject them to quantity. His solution has already been laid out in the opening debate. Matter in its essence does not include quantity—quantity is an accidental form—and so it is not necessary to assert that whatever has matter has quantity. Matter is as essentially indeterminate with respect to quantity as it is with respect to corruptibility.

The claim of spiritual matter's opponents, however, is that without quantity there is no way for forms in matter to be distinguished: recall Giles of Rome's quite lengthy arguments on the subject, for instance. But Gonsalvus simply denies that matter needs quantity to be divided or to have different parts. Since every positive property is ultimately given to matter by its substantial form, it is through form that one instance of matter is distinct from another (*ab alio*), just as it is from form that matter is something (*aliquid*) at all, and not from some accidental form which is somehow bound up with matter prior to the

¹⁴⁴ Gonsalvus, Q.XI, 211: “. . . finis vero materiae non est generatio et corruptio nec eius operatio propria secundum se, sed ordinatur per se ad integritatem compositi ut materia substet formae eius.”

introduction of the substantial form. Now Gonsalvus seems to hedge: it is true that in material things here in the sensible world the partibility of matter comes only from quantity, which is required on account of the necessity of natural agents, which act by multiplying forms in quantified matter. Forms cannot be multiplied unless they are received in one part of matter after another, which only quantity makes possible.¹⁴⁵ Gonsalvus does not elaborate on this point, and it's unclear whether it is a retraction of the earlier point that quantity is introduced into matter by the substantial form, or whether we are to understand that quantity comes along with some primitive substantial form like the forms of elemental mixtures, which—since he accepts a plurality of substantial forms in a substance—can endure along with higher forms.

3. The third foundation of opponents' objections is the argument from the immateriality of cognition. If the mode of something's operation is according to the mode of its substance, and if an intellectual substance has an immaterial operation, its substance ought also to be immaterial. But this argument fails, first, because angels and souls understand not only the universal and immaterial, but also the singular and material. And it fails, second, because the claim that the mode of operation must be the same as the mode of the substance can mean either of two things. First, that the two must always be identical, which is false. For instance, the mode of operation is transient and the mode of substance is permanent. Second,

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 211-212: "Secundum vero fundamentum eorum propter quod negant materiam in rebus spirituaibus est simplicitas earum per quam repugnat eis habere quantitatem, quae tamen, ut dicunt, necessario consequitur materiam. –Sed quod non repugnet esse in eis ratione quantitate probatur sic: quod de essentia sua non includit oppositum alicuius, per essentiam suam non repugnat illi; sed materia secundum suam essentiam non includit quantitatem; ergo ratione quantitatis non repugnat materia non habentibus quantitatem, ut rebus spiritualibus. – Quando ergo arguunt quod materia non dividitur nec habet partem et partem nisi per quantitatem, dicendum quod non est verum; per illud enim idem per quod est aliquid, est illud quod est distinctum ab alio, et non per illud quod non est de essentia eius, quamvis in istis materialibus non esset partibilitas materiae nisi esset quantitas quae requiritur propter necessitatem agentis naturalis, qui non agit nisi in quantum et propter plurificationem formae, quae non plurificatur nisi recipiatur in alia et alia parte materiae formaliter, cum partibilitas materiae non est nisi a quantitate."

it could mean that some mode of operation or other must be the same as the mode of substance. If so, why should that mode in which the operation is like the substance be that of the immateriality of cognition and not some other? The opponents fall into a *petitio principii*.¹⁴⁶

Looking at the operation of cognition more closely, Gonsalvus makes the same point that he made in the parallel argument in Q.XIII. In examining an operation one must consider not only the power or the substance to which the operation belongs, but also the operation's object; indeed one must consider the object more than the substance, since operations are distinguished by their objects and not by their powers or substances. An operation then can be immaterial in the sense of having an immaterial object, and yet be material on the part of its power or substance. Gonsalvus raises again the case of the imagination, familiar from William de la Mare, whose object is a phantasm separated from a thing's proper matter, and yet which lies wholly in a material organ. It is not necessary, then, to admit that the mode of every operation is determined according to the mode of the power or substance performing the operation, and so the mode of the substance itself cannot be determined by the mode of its operation.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 212: "Tertium vero fundamentum eorum propter quod negant materiam in spiritualibus est natura operationis, quae debet esse secundum modum substantiae eorum; operatio vero eorum est immaterialis, quia est immateriale istud fundamentum. –Primo, deficit quia angelus et anima non solum intelligunt universale et immateriale, sed etiam singulare et materiale. –Secundo deficit quia, cum dicunt quod modus operationis et substantiae, aut intelligunt de omni modo operationis et substantiae, et tunc est propositio falsa, quia modus operationis est transiens et modus substantiae est permanens; aut intelligunt de aliquo modo operationis et substantiae, et tunc aut est de alio modo a modo immaterialitatis aut de isto modo; si de alio, tunc nihil ad propositum; si de isto modo intelligunt, tunc petunt quod probare debent."

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 213: "Item, operatio non tantum respicit potentiam sive substantiam operantis, sed etiam obiectum, et plus obiectum quam substantiam, cum ab obiecto sortiatur distinctionem et non a potentia nec a substantia; operatio autem potest esse immaterialis a parte obiecti immaterialis, quae tamen materialis est ex parte potentiae materialis, ut operatio imaginativae est immaterialis ex parte obiecti imaginati quod est quantitas non sensibilis et ita non materialis materia sensibili, quae tamen operatio est in potentia materiali sensibili, ut imaginativa. Ergo non oportet quod modus operationis simpliciter sit secundum modum potentiae et substantiae operantis."

4. The fourth foundation of opposition to spiritual matter is the argument specific to the human soul, namely that if the soul both has matter and is in its totality the form of the body, then the matter of the soul will inform the body. As we have seen, Gonsalvus devoted extensive attention to this subject in the opening debate, and he has little to add here. The objection fails because it considers the soul only under its aspect as the form of the body, and so sees it only as a form. But in addition to being a form the soul is *hoc aliquid*, something in its own right, and thus a composite. Now when something acts the entire composite performs the act, and not merely the form or merely the matter; at the same time, a composite acts by reason of its form. Thus “the whole soul informs the body, but by reason of its form, nor therefore does it follow that its matter similarly informs [the body].” For just as it pertains to the composite *hoc aliquid* to exist, so does it pertain to the soul to be in something and to inform something. Now, the whole composite exists by reason of its form—it is the form which gives being to a substance—and yet it is the matter-form composite which exists and not merely the form. For the same reason the whole soul informs the body by reason of its form, and yet it does not follow that the matter of the soul itself informs it.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., “Quartum fundamentum eorum ex informatione est animae, quia si habeat materiam et tota sit forma corporis, ergo materia animae informabit corpus. –Sed illud fundamentum non concludit, quia solum compositum agit et non forma nec materia, sed totum ratione formae; nec tamen sequitur quod forma agat sic in proposito; tota anima informat corpus ratione suae formae, nec ideo sequitur quod materia eius informet similiter; sicut esse se habet ad compositum sic inesse et informare ad animam. Nunc autem, totum compositum existit ratione suae formae, nec tamen sequitur quod materia eius informet.”

IV.3.2.3. Direct Argument for Gonsalvus' Position

Finally, Gonsalvus argues directly for his position, showing, first, that there is matter in spiritual creatures as well as in corporeal ones, and, second, that matter is of the same sort wherever it is found.¹⁴⁹ To prove that matter is in spiritual creatures he presents four arguments.

1) The first argues that principles ought to be proportioned to that which they produce (*principiatis illorum*). A principle is more and more truly found in those things in which the properties of the principle are more to be found. But the properties of matter, whether according to becoming or according to being, are more truly found in all incorporeal things than in corporeal ones, and so matter will be more and more truly found in incorporeal things than in corporeal ones.¹⁵⁰ Gonsalvus justifies this astonishing claim by pointing out what the essentially properties of matter really are: in itself matter according to its being is ingenerable and incorruptible; according to its becoming matter can be produced in being only by a direct act of creation by God. But freedom from generation and corruption and direct creation from nothing are properties especially (*singulariter*) accorded to incorporeal creatures. The

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., “Nunc autem, tertio, ostendendum est directe propositum, ubi duo sunt probanda: Prima, quod non solum in corporalibus, verum [etiam in] spiritualibus sit materia. –Et secundo, probandum est quod illa sit eiusdem rationis ibi et in omnibus in quibus est materia.”

¹⁵⁰ It is worth noting the interesting similarities and differences this argument has to one offered by St. Thomas in the body of his *Quaestiones disputatae de anima* 6, noted in Chapter 2 above: “. . . quod oportet in quocumque inveniuntur proprietates materie inueniri materiam. Vnde cum in anima inveniuntur proprietates materie, que sunt recipere, subici, esse in potentia, et alia huiusmodi, arbitratur esse necessarium quod in anima sit materia. Set hec ratio friuola est, et positio impossibilis.”

essential properties of matter, therefore, are more truly found in spiritual than in corporeal creatures, and so matter is more and more truly to be found in the former than in the latter.¹⁵¹

With this argument Gonsalvus strikes more directly at the heart of the opposing view than in any of the arguments aimed at removing their “foundations.” The objections which he removed in the previous section, objections about quantity, cognition, and so forth, have more of the character of “practical” difficulties with spiritual matter, the sort of difficulty of which one might say, “I don’t see how it could be true, because—”. The present argument is aimed, instead, at revealing the deep divide between metaphysical viewpoints which makes spiritual matter seem so natural and obvious to some and so repellent and absurd to others. Nothing could be further removed from the perspective which sees matter as the dregs and muck of the universe, from which form flees and strives to surmount, a metaphysical husk of unintelligibility and obscurity, a drag and weight pulling form down to corruption and non-being, than the perspective from which spiritual natures have more in common with matter than do corporeal ones. The way in which he repeatedly brings this stark contrast to the forefront of the question is one of the most distinctive and valuable characteristics of Gonsalvus’ approach.

2) In his second argument Gonsalvus continues to explicate the fundamental metaphysical principles which underlie the doctrine of spiritual matter. That whose nature it is to provide perfection in a being ought especially to be found in a perfect being. But the

¹⁵¹ Gonsalvus, Q.XI, 214: “. . . principia debent proportionari principiatis illorum; igitur magis et verius sunt aliqua principia in quibus magis inveniuntur proprietates illorum principiorum; sed proprietates materiae, tum quantum ad fieri tum quantum ad esse, verius inveniuntur in incorporalibus omnibus quam in corporalibus; ergo magis et verius erit materia in incorporalibus quam in corporalibus. —Assumpta patet: quia proprietas materiae, quantum ad suum esse, est quod sit ingenerabilis et incorruptibilis; proprietas vero eius quantum ad fieri est quod producitur in esse per creationem a sola potentia creante. Haec autem singulariter conveniunt incorporalibus; ergo materia, quantum ad proprietates sui esse et fieri magis proportionatur incorporalibus quam corporalibus. Ergo etc.”

nature of matter is to provide for the perfection of substance as such. It belongs to the nature of substance to provide a foundation for things other than itself (i.e. accidental forms).

Indeed, the very word substance is from *sub-stans*, standing under the ephemeral forms for which it provides a stable base. Now a substance is the whole composite being, but this key operation of “substanding” (*substandi*) is attributed specifically to the matter of a composite, not to the whole composite and certainly not to the form: it is not humanity in a man which supports his whiteness, but his matter. (Gonsalvus notes parenthetically that even if one were to insist that it *is* the whole composite which supports the accidents, and not the matter alone, one would already then have admitted that an angel having accidents is such a composite.)

And many forms are not substantial at all: an accident neither “substands” other accidents nor forms an essential part of a composite which does; whereas all matter is capable of “substanding”. To “substand” forms, then, is not attributed to form qua form at all, and so that which pertains to the perfection of a substance as such, as distinct from accidents, is or is provided by matter. But spiritual creatures are preeminently substances, being nobler and more perfect than corporeal substances, and so matter must be posited in them.¹⁵²

¹⁵² Ibid., 214-215: “. . . quod facit ad perfectionem substantiae in quantum substantia est ens distinctum contra ens diminutum, quod dicitur ens quia entis, et tale ponendum est in entibus nobilioribus sive magis perfectis, ut sunt incorruptibilia omnia; sed materia est huiusmodi, quod ipsa facit ad perfectionem substantiae ut substantia est ens perfectum distinctum contra accidens; ergo etc. –Maior est evidens secundum illud: ‘sicut simpliciter ad simpliciter, et magis ad magis, et maxime ad maxime’; ergo illud quod facit ad perfectionem maxime debet esse in ente perfecto. –Minor probatur: quia de ratione substantiae est quod praestet fundamentum aliis; sed prima ratio substandi attribuitur materiae in composito, non autem composito; vel si sic, tunc habetur propositum quod angelus substans accidentibus sit quoddam compositum; nec etiam primo attribuitur formae unde forma, quia non omnes formae substant; ergo prima ratio pertinet ad perfectionem substantiae ut substantia distincta contra accidens.”

3) Gonsalvus' third argument is from the multiplication of individuals in spiritual species. Since there are many souls and angels of the same species, they must have matter.¹⁵³ Gonsalvus goes on to confirm that both souls and angels belong to species with a plurality of individual members. The case is more clear for human souls, because they belong to men, who are clearly all of the same species. Men's' bodies would not have specifically the same forms if their souls were not specifically identical. "Therefore," Gonsalvus concludes bluntly, "souls have matter." (Note the implication that matter is a necessary factor of individuation, even if, as we saw earlier, the intrinsic indeterminacy of matter means that it cannot be the only such factor.) Nevertheless, he insists, it is not sufficient to protest that the matter which distinguishes and multiplies souls is the matter of the human body; on the contrary, since bodies exist for the sake of their souls, and the soul is the end of the body, therefore the multiplication and distinction of souls cannot be on account of the body. Rather, it is only because of the prior specific identity of their souls that bodies are *human* bodies at all. On the other hand, if the distinction and multiplication of souls came from their bodies, then at death, when these bodies are corrupted and annihilated, their souls would cease to be distinct from one another, which is impossible. "It would also follow that God could not create souls without bodies, which is false."¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ For the converse position note St. Thomas, *Summa theologiae* I.Q.50 A.4: "Si ergo angeli non sunt compositi ex materia et forma, ut dictum est supra, sequitur quod impossibile sit esse duos angelos unius speciei." Of course, Thomas goes on to assert that *even if* angels had matter there could not be more than one to a species.

¹⁵⁴ Gonsalvus, Q.XI, 215-216: ". . . quaecumque sunt plura eiusdem speciei habent materiam . . . sed anima et angeli sunt plures eiusdem speciei; ergo habent materiam. –Minor patet de animabus quae sunt plures eiusdem speciei, aliter homines non essent plures eiusdem speciei nisi haberent formas eiusdem speciei: ergo animae habent materiam. Sed ad hanc plurificationem et distinctionem animarum sub eadem specie non sufficit materia in qua sunt et quam perficiunt, ut corpus humanum, quia corpora sunt propter animas, et anima est finis corporis, sicut dicitur I *De anima*; ergo plurificatio et distinctio animarum non est per corpora, sed magis e contra. . . . Item, si distinctio et pluralitas animarum esset per corpora, ergo corruptis et annihilatis corporibus cessaret distinctio animarum, quod est impossibile; sequeretur etiam quod Deus non posset creare animas sine corporibus, quod falsum est."

Proving that angelic species have more than one member is more difficult. Gonsalvus offers two ways. First is from the nature of a species itself which is intrinsically apt (*apta nata*) to be predicated of a plurality of numerically different individuals. Just as nothing can be called a genus unless it is intrinsically apt to be predicated of a plurality of species, so nothing can be called a species unless it is intrinsically apt to be predicated of numerically different members. This is true even when a given species only in fact has one member, such as the sun: it is intrinsically possible that there could be many suns, and God could have made many if he chose. One might note that this argument even if successful only proves the *possibility* of there being many angels to a species, and does not prove that there actually is a plurality of angels in any given species. Gonsalvus' second attempt to prove his point also lacks philosophical force: unless there were angels of the same species, there would be no natural love among them; they would have no more natural delight and companionship in one another than there is between an ass and a cow.¹⁵⁵

4) Gonsalvus' fourth direct argument for spiritual matter is from the passability of spiritual creatures. "As being and act attest to form, so potency and passivity (*passio*) attest to matter; but in angels and in the soul there is true passivity, since they suffer from hell-fire.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 216: "Alia etiam pars minoris quantum ad angelos, quod sint eiusdem speciei, probatur dupliciter: primo, ex ratione speciei, quae apta nata est de pluribus numero differentibus praedicari; unde sicut nihil habet rationem generis nisi sit aptum natum de pluribus differentibus specie praedicari, ita nihil est habens rationem speciei nisi sit aptum natum de pluribus differentibus numero praedicari. Unde sol aptus natus est de pluribus praedicari, et posset si agens, cuius potestati eius forma subiicitur, vellet ipsum producere. –Secundo, hoc idem probatur ex hoc, quod nisi angeli essent eiusdem speciei, sequeretur quod inter eos non esset amor naturalis, nec unius esset plus cura naturaliter de alio in gaudium naturale nec societas naturalis quam ipsi asino de bove . . ." It may be worth noting that Bonaventure seems to assume that all angels belong to a single species, and is content with proving that souls and angels are specifically different. See *In II Sententiarum* D.I Pars II Art. III Q. I.

Therefore etc.”¹⁵⁶ The statement of the argument is short perhaps because it is so well-established; we have seen it made in very similar terms, complete with reference to hellfire, by William de la Mare and Nicholas of Ockham, and of course the point goes back to Bonaventure and beyond. However, Gonsalvus goes on to raise and answer three difficulties associated with it.

The first is taken from a theological example. If nothing can undergo something (*pati*) except what has matter, then no “true and real transformation” could occur in the accidents and sacred species of the Eucharist, since after consecration these exist without matter. But it is apparent to the senses that the species do undergo transformation, for instance, when consumed.¹⁵⁷ For Gonsalvus this can only be explained by appealing to the miraculous nature of the sacramental species. If God were to make some form altogether separate from matter, such that it neither had matter as a part of itself nor perfected a material subject, it would be altogether impassable and could undergo nothing. Nevertheless forms which have an aptitude for matter, and which follow upon matter, and which (in the natural order of things) are immersed in matter, are able to undergo transformation. And this is the case with the sacramental species, which according to nature would inhere in a material subject and are separated from it only by divine power.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ Gonsalvus, Q.XI, 217: “Quarto, ostenditur supradicta sic: sicut esse et agere attestatur formae, ita potentia et passio attestatur materiae; sed in angelis et in anima potest esse vara [*sic*; read *vera*?] passio, cum ab igne infernali patiantur. Igitur etc.”

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., “Sed contra hanc rationem sunt aliquae difficultates: 1. Quia si nihil pati posset nisi quod est habens materiam, tunc non posset esse vera et realis transmutatio circa accidentia et Species sacramentales cum sint sine materia, cuius oppositum apparet ad sensum.”

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., “Ad primum dicendum quod si Deus faceret aliquam formam a materia omnino separatam quae nec haberet materiam partem sui nec materiam quam perficeret, illa esset omnino impassibilis, nec aliquo modo pati posset; formae tamen quae habent aptitudinem ad materiam et quae consequuntur materiam et sunt immersae materiae, ex aptitudine quam habent ad materiam, pati possunt; et ideo circa accidentia sacramentalia vera potest esse transmutatio.”

Gonsalvus recognizes that this solution is open to dispute. One might say that, just as something does not act out of an aptitude for form, and that such an aptitude for form does not allow action unless the form in question is present in act as well, so similarly an aptitude for matter cannot give real passibility unless matter is actually present. This seems to follow by an *a maiori* argument, since matter is more essentially related to potency and passibility than form is to action. Gonsalvus replies that the case between matter and form is not similar here, since nothing can act except insofar as it is in act, and nothing exists in act except by reason of its form, and so nothing can act unless its form is actually present. Passivity however stems not from what is present in act but from what is present in potency; and while the actual presence of matter, of course, provides potency, an aptitude for matter is itself another kind of potency (presumably “objective” and not “subjective” potency). The sacramental species can only act because of their actually existing form; but they can be passive, not only when inhering in the subjective potency of matter, but also by *being in potency* to inhering in the potency of matter. The really present potency of matter itself is not required, for more is required for action than for passivity. Action, again, requires that the acting thing be a being *per se* existing in act, which can only be true if there is an actual form; but passivity only requires some potency, not necessarily that the thing in potency be a being *per se* having potency (i.e. matter), since aptitude for matter is itself a potency.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 218: “Sed dices forte quod ex aptitudine quam aliquid habet ad formam non agit; non enim aptitudo ad formam dat agere nisi actu forma habeatur; ergo similiter, nec aptitudo ad materiam dabit potestatem patiendi nisi actu habeatur materia; et videtur consequentia tenere per locum a maiori, quia essentialius comparatur materia ad potentiam et passibilitatem quam forma ad actionem . . . —Respondeo quod non est simile, quia nihil agit nisi secundum quod in actu; nihil autem est in actu nisi ratione formae; et ideo nihil potest agere nisi actu habeat formam; pati autem inest alicui quod est in potentia, non solum autem est aliquid in potentia ex hoc quod actu habet materiam, sed ex aptitudine ad materiam; ideo non est simile. —Item, plura requiritur ad agere quam ad pati, quia ad agere requiritur quod sit ens per se existens in actu, et tale non est nisi per formam; sed ad pati non tantum requiritur quod sit ens per se habens potentiam, sed aptitudinem ad illam.”

The second objection Gonsalvus gives to his argument that spiritual creatures must have matter because of their passivity comes from quantity. Quantity is divisible, since one part stands outside of another part. “But the division of quantity is a real action; therefore something can be passive (*potest pati*) according to a real action, although it be separate from matter.”¹⁶⁰ The point of this objection is unclear until Gonsalvus explains in his own response to it. There is a twofold division of quantity: one is mathematical and imaginary, in which we imagine separable parts in quantity—Gonsalvus seems to be thinking of, for instance, imagined geometrical figures—and these are always divisible in the imagination. The other kind of quantitative division is natural and real division, when some quantity is broken and its parts separated from each other, and this kind of division can only take place in matter which is already subject to natural qualities like hardness or softness, whereby something can be actually divided. Gonsalvus’ point is that abstract quantity, or even quantity existing in a subject without qualities otherwise dispositive of its being affected, does not in itself provide for passivity.¹⁶¹

The third objection Gonsalvus offers suggests that creatures are already mutable as a consequence of being created from nothing, and not only because they are made of matter. Since being created is a real change from being nothing, a creature suffers real passivity in

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 217: “Item, de ratione quantitatis est quod sit divisibilis secundum partem extra partem; sed divisio quantitatis est actio realis; ergo aliquid potest pati secundum actionem realem, licet sit a materia separatum.”

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 218-219: “Ad aliud de divisione quantitatis dicendum est quod duplex est divisio quantitatis: una mathematica et imaginaria secundum quam imaginatur in quantitate pars extra partem, et ita semper divisibilis est secundum imaginationem. Alia vero est divisio naturalis et realis secundum quam quantitas frangitur et partes ad invicem separantur, et haec divisio non competit nisi in materia, et non in quacumque virtute, quia non nisi sub qualitatibus naturalibus, ut sub duritie et mollitie; aliter enim caelum esset divisibile si de ratione quantitatis esset quod posset dividi et frangi; unde secundum quod aliquod corpus naturale diversimode disponitur qualitatibus, diversimode secundum hoc se habet in divisione naturali, scilicet plus et minus.”

being created, and does not thereby require matter.¹⁶² But against this Gonsalvus distinguishes between a positive change *from* something and *to* something, and a switch between being and non-being. Change in the sense of (even accidental) transformation requires matter. Annihilation, a “turn” from being to nothing, is possible for a creature on the basis of its being created from nothing, but this is not change or passivity in the relevant sense, since the terminus of change is privative rather than positive.¹⁶³

Gonsalvus concludes the entire question with a discussion of the unity of matter. Not only is there matter in spiritual things, but it is of the same sort as that in corporeal things, so that for all created substances there is a single kind of matter. Gonsalvus offers two arguments for this in addition to appeals to authority.¹⁶⁴

Matter, according to the first argument, may be compared both with form and with its mode of receiving (*percipiendi*) form, but it is compared more essentially with the mode of receiving form (because matter is essentially receptive of form, but matter is not essentially form). Again, matter is compared with the composite and with its mode of establishing (*percipiendi*) the composite, but it is more essentially compared with the composite itself, since it is an essential part of the completed composite, and a part is more essentially compared to that of which it is a part than to anything else. Given all this, Gonsalvus asks, if matter were not generically one for all creatures, where would its diversity come from?¹⁶⁵ It

¹⁶² Ibid., 217: “—3. Item, omnis creatura, quia est de nihilo, est mutabilis, et non solum quia est de materia; sed omne quod mutatur mutatione reali patitur passione reali; ergo non ex hoc aliquid patitur quia habet materiam.”

¹⁶³ Ibid., 219: “Ad tertium dicendum quod aliquid mutatur positive quia in terminum mutatur, et talis mutatio requirit materiam; aliquid dicitur vero mutari privatione quia annihilatur et vertitur in nihil, et talis mutatio non requirit materiam, sed sufficit quod sit creatum de nihilo quod sic mutatur.”

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., “Secundo, quantum ad hunc argumentum, et ultimo quantum ad totam quaestionem, dicendum est quod non solum materia est in rebus spiritualibus, sed quod illa materia eiusdem rationis est secundum se cum materia corporalium, ita quod in creatis per se entibus est materia unius rationis, quod probatur, primo per rationes, et secundo, per auctoritates Sanctorum.”

¹⁶⁵ The assumption, left unspoken here, is that matter *in itself* has no distinctions which are not given by form.

could not come from the diversity of composites or the forms of those composites, when—for instance in generable and corruptible things—matter is admitted to be of the same sort even when belonging to specifically different forms. But if its diversity does not come from that to which it is more essentially compared, namely the composite to which it belongs, then it certainly cannot come from that to which it is less essentially compared, namely its manner of establishing that composite. Matter unites with form to establish a composite either dissolubly or indissolubly, according to transformation or without transformation, but these manners of establishing the composite cannot themselves introduce diversity into matter in itself. Consequently matter must be of one sort in corruptible and incorruptible things, although it participates in form and in the composite in different modes for each case, in the first case being united to form dissolubly, and in the second case indissolubly.¹⁶⁶

The second argument raises a problem which arises on the assumption of a diversity of kinds of matters. If generable and corruptible things, the heavens, and spiritual creatures all had different sorts of matter, the matter of the heavenly bodies would have to be nobler than that of things here below (if they were in the same grade of nobility they would not be of different sorts). But a nobler perfectible matter ought to have a nobler natural perfection, or else its natural perfectible potency would be in vain. Therefore the form perfecting the

¹⁶⁶ Gonsalvus, Q.XI, 219-220: “Primo ergo, arguitur sic: quodcumque aliquid habet habitudinem ad duo quorum alterum essentialius respiciat quam reliquum, si non capit distinctionem et diversitatem ab eo quod essentialius respicit, nec ab altero recipiet distinctionem quod secundario respicit, nec ab altero recipiet distinctionem quod secundario respicit; nunc autem, materia comparatur ad formam et ad modum percipiendi formam, et essentialius comparatur ad modum percipiendi formam. Comparatur etiam materia ad compositum et ad modum percipiendi compositum, sed essentialius comparatur ad compositum, quia est pars essentialis compositi et non modo percipiendi compositum; et pars essentialius comparatur ad compositum quam ad aliquid. Nunc autem, nec ex diversitate compositorum nec formarum causatur diversitas materiae primae quin unius rationis sit in compositis et sub formis differentibus specie; ergo nec ex diverso modo percipiendi formam vel compositum, ut dissolubiliter vel indissolubiliter, secundum transmutationem sive sine transmutatione, causabitur diversitas materiae, et per consequens materia prima erit unius rationis in corruptibilibus et in incorruptibilibus, quamvis alio modo participet formam et compositum utrobique, et quamvis alio modo uniatur formae utrobique, ut hic [in]dissolubiliter, ibi vero solubiliter.”

matter of the heavenly bodies ought to be nobler than any form perfecting the matter of generable and corruptible things, including human souls. The heavens therefore ought to be animated by an intellective soul—which is false according to the truth of the matter.¹⁶⁷

Gonsalvus concludes the solution of the question with a number of appeals to the familiar authorities of *De unitate*, Boethius, pseudo-Augustine, and Augustine.¹⁶⁸

IV.4. Conclusion

Gonsalvus of Spain provides a crucial chapter in the history of spiritual matter at the hinge of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In his small surviving *corpus* of philosophical writings the subject takes an unusually prominent place. He treats it with a combination of metaphysical depth and topical breadth unparalleled among Franciscans since his fellow Minister General St. Bonaventure, half a century earlier. Noteworthy is the fact that Gonsalvus is here as thorough-going a Bonaventurian as any of the thinkers presented in the last chapter. He argues from traditional Bonaventurian principles as consistently as

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 220: “Secundo, hoc idem probatur sic: si in caelo esset materia alterius rationis quam in istis corporalibus, et in rebus spiritualibus quam in rebus corporalibus, oporteret quod materia in corporibus caelestibus esset nobilior quam materia istorum inferiorum; aliter si essent in aequali gradu non essent alterius rationis; sed perfectibili nobiliori debetur perfectio naturalis nobilior, aliter enim esset aliqua potentia naturalis in perfectibili frustra cum non posset perfici; unde quamvis non tenet in perfectibilibus perfectione supernaturali, ut de gratia, tamen tenet de eo quod est perfectibile naturaliter, et quod vere habet rationem perfectibilis; quod dico propter compositum quod perficitur forma accidentali, quod proprie non est perfectibile essentialiter. Ergo forma perficiens materiam in caelestibus esset nobilior forma perficiente materiam in generabilibus animatis; et sic caelum esset animatur anima intellectiva, quod tamen falsum est secundum rei veritatem.”

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 220-221: “Hoc etiam confirmatur auctoritatibus . . .”

Matthew of Aquasparta. His treatment has much in common with Olivi's in its metaphysical penetration, and the two are similar in most of their principles and conclusions, though Gonsalvus has a firmer grasp on the range of issues involved than does Olivi and covers more argumentative ground. In addition, Gonsalvus clearly does not share Olivi's disdain for Aristotle, at whom he always casts a glance to justify his principles. He is concerned to affirm Bonaventure's views on the unity of matter, combating Richard of Middleton's theory of a threefold matter, which was being held in his own day (as we can see from Gonsalvus' bachelor respondent). He stands in the tradition of William de la Mare and William's later readers in his lack of interest in engaging alternative theories of spiritual composition, and does not make the relation of essence and existence a focus of the debate, as many Franciscans felt the need to do. Instead he pays special attention to a position like that of Dietrich of Freiberg, which claims that matter is restricted to generable and corruptible things alone.

Although Gonsalvus' position on spiritual matter is thoroughly Franciscan, making constant use of Bonaventuran principles and traditional arguments and distinctions, Gonsalvus adds his own original contributions to the debate in several places. Of particular importance is his detailed discussion in the opening debate of Q.XI about the relation between the matter proper to the human soul and the corporeal body which the soul informs; his extensive refutation of the claim that incorruptibility is incompatible with matter, using thought-experiments, theological data, and considerations of the criterion of naturalness; his strong insistence that every property, including quantity, is provided to matter by form, and the inference that whether a substance is corruptible or incorruptible is a consequence of the manner in which form unites itself to matter, and not a consequence of the nature of matter

itself; finally, a rigorous distinction between negative and limited notions of the role that matter plays in creation and his own positive and expansive one. Altogether Gonsalvus' defense of spiritual matter is perhaps the most significant one since that of St. Bonaventure himself.

Chapter 5

Conclusion: Gonsalvus' Impact and the Fate of Spiritual Matter

This final chapter concludes the present study by examining the relation between Gonsalvus of Spain's Q.XI and the writings of two important contemporaries, Godfrey of Fontaines and John Duns Scotus.

V.1. Godfrey of Fontaines

Godfrey of Fontaines (ca.1250-1306/9) was perhaps, after Henry of Ghent, the most important of the Secular Masters of Theology of Paris in the last quarter of the thirteenth century.¹ Born in present-day Belgium, he studied under Henry of Ghent, and was deeply involved in both the theological and the ecclesiastical life of the day, taking part in the mendicant disputes and holding various offices. He left behind a number of manuscripts, including a famous notebook containing early witness to works by St. Thomas Aquinas,

¹ For Godfrey's life, see M. De Wulf, *Un théologien-philosophe du XIIIe siècle. Etude sur la vie, les oeuvres et l'influence de Godefroid de Fontaines* (Brussels, 1904); John Wippel, "Godfrey of Fontaines at the University of Paris in the last quarter of the thirteenth century," in J. Aertsen, K. Emery, and A. Speer, eds., *Nach der Verurteilung von 1277. Philosophie und Theologie an der Universität von Paris im letzten Viertel des 13. Jahrhunderts. Studien und Texte* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2001), 359-389. For a thorough survey of scholarship on Godfrey up to 1981 see Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey of Fontaines* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1981), xiii-xv, notes 10-12. Wippel's book is the primary resource on the subject, and he remains the foremost authority on Godfrey. See also his "Godfrey of Fontaines and the Real Distinction Between Essence and Existence," *Traditio* 20 (1964), 385-410; *Metaphysical Themes in Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1984), chapter VII; "Possible sources for Godfrey of Fontaines' views on the act-potency composition of simple creatures," *Medieval Studies* 44 (1984), 222-244; see also F.X. Putallaz, *Insolente liberté. Controverses et condamnations au XIIIe siècle* (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires; Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1995).

Giles of Rome, and others.² As for his philosophical thought, “his metaphysics stands out . . . as the most striking and most powerful form of a purer kind of Aristotelianism to be developed at Paris during the period between the death of Thomas Aquinas in 1274” and Scotus’ new synthesis around the turn of the century.³

Godfrey discusses spiritual matter twice, once in the case of angels⁴ and once in the case of the human soul.⁵ Each has been discussed in some detail by John Wippel, and so my treatment will not be exhaustive.⁶ Instead I will briefly survey both questions before more closely examining the section of the second one in which Godfrey critiques Gonsalvus of Spain’s arguments.

Godfrey’s Quodlibet III has been dated to Advent, 1286.⁷ Question 3 asks whether an angelic nature is composed from true matter and true form. The word “nature” in the statement of the question is significant. Godfrey, unlike some opponents of spiritual matter, realizes that one cannot dismiss the doctrine by appealing to *any composition whatsoever* in a spiritual creature as an alternative, for instance to a composition of an angel’s substance with his accidents, or of essence with existence (a distinction which Godfrey rejects in any case). What is at issue is not whether the angel completely lacks composition, but whether his

² For this see A. Aiello and R. Wielockx, *Goffredo di Fontaines, aspirante baccelliere Sentenziario: le autografe "Notule de scientia theologie" e la cronologia del ms. Paris BNF Lat. 16297*, Corpus Christianorum, Autographa Medii Aevi, VI (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008).

³ Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey of Fontaines*, 385.

⁴ Godfrey of Fontaines, *Quod.* III, q.3: “Utrum natura angelica sit composita ex vera materia et vera forma.” In *Les quatre premiers Quodlibets de Godefroid de Fontaines*, ed. M. de Wulf A. Pelzer (Louvain: Institut supérieur de philosophie de l’Université, 1904).

⁵ Godfrey, *Quod.* XV, q.10. In *Le Quodlibet XV et trois Questions ordinaires de Godefroid de Fontaines*, ed. Odon Lottin (Louvain: Institut supérieur de philosophie, 1937).

⁶ For *Quod.* III.3, see Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey of Fontaines*. Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, (1981), 274-281; for *Quod.* XV.10, see *ibid.*, 281-285, and Wippel, “Godfrey of Fontaines: The Date of Quodlibet 15,” *Franciscan Studies* 31 (1971), 300-369.

⁷ Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey of Fontaines*, xxiii.

properties are such as to require a composition of really diverse elements in his nature.

Godfrey denies that they do.⁸

The body of the question consists of two main arguments for Godfrey's denial, after a good summary of the standard reasons for affirming spiritual matter. The first argument against it is based on the nature of matter and the second is a variation on the standard argument from the immateriality of cognition. The first can be summed up as follows: true matter is not any potency—even any subjective potency—whatsoever, but only *substantial* potency. Furthermore, true matter is pure potency, having no internal distinctions, so that there can be only one kind of matter. But the potency of the angels is *not* in potency to substance, since angels are incorruptible, and is *not* pure potency, since it is rooted in the angel's already-actual substance.

For this argument Godfrey emphasises the difference between substantial potencies and acts on the one hand, and accidental potencies and acts on the other. There is a potency *simpliciter* which has no act, which is in potency to being *simpliciter*, and this is properly called prime matter or *hyle* and is called a subject. But there is another kind of potency which is not potency *simpliciter*, but which has some act, and yet is in potency to some further act. This is not properly called matter, but it is a subject. This second kind of potency is that which is found in the angels, since they are in potency to accidental acts. Like Thomas and others, Godfrey grounds these acts in the powers of the intellective substance, which are accidents really distinct from the substance itself, and which are the immediate subjects for

⁸ Godfrey of Fontaines, *Quod*. III.3, 186: “. . . volentes excludere omnimodam simplicitatem Dei ab angelis, et ideo ponentes quod in eis est compositio ex essentia et esse non evadunt. Alioquin etiam evaderent dicentes solum compositos ex essentia ipsorum et suis viribus vel accidentibus sive proprietatibus per se. Quoniam quaeritur de simplicitate eorum quantum ad ipsorum essentiam, non de compositione essentiae ipsorum cum alio vel alterius cum ipsa, utrum scilicet in eorum essentia cadunt plures res ad illam pertinentes; videtur dicendum quod non.”

operations like understanding and willing. “But whether the substance itself of the angel, which is thus a subject and a potency in itself, is composed from true matter and substantial potency, this is what the question is about.”⁹

With the claim that some accidents inhere directly in an angel’s substance, Godfrey seems to have removed one of the primary reasons for asserting that an angel must have matter, namely for the support of its accidents. After this the step to denying that the angel’s substance must have matter as a component is easy, given Godfrey’s principles. Matter is pure potency, potency both to existence and to substantial form, and as such can have no inherent distinction whereby it would be more determined to one substantial form rather than to another, nor any distinction whereby one kind of matter would be different from another kind. There can not be one kind of matter more noble or more actual than another kind, for where there is in no way an act, in no way can something be more actual.¹⁰ Nor, for a similar reason, can different kinds of matter be distinguished by a relation or aptitude to different

⁹ Ibid., 182: “. . . est potentia simpliciter nullum actum habens, quae est potentia ad esse simpliciter et hoc proprie dicitur materia prima sive hyle et dicitur subiectum, et est potentia non simpliciter sed secundum quid, actum aliquem habens, et in potentia ad aliquem actum existens, et hoc non dicitur proprie materia sed subiectum. Quia ergo in angelis est reperire actus accidentales, constat quod in angelis est potentia, et non ratione materiae, quia ipsa substantia angelorum ens in actu substantiali est subiectum suarum virium et potentiarum naturalium quae secundum aliquos sunt accidentia et per se proprietates essentielles secundo modo dicendi per se. Et ulterius ipsa cum huiusmodi viribus est subiectum operationum quibus perficitur in intelligendo et volendo. –Sed utrum ipsa substantia angeli quae sic est subiectum et potentia in se ipsa sit composita ex vera materia et potentia substantiali, de hoc est quaestio.” See also Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey of Fontaines*, 204-207.

¹⁰ Ibid., 182-183: “Et videtur dicendum quod non, quoniam potentia ad substantiam quae est omnino potentia et nullo modo actus vel aliquem actum habens, cum non habeat unde determinetur, est contradictorium . . . Quod enim dicit puram potentiam ad esse simpliciter quod est esse secundum aliquam formam substantialem, non includit aliquid quo magis ad unam formam substantialem determinetur quam ad aliam. Nam illud determinans iam esset aliquid actuale. Si enim esset pure potentiale, idem esset iudicium de ipso. Nec potest dici quod materia una ab alia distinguitur se ipsa; nam forma solum est quae essentialiter dividit, et quantitas accidentaliter. Sicut enim non ens *non* est distinguibile . . . ideo nihil est dictum quod una materia sit nobilior et actualior alia, quia ubi nullo modo actus, nullo modo actualius.”

forms.¹¹ Therefore there can only be one kind of matter, and if there is matter in the angels it must be of the same kind as that found in bodies. But if this is the case, then all things, angels and bodies alike, will be corruptible and mutually transmutable.¹² Since angels are incorruptible and unable to be transformed either into bodies, or into other spirits, then they cannot be said to have matter.¹³

Godfrey's second main argument is his version of that from the immateriality of cognition. Since understanding is a perfect act, by which a thing is apprehended according to a consideration abstracted from its individuating conditions, it is necessary that the power which so apprehends be similarly perfect and abstract. This excludes matter from the intellect, since the act of any material subject is so potential and material, with such a modicum of actuality, that it is unable to be the subject of an operation so actual and perfect as understanding.¹⁴

As this survey shows, Godfrey's earlier question on spiritual matter proceeds on familiar grounds, having little to distinguish it from other oppositions to the doctrine—except, perhaps, in his explanation of how the subjective potency in an intellectual substance differs from that in a corporeal one. His second treatment of the issue is more unique.

¹¹ Ibid., 183: "Cum etiam omnis respectus ad aliud consequatur naturam rei in qua fundatur respectus, nec distinguatur res fundamenti secundum illum, videtur quod nullus respectus materiae possit esse ratio distinctionis et diversitatis materiae secundum eius essentiam."

¹² Ibid., ". . . -ita in omnibus spiritualibus erit materia unius rationis, et una secundum rem, et etiam secundum numerum quantum est de se. Propter quod etiam omnia illa erunt corruptibilia et ad invicem transmutabilia."

¹³ Ibid., 184: "Ubi autem non potest esse transmutatio secundum substantiam, nec est materia quae est in potentia ad substantiam."

¹⁴ Ibid., "Quia etiam intelligere est actus perfectus, quo res secundum considerationem abstractam a conditionibus individuatibus apprehenduntur, oportet virtutem sic apprehensivam esse sic perfectam et abstractam quod de ratione et essentia eius non sit vere materia . . . ita videtur quod multo minus illud de cuius ratione est vera materia possit esse intelligens, quia illud actualitatis quod habet illud de cuius ratione sic est talis materia et potentia sic immersum ei et comprehensum ab ipsa, est actus ita potentialis et materialis, et ita modicum habens de actualitate et a potentialitate recedens quod non posset esse subiectum operationis tam actualis et perfectae."

Although his own position remains unchanged, Godfrey devotes the bulk of this second question to a statement of, and then a refutation of, Gonsalvus' arguments for spiritual matter as laid out in the latter's Q.XI. It was once claimed by San Cristóbal-Sebastián¹⁵ that Gonsalvus' Q.XI was in fact composed posterior to Godfrey's *Quod*. XV.10, and that Gonsalvus took arguments for spiritual matter which were invented by Godfrey in order to refute them, and appropriated them to his own position without the corresponding refutations. John Wippel has demolished this intrinsically improbable hypothesis and shown beyond a reasonable doubt that Godfrey's question is posterior to and dependent on Gonsalvus'.¹⁶ I will proceed on that assumption.

As in *Quod*. III.3, the title of the present question, "Whether the soul can perfect two matters," is significant. Recall that the discussion of the two matters of the soul and their relation to each other is one of the most distinctive parts of Gonsalvus' Q.XI, and Godfrey's title may be intended to indicate that, whereas in his earlier question he had argued against a more generic version of the "hylomorphist" position, here his target is Gonsalvus himself. At the same time, Godfrey does not devote much argumentation directly to the problems raised by the soul's simultaneously informing two matters; instead he presents the broader arguments for spiritual matter, as given by Gonsalvus, and goes on to refute them, considering that, once the possibility of the soul having matter as a part of itself is rejected, the problem of its having two matters evaporates.¹⁷

¹⁵ Antonio San Cristóbal-Sebastián, *Controversias acerca de la voluntad desde 1270 a 1300 (Estudio histórico-doctrinal)*, (Madrid, 1958), 109-118.

¹⁶ Wippel, "Godfrey of Fontaines: The Date of Quodlibet 15," *Franciscan Studies* 31 (1971), 300-369. See especially 322-332.

¹⁷ Godfrey of Fontaines, *Quod*. XV.10, 56: "Ex his ergo patet quod impossibile est quod anima habeat materiam partem sui: et hoc probando, etiam probatum fuit quod impossibile est quod anima perficiat duas materias, vel quod anima habeat aliquam formam partem sui quae perficiat duas materias."

Before refuting Gonsalvus' arguments, then, Godfrey gives his own reasons why the soul cannot have matter as a part of itself. As I noted above, this portion of the question has been examined in detail by Wippel, and so I offer only a brief survey. Godfrey's chief argument is that what is in itself wholly form and act, such as the soul, cannot have matter as a part of itself.¹⁸ Matter is pure potency and so what is purely act cannot contain it, or else pure potency would be act, "which is altogether impossible, except perhaps among those for whom all impossible things are possible."¹⁹ Godfrey gives three arguments proving that the soul is wholly form and act, including familiar arguments based on either the unity or the diversity of spiritual and corporeal matter, the problems arising from the soul informing two matters, and from the claim that if the soul had matter it would be corruptible.²⁰

It is in relation to this last argument, from corruptibility, that Godfrey first responds directly to Gonsalvus.²¹ Recalling Gonsalvus' claims that even bodies could be made incorruptible, after the motion of the heavens have ceased and no agent remains which could corrupt them, Godfrey responds that they could still not be called *naturally* incorruptible. Corruptibility follows quantity, and it is a fiction to say otherwise, and so bodies are naturally corruptible even if in fact they are not corrupted.²²

¹⁸ Ibid., 50: "Quantum ad primum adduco unam rationem brevem. Illud quod secundum se totum est forma et actus non potest habere materiam partem sui; sed anima est huiusmodi; ergo etc."

¹⁹ Ibid., 51: ". . . cum pars includatur in essentia totius si aliqua pars eius esset potentia, tunc pura potentia esset actus; quod est omnino impossibile, nisi forte apud illos quibus omnia impossibilia sunt possibilia. . ."

²⁰ Ibid., 51-53.

²¹ For the passages in Gonsalvus to which Godfrey is responding here, see Chapter 4, section IV.3.2.2., part 1, 360-371.

²² Godfrey of Fontaines, *Quod*. XV.10, 53: "Si dicatur contra hoc quod non, quia agens naturale non potest attingere ad separandum, quia illa materia non habet contrarietatem annexam, nihil est: primo, quia, dato quod post cessationem motus coeli non sit aliquod agens quod possit corrumpere corpora hominum, non possunt dici tunc per naturam suam incorruptibilia; secundo, quia fictio est dicere quod illam materiam non consequatur quantitas et contrarietas, quia hoc non repugnat sibi, etiam secundum viam eorum qui ponunt omnem materiam esse eiusdem rationis, nec ex se, nec ex forma cui coniungitur, nec ex sua depuratione, ut ostendum est."

Again, Godfrey rejects the claim that if God had made all things, including bodies, incorruptible from the beginning, then they would be naturally incorruptible. According to Godfrey, “it is ridiculous to say that if heavy things were commonly found up high, then it would be natural for heavy things to become or to be up high, when this is manifestly repugnant to the nature of weight.” The fact that supernatural occurrences might be so common as not to seem prodigious to us would not make them any less supernatural, and an incorruptible material thing can only be so supernaturally.²³

Returning to the question of the soul, and especially the problem of whether the matter of the soul informs the matter of the body—which would require matter to be form, which is contradictory—Godfrey now notes Gonsalvus’ claim that while the entire soul is the form of the body, this is by reason of the soul’s form and not its matter.²⁴ Godfrey rejects this solution based on his own arguments showing not only that the soul as a whole is the form of the body, but that everything that belongs to the essence of the soul is form and act.²⁵

In the second and third sections of his question Godfrey first gives summary versions of six arguments from Gonsalvus’ Q.XI, and then responds to them. The first four of these correspond to the four arguments Gonsalvus gives in direct argument for his position. The fifth corresponds to the first argument Gonsalvus gives in defense of the unicity of spiritual and corporeal matter.²⁶ For the sixth argument Godfrey looks back, again, to Gonsalvus’

²³ Ibid., “Nec valet etiam quod dicunt ultra quod si Deus a principio fecisset omnia incorruptibilia, fuissent incorruptibilia per naturam . . . quia ridiculum est dicere quod si gravia communiter fierent superius, quod naturaliter esset gravibus fieri vel esse superius, cum hoc manifeste repugnet huic naturae gravis . . . non est idem non esse prodigia et non esse supernaturalia; quia, si frequenter fierent, homines non mirarentur sicut modo, tamen essent ita supernaturalia sicut modo.”

²⁴ See Chapter 4, Section IV.3.1.3, 339-352.

²⁵ Ibid., “Ex declaratione etiam maioris patet quod responsio quam quidam dant ad istam rationem principalem, scilicet quod licet totam anima sit forma, non tamen ratione totius, nulla est: quia probatum est quod non solum tota anima, sed etiam secundum omne illud quod est de essentia sua, est forma et actus.”

²⁶ See Chapter 4, Section IV.3.2.3, 368-378.

discussion of matter and corruptibility.²⁷ I will here give Godfrey's versions of each of these arguments together with his response.

1) Gonsalvus' first direct argument for his position claimed that matter should be especially posited in things which are especially proportioned to it, and that matter is more especially proportioned to incorruptible substances, such as the angels, than to corruptible ones in which we know matter is present. For the principles of things ought to be proportioned to things of which they are principles, and since matter is incorruptible and ingenerable, it is more proportioned to incorruptible and ingenerable substances than to corruptible and generable ones.²⁸

In response to this Godfrey agrees that a material principle ought to be proportioned to that of which it is the principle. But he denies the general proposition that a principle must be proportioned to its "principle" (*principiatum*). Otherwise the principle of a composite could only be a composite—but it's clear that a composite must at some point be composed of simple elements; and the principle of a corruptible substance would have to be corruptible—but (as Gonsalvus himself admits) corruptible things are composed of matter, which is incorruptible. Although, therefore, matter in itself is ingenerable and incorruptible, it is more proportioned to be the principle of corruptible things than incorruptible ones, since it

²⁷ Again, see Chapter 4, section IV.3.2.2., part 1., 360-368.

²⁸ Godfrey of Fontaines, *Quod*. XV.10, 53: "Prima ratio talis est: in illo ponenda est magis materia cui magis est proportionata; sed materia magis est proportionata substantiis incorruptilibus, puta angelis, quam rebus corruptilibus in quibus constat esse materiam; ergo etc. Maior patet; quia principia debent proportionari principiatis. Minor probatur; quia incorruptibile magis proportionatur incorruptibili quam corruptibile incorruptibili: sed materia est ingenerabilis et incorruptibilis; ergo magis proportionatur incorruptilibus quam corruptilibus."

is in potency to diverse forms, and makes up a unity with one of these forms, while remaining in potency to others.²⁹

2) Gonsalvus' second argument states that that which provides for the perfection of a perfect substance (insofar as substance is distinguished over against accidents) is to be attributed to more perfect substances, and hence to angels and separated souls. But matter provides for the completion of a perfect substance, since it belongs to substance as such to provide a prop or support (note Godfrey's use of the Bonaventurian word *fulcimentum*, whereas Gonsalvus uses the more generic *fundamentum*) for accidents, which it does by means of its matter. Matter is also the primary reason for a substance's being able to subsist and endure, for, if it were form, then every form would be subsistent, including accidents.³⁰

Against this Godfrey denies the universal application of the principle that matter makes for the perfection of a created substance. This is true for material creatures, which are less perfect than immaterial ones and suitably have a less perfect principle as part of their makeup. Accordingly, he also denies that matter gives the only explanation for a substance's subsistence and its being a prop for accidents. A substance subsists more through its form than through matter, even when both are required, as for composite (i.e. corporeal)

²⁹ Ibid., 55: "Ad primum istorum dicendum ad maiorem quod habet veritatem de proportione quae debet esse inter principium materiale et principiatum suum; hoc autem non est secundum convenientiam in aliquo uno praedicabili; alioquin principium compositi non posset esse nisi compositum, nec incorruptibile posset esse principium corruptibilis: quod est falsum. Sed ista proportio attenditur secundum hoc quod materia est in potentia ad formam, vel est nata facere unum per se cum forma; ex hoc autem quod aliquid est in potentia ad diversas formas, quantum est de se, magis est proportionatum ut sit principium corruptibilis quam incorruptibilis, quantumcumque in se sit ingenerabile et incorruptibile."

³⁰ Ibid., 53-54: "Secunda ratio talis est: illud quod facit ad complementum substantiae perfectae prout distinguitur contra accidens est magis attribuendum substantiis magis perfectis, et per consequens angelis et animabus separatis; sed haec est materia; ergo etc. Maior patet. Minor probatur: quia ad perfectionem substantiae creatae pertinet quod praestet fulcimentum accidenti; sed hoc convenit substantiae per materiam; quia materia est prima ratio suscipiendi quodcumque et sustentandi; ergo etc. Quod autem prima ratio sustentandi et subsistendi sit materia, probo: quia, aut hoc convenit composito ratione qua compositum, et sic omne subsistens creatum erit compositum, et sic habetur propositum: aut hoc convenit composito ratione formae; et hoc non potest esse, quia tunc omni formae conveniret subsistere; relinquatur ergo quod hoc conveniat composito ratione materiae; ergo prima ratio sustentandi et sustinendi est materia."

substances. For although it is repugnant to matter to inhere in something, which belongs to form, nevertheless to be in act belongs to a composite through its form rather than through the matter providing a substrate for that form. And to the claim that, if subsistence came from the form then even accidents would subsist, Godfrey denies the implication, repeating that subsistence is from the form for subsistent forms, and the form along with the matter for composites.³¹

3) Gonsalvus' third argument stated that matter was required for the numeric plurality of individuals in a species. Since human souls and angels have multiple members in their species, they must have matter. Human souls are numerically distinct even when separated from their bodies, so their bodies cannot serve this function, or else souls would cease to be distinct upon death. The body exists for the sake of the soul more than vice versa, and the body needs to be distinguished by the soul rather than vice versa. And there are multiple angels in one species, both because it belongs to the nature of a species that it is predicated of many numerically different individuals, and because angels require fellow-members of the species to which they belong for their greater fellowship and friendship.³²

³¹ Ibid., 55: "Ad secundum dicendum per interemptionem minoris: quia materia non facit universaliter ad perfectionem esse substantiae creatae, sed bene facit ad esse substantiae creatae materialis, sicut principium minus perfectum.

"Ad illud quod dicitur contra hoc, quia scilicet per eam compositum magis praestat fulcimentum accidenti, dicendum quod non est verum; et quando dicitur quod imo, quia per eam magis habet substantia subsistere, dicendum quod hoc etiam falsum est, imo magis habet subsistere per formam quam per materiam, licet utrumque requiratur in compositis: licet enim materiae magis repugnet esse in aliquo sibi substrato quam formae, simpliciter tamen esse in actu magis convenit composito per formam quam per materiam substratam formae. Et quando dicitur contra hoc quod si subsistere conveniret composito ratione formae, tunc omnis forma subsisteret, dicendum quod non sequitur, sed bene sequitur quod in omni subsistente forma sit ratio subsistendi, vel per se solam sicut est in separatis, vel cum materia, sicut est in compositis."

³² Ibid., 54: "Tertia ratio talis est: pluralitas numeralis in eadem specie est per materiam; sed talis pluralitas est in angelis et in animabus; ergo etc. Maior supponitur. Minor probatur: et primo patet hoc de animabus separatis quae sunt plures numero in eadem specie; nec potest dici quod numerentur per corpora; primo, quia magis est corpus propter animam quam e converso, et per consequens corpora magis habent distingui per animas quam e converso; secundo, quia animae quando essent separatae non distinguerentur, quod esset inconveniens. Idem patet de angelis, scilicet quod sint plures in eadem specie; primo, quia de ratione speciei est quod praedicetur de

Godfrey replies that matter is only required for numeric plurality where the substances in question are subject to quantity, because (all things being equal) it belongs more to act to distinguish something than to pure potency. As for human souls, Godfrey maintains that when separated from their bodies they are distinguished, not by any matter intrinsic to them, but by their relation (*habitudinem*) to quantitatively diversified matters (i.e. the bodies left behind), or else because a form, like a soul, which is naturally apt to be united to matter, has some intrinsic potentiality whereby it is apt to be plurified. As for the angels, Godfrey considers the appeal to the nature of species to be frivolous, since the definition appealed to applies only to the species of things plurified by matter; there is another definition of species appropriate to things which are not so multiplied, namely something which is posited under a determinate genus. He also dismisses concerns about the angels' mutual friendship and society, saying that on the same grounds we could object that one angel must be the father of another, so that an angel could have filial piety, and so forth.³³

4) Gonsalvus' final argument in the section directly arguing for his position stated that, as being (*esse*) is to form, so is receptivity (*pati*) to matter. There is no being except through some form; therefore there is no receptivity except through some matter. But souls

pluribus differentibus numero in eo quod quid; sed in angelis est dare speciem, ergo etc; secundo, quia maior societas et amicitia debet esse inter illos qui sunt eiusdem speciei quam inter illa quae sunt diversarum specierum; sed maior societas et amicitia debet esse inter angelos ad invicem quam inter homines ad invicem qui sunt eiusdem speciei; ergo etc.”

³³ Ibid., 55-56: “Ad tertium dicendum est quod pluralitas numeralis non habet esse per materiam nisi in quantum est quanta, quia magis convenit actui distinguere quam purae potentiae. Quando autem dicitur quod sunt plures animae differentes numero, dicendum quod non differunt numero per materiam remanentem in animabus separatis, sed vel per habitudinem ad diversas materias per quantitatem separatis, sed vel per habitudinem ad diversas materias per quantitatem diversificatas, vel per hoc quod in omni forma quae nata est esse in materia est potentialitas per quam nata est habere talem plurificationem. Ratio autem prima quae adducitur de angelis, scilicet de definitione speciei, satis est frivola; quia illa definitio datur de speciebus rerum materialium plurificabilium; alia autem est definitio speciei quae potest convenire non multiplicabilibus, scilicet quod est illud quod ponitur sub determinato genere. Quod etiam dicitur de societate parum valet: primo, quia eodem modo posset argui quod oporteret quod unus angelus esset pater alterius, alioquin non possent habere tantum amicitiam et societatem sicut pater et filius; secundo, quia inferiores angeli non possent secundum hoc habere ita amicabilem societatem cum optimis angelis sicut inter se invicem.”

and angels are receptive of true suffering, for instance by hellfire, and so they must have matter.³⁴

Godfrey responds that the only kind of passivity which requires matter is that which is in potency to a change of substantial form. A supernatural receptivity whereby an angel suffers from hellfire, or even natural accidental change, does not require matter, but only something subsistent which is in potency to some accident. Suffering from hellfire is not substantial change, nor is it an accidental change ordered to substantial change, but is only the reception of an accident that is troublesome to the one receiving it, whether because it binds the spiritual creature to something corporeal, or is troublesome in some other way. Godfrey adds, “It is a wonder that these [i.e. Gonsalvus and defenders of spiritual matter] would have it that matter is the reason for suffering in supernatural sufferings.”³⁵

Finally Godfrey gives and refutes two more arguments from Gonsalvus showing that it is not incoherent for all creatures to share in one kind of matter, although some are corruptible and some incorruptible.³⁶ As noted above, the first of these arguments is from the section Gonsalvus devotes to proving the unicity of matter, while the second is from the first section devoted to removing his opponents’ foundations, namely the section on incorruptibility.

³⁴ Ibid.,: “Quarto ratio est quia, sicut se habet esse ad formam, ita pati ad materiam; sed nullum esse est nisi per aliquam formam; ergo nullum pati est nisi per aliquam materiam; sed animae et angeli patiuntur vera passione quae est ab igne infernali; ergo etc.”

³⁵ Ibid., 56: “Ad quartum dicendum quod passio vera quae est secundum transmutationem ad formam substantialem requirit materiam; sed passio qua supernaturaliter aliquid patitur vel etiam naturaliter mutationem aliquid accidens vel sibi conveniens vel repugnans, non requirit materiam, sed solum requirit aliquid subsistens existens in potentia ad aliquid accidens; illa autem passio infernalis non est transmutatio ad substantiam, nec est etiam transmutatio secundum aliquid accidens ordinatum ad transmutationem substantiae, sed est secundum receptionem alicuius accidentis disconvenientis ipsi passo, sive sit alligatio sive aliquid aliud. Mirum etiam est quod isti volunt quod materia sit ratio patiendi in passionibus supernaturalibus.” For punishment of spirits by “binding” them to corporeal fire, see also St. Thomas, *Summa contra gentiles* IV.90 (Leon. vol.15), 281-282.

³⁶ Ibid., 54: “Quod autem non obstante incorruptibilitate illorum et corruptibilitate istorum, materia hinc inde sit eiudem rationis, probatur duplici ratione.”

5) It is argued that if something is released from a less essential condition, it need not be released from a more essential condition. But matter's being conditioned for form is more essential to it than its being conditioned for any particular kind of transformation; therefore, even if matter's being conditioned for transformation were removed, its being conditioned for form could remain. Consequently it is not incoherent to claim that of those things which share in matter one is corruptible and another incorruptible.³⁷ This is not exactly the argument which Gonsalvus gives to defend the unicity of matter, but it is clearly based on it. In any case, Godfrey asserts that even if matter is more essentially ordered to form than to being transformed from having one form to having another, still one necessarily follows upon the other; the two properties are inseparable.³⁸

6) Finally, Gonsalvus argued that it is unreasonable to make judgements about the entire universe based on what obtains under the present conditions of the here and now, when the latter represent only a modicum of the universe. But those who believe that there can be no matter in incorruptible things only do so because they judge on the basis of these things here below.³⁹

Godfrey responds to the effect that he does not make sweeping judgements about the entire universe on the basis of observations of the here and now, but he does judge, and rightly so, on the basis of these things here below that whatever shares something with them

³⁷ Ibid., "Prima talis est: illud quod absolvitur a minus essentiali habitudine non oportet absolvi a magis essentiali habitudine; sed habitudo materiae ad formam est magis essentialis quam habitudo ipsius ad quamcumque transmutationem; ergo, amota a materia habitudine ad transmutationem, adhuc potest manere habitudo ad formam; et per consequens non est inconveniens quod eorum quae communicant in materia unum sit corruptibile et aliud incorruptibile."

³⁸ Ibid., 56: "Ad quintum dicendum quod, licet ita sit quod materia magis essentialiter se habeat ad formam quam ad transmutationem ad eam, tamen unum de necessitate consequitur ad alterum, nec sunt separabilia. . . ."

³⁹ Ibid., 54-55: "Secundo ratio talis est: accipere iudicium de toto universo ex istis quae sunt hic, cum sit modicum respectu totius universi, est inconveniens; et hoc patet per Philosophum quarto *Metaphysicae*, quia ista inferiora videbat esse talia. Sed illi qui credunt quod non possit esse materia in aliquo intransmutabili volunt iudicare ex istis inferioribus omnia; ergo etc."

will share the concomitant properties of what they share. Therefore, when in things here below having matter is the cause of generation and corruption, he judges that everything which shares the same kind of matter will also be generable and corruptible.⁴⁰

Godfrey's refutation of Gonsalvus is successful if judged as a demonstration that Gonsalvus' position is incompatible with Godfrey's metaphysical principles. It is less successful, however, as a critique of Gonsalvus' own principles. Godfrey ably shows where Gonsalvus is simply weak—for instance, in his second argument designed to show that there are multiple individuals in a single angelic species—but when their basic principles conflict, Godfrey simply denies those of his opponent and asserts his own, so that some of his responses have the character of a *petitio principii*. Where Gonsalvus is eager above all to lay bare the fundamentally different conceptions of matter behind the two basic positions (while arguing, of course, for his own), Godfrey prefers simply to critique his opponent's position without much examination of either side's principles—at least in the question at hand.

As for these differing principles themselves, we can apply here what has been said in earlier chapters about the difference between all those on the “Aristotelian” side of the debate, for whom matter is pure potency, and therefore must always be in potency to substantial as well as accidental change—thus confined to the objects of physics—and those on the “Augustinian” side, for whom matter is primarily the foundation and complement of form, as well as the subject of all change whatsoever, including merely accidental change.

The former conception of the role of matter in metaphysics unites such otherwise diverse

⁴⁰ Ibid., 56: “Ad sextum dicendum quod illi qui arguunt illa quae habent materiam saltem eiusdem rationis cum istis inferioribus non iudicant absolute ex istis de omnibus esse corruptibilia, non iudicant absolute per ista inferiora de omnibus quantum ad omnia quae eis conveniunt; sed bene iudicant ex istis inferioribus quod omnia quae cum eis communicant in quantum eis communicant consimilia eis conveniunt; et ideo, cum in inferioribus habere materiam communem sit causa generationis et corruptionis, iudicant quod omnia illa quae communicant cum istis in hoc [quod] est habere materiam communem, sunt generabilia et corruptibilia.”

thinkers as Godfrey, Henry of Ghent, and Dietrich of Freiberg, not to speak of St. Thomas and his followers, against the Bonaventuran tradition. Godfrey differs from those on his side of the debate whom we have examined so far, however, in offering an intelligible account of spiritual composition and an intellectual substance's being the subject of accidents which does not make use of a composition of essence and existence.⁴¹

I cannot conclude this section on Godfrey's response to Gonsalvus without one final note. In the opening arguments to *Quod. XV.10* Godfrey includes the following: "Wise men say this, [namely] that the form of the soul perfects two matters; therefore one should believe

⁴¹ Godfrey's position on spiritual composition is similar to that taken by William Ware and also by the mature Scotus, as we shall see at the end of the next section. See William Ware, *In II Sent.* d. 3 (Codex Laurentianus, pl. 33 d. 1, f. 116v et sq.) (Transcription by Dr. Timothy Noone), paragraphs 45-56: "Ideo dico quod [angeli] sunt simplices substantiae non compositae ex diversis essentiis. Sed priusquam <dub.> potentia passiva arguit materiam, distingo de potentia passiva, quoniam triplex est potentia passiva quae arguit triplices materias. Una est potentia passiva ad ubi; alia ad formam accidentalem; et tertia ad formam substantialem. Potentia passiva ad ubi non arguit materiam quae sit altera pars compositi, quia talis potentia passiva vel est in aliquo ad ubi circumscriptive vel definitive solum. Si circumscriptive requirit solum quantum per se et non materiam et ideo dicit Commentator <dub.; forsan: commentum> quod in caelo ubi est potentia passiva ad ubi circumscriptive non est materia, sed sola quantitas loco materiae. Si sit potentia ad ubi definitive, sic solum arguit lunitatem<????> materiam, sicut patet de accidentibus in sacramento Altaris, quae ibi sunt definitive sine subiecto et tamen non habent materiam alteram partem sui et ideo talis potentia passiva ad ubi non arguit veram materiam quae differat a forma. Similiter potentia passiva secundo modo quae est ad formam accidentalem non arguit materiam veram, quae differat a forma, sed solum arguit materiam quae est subiectum; quidquid subiectum potest esse simplex forma in essentia. Propter quod Commentator in *Metaphysica* <seq. spat vac. quinque litteras comprehendens> dat differentiam inter materiam et subiectum. Si loquitur de potentia passiva tertio modo, quae est ad formam substantialem, sic illa potentia concludit materiam esse in eo cuius est illa potentia et ideo dicit Philosophus in VII quod materia nec est quale nec quantum per se nec aliquid aliorum, per quod determinatur. Unde transmutatio fecit sciri materiam, sicut dicit Commentator VIII *Metaphysicae*. Unde iuxta tres modos transmutationis in rebus sciuntur in rebus tres materiae. Unde et si in angelis et animabus non sit potentia ad formam substantialem, quae arguit materiam primam et per consequens nec materia de qua est quaestio, est tamen in eis duplex potentia <rep. L> passiva, scilicet ad ubi et ad formam accidentalem et per consequens duplex potentia passiva correspondens et duplex materia aliquo modo extendendo nomen materiae. Nec tamen ista materia in eis est alia realiter a forma. Sed <dub. L> talis, cum sit deficiens a pura forma quae Deus est, se ipsa incidit in quamdam potentialitatem admixtam actui eo quod non est actus purus. Potentialitas cum actu proportionantur materiae et formae, cum tamen una res sit in eis potentia et actus." William Ware was a Franciscan who flourished at Oxford in the 1290s and is known to be a significant influence on Scotus. In his *Sentences* commentary he considers the traditional view as espoused by William de la Mare but rejects it in favor of the one just described. It seems that the confluence of Godfrey's views with those of William Ware and the later Scotus may be indicative of the shift in philosophical perspective which was to render the debate between the "Aristotelians" and the "Augustinians" irrelevant.

them.”⁴² Godfrey’s response: “If one must concede that those who say such things are wise, one will also have to say that sometimes good Homer nods.”⁴³ The extent to which this odd exchange, with its surprising reference to Horace,⁴⁴ is intended to reflect personally on Gonsalvus, the obvious target throughout the question, must be left to the imagination of the reader.

V.2. John Duns Scotus

With the thought of the great Bl. John Duns Scotus medieval philosophy, and especially Franciscan philosophy, undergoes a huge and dramatic shift, never to be the same. Scotus’ thought, though deeply rooted in Franciscan tradition, nevertheless put an end to the Bonaventuran impetus of the previous fifty years: henceforward Franciscan thought will be either Scotistic or pointedly un-Scotistic. As with other topics, this study of the controversy over spiritual matter, centering as it does around Franciscan thinkers in the “Bonaventuran” era, finds its natural terminus in Scotus.⁴⁵ In fact the case of spiritual matter provides a striking example of the shift which Scotus caused. Early in his career he defends spiritual matter (although in an oddly provisional manner) along the lines of Bonaventure, William de la Mare and others, and especially Gonsalvus. In his later writings, however, the subject disappears almost completely: Scotus never devotes a full question to it in his mature

⁴² Ibid., 50: “Praeterea, sapientes hoc dicunt quod forma animae perficit duas materias; ergo credendum est eis.”

⁴³ Ibid., 56: “Ad tertium autem dicendum quod si oportet concedere quod illi qui dicunt talia sint sapientes, oportebit dicere quod quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus.”

⁴⁴ Horace, *Ars poetica*, l.359: “indignor quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus.”

⁴⁵ Cf. Zavalloni, *Richard de Mediavilla*, 305: “Jeans Duns Scot, qui représent le point d’aboutissement de la controverse que nous étudions ici.”

writings, and one must glean his position from (sometimes cryptic) hints and asides.⁴⁶ He seems to be simply disinterested in the problem, and after him spiritual matter—of such central metaphysical significance for Gonsalvus—seems to drop out of medieval debate as a subject of special concern or import.

Just as there has been some scholarly controversy about the interrelationship and the directionality of influence between Godfrey of Fontaines' *Quod.* XV.10 and Gonsalvus of Spains' Q.XI, so there has been a similar controversy about the relationship of John Duns Scotus' *Quaestiones super secundum et tertium De anima* Q.15 and Gonsalvus' Q.XI. In editing Gonsalvus' text Amoros noted certain close similarities between passages in Scotus' *De anima* questions and Gonsalvus' disputations. Clearly either Scotus knew Gonsalvus' texts, or vice versa. But who depends on whom, and if Scotus' questions depend on Gonsalvus, when (since the date of Gonsalvus' disputed questions is known) were they composed?⁴⁷ These issues have remained problematic, even as the problem of the authenticity of Scotus' text—which had been called into question partly because of the observed similarities to Gonsalvus—has been laid to rest by the editors of the recent critical edition.⁴⁸ In their very comprehensive introduction the editors lay out what has been said on

⁴⁶ The same is true of the other most significant Franciscan of the period, William of Ockham. I have not found a question devoted to spiritual matter in Ockham's writings, although he does have one about whether the matter of the heavens is of the same sort as the matter of generable and corruptible things. See his *Quaestiones in Librum secundum sententiarum*, ed. G. Gal and R. Wood, in *Guillelmi de Ockham Opera Theologica* v. 5 (St. Bonaventure, New York, 1981), 395-409. Q. 18: "Utrum in caelo sit materia eiusdem rationis cum materia istorum inferiorum." In his *Quodlibet* I.19, in *Opera Theologica* v.9, ed. J. Wey (St. Bonaventure, New York, 1980), 96-98, "Utrum spiritus patiat ab igne purgatorio," the question is not raised.

⁴⁷ Amoros, lxxvi: "Praeterea, relate ad B.D. Scotum, quaestiones Gonsalvi aliud problema nondum solutum suscitant. In cursu nostrae editionis observare potuimus nonnullos textus quaestionum invenire fere ad litteram in tractatu *De anima* B.D. Scoti, quod certe manifestat auctorem tractatus *De anima* quaestiones cognovisse, vel vice versa. Si ergo B.D. Scotus scripsit tractatus *De anima*, quisnam a quonam dependet? Casu quo B.D. Scotus dependeat a Gonsalvo, quandonam tractatus *De anima* fuit compositus?"

⁴⁸ John Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super secundum et tertium De anima*, ed. T. Noone et al (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006), 121*-137*.

either side and conclude that Scotus' questions were composed in the early 1290s, about a decade before Gonsalvus' disputed questions were held in 1303-1304:

Scotus' extant philosophical corpus represents questions that he disputed, as part of longer courses at the Oxford convent and thus provide "windows" into his activities in the early and mid-1290s. . . . A dating, therefore, of the *Quaestiones super libros De anima* to the early 1290s solves two problems: Scotus' familiarity with Parisian sources and the claim by Gonsalvus Hispanus that he had known Scotus from "long experience."⁴⁹

This latter phrase refers to a comment made by Gonsalvus of Spain in an epistle in the fall of 1304, that he is "fully informed" of Scotus' "praiseworthy life, excellent knowledge, and most subtle mind . . . partly by long experience, partly by [his] fame which has spread everywhere."⁵⁰ This testimony of Gonsalvus has been of great interest to scholars attempting to pinpoint the details of Scotus' biography.⁵¹ In itself, however, it does little to determine the date of Scotus' *De anima* questions. The editors continue:

The association with Gonsalvus, however, raises yet another question, namely the shared matter between the two authors. There are parallels in some of their works, most notably between Scotus' *Quaestiones De anima* q. 15 and Gonsalvus'

⁴⁹ *QQ De anima*, 143*.

⁵⁰ See Amoros, xxvi-xxvii: "Hoc enim pacto B.D. Scotus *incipere* debuit lecturam suam, quae nomine *Reporata Parisiensia* cognoscitur, sub Gonsalvo, tunc magistro regente, et Gonsalvus coram facultate tamquam B.D. Scoti magister habebatur. Sic enim Gonsalvus optime propria experientia cognoscere poterat et vitam laudabilem, et scientiam excellentem ingeniumque subtilissimum sui discipuli, de quibus ipsi facultati Universitatis rationem reddere tenebatur iuxta statuta. Hoc quidem luculenter declarat in praedicta epistola, (18 nov. 1304), sex mensibus post suam electionem in Generalem Ministrum scripta, sic dicens:

"Cum secundum statuta Ordinis et secundum statuta verstri conventus (Parisiensis) baccalaureus huiusmodi praesentandus ad praesens debeat esse de aliqua provicia aliarum a provicia Franciae, dilectum in Christo patrem Iohanem Scotum, de cuius vita laudabili, scientia excellenti, ingenioque subtilissimo aliisque insignibus conditionibus suis, partim experientia longa, partim fama quae ubique divulgata est, informatum sum ad plenum."

"Gonsalvus igitur testatur se plene cognovisse huiusmodi insignes condiciones Scoti, et quidem partim longa experientia sua. Haec autem experientia certe magisterium quoddam insinuat relate ad B.D. Scotum, quia nemo melius iudicare potest de scientia alicuius quam proprius magister." Probability is on the side of Scotus having been Gonsalvus' "sub-lector", although there is no positive assertion of this in the documents.

⁵¹ See, for instance, A. Wolter, "Duns Scotus at Oxford," in *Via Scoti: Methodologia ad mentem Joannis Duns Scoti I* (Rome: Edizione Antonianum, 1995), 183-192. Wolter speculates on the nature of Gonsalvus' relationship with Scotus in 184-185: "I wonder if Gonsalvus' year with Duns Scotus was not just as exciting as Russell's first encounter with Wittgenstein."

Quaestiones disputatae q. 11; Scotus' *De anima* q. 13 and Gonsalvus' *Quaes. disp.* q. 13; and between Scotus' *QQ De anima* and Gonsalvus' *Quodlibeta* q. 10. Since each of these texts treats quite different issues of philosophical and theological doctrine (e.g., the possibility of hylemorphic composition in human souls and angels, the identity and status of the possible and agent intellects, and the knowability of singulars), one must examine each of the questions and their respective issues separately and carefully, bearing in mind the history of thirteenth century discussions of these issues. Scholars should not be misled by the tyranny of print, in this case by the fact that the edition of Gonsalvus' disputed questions has appeared before this critical edition [of] Scotus' *Quaestiones super secundum et tertium De anima*. It seems to us evident, as we have said, that the resemblance of some arguments in Gonsalvus' and Scotus' questions can best be explained by the fact that the two friars were twice together in the Parisian *stadium* [*sic*, read *studium*], in the late 1280s and 1302-1303.⁵²

Clearly the editors wish to suggest that the similarity Scotus' *De anima* question bears to Gonsalvus' disputed question must not hastily be taken as proof that the former is directly dependent on, and thus postdates, the latter. Part of the motivation for urging this point is to avoid questions about the authenticity of the *QQ De anima*:

Now it is extremely important to emphasize the point that the historical arguments against authenticity are committed to a dependency of the 'Scotus' text on Gonsalvus' text and not the reverse; indeed, those denying the authenticity of the *Quaestiones* need the latter to be dependent upon Gonsalvus, in order to render plausible their overarching hypothesis that the true author of the *Quaestiones* is a later Franciscan writer trying to synthesize the newer teachings of the mature Scotus with the older traditional teaching of the Franciscan school. The nature of these parallels, however, renders it impossible to say with any degree of certainty whether one author was borrowing directly from another. The parallels are themselves best characterized as indeterminate in their directionality and both sets of passages could likewise originate from some third source available to both authors. Moreover, there are possible historical explanations for the resemblance of a few arguments in Scotus' *Quaestiones De anima* and Gonsalvus' disputed questions. As we noted above, Scotus assisted Gonsalvus in disputes in 1302-1303 and may have then introduced arguments from his prior course on *De anima* into his Master's script . . . or as we argue below . . . the resemblances may be explained by the fact that Gonsalvus and Scotus were together in the Parisian Franciscan *Studium* in the late 1280s.⁵³

⁵² *QQ De anima*, 143*.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 126*.

In my opinion, however, this is not completely satisfactory by itself. The editors' argument here rests on a comparison of only three pairs of passages from Gonsalvus and Scotus,⁵⁴ and the *apparatus fontium* for Scotus' Q.15 does not show any parallels at all with Gonsalvus' Q.XI—not even pointing out the three compared in the Introduction. However, as I shall show, Scotus' question actually contains at least eight parallels with Gonsalvus, adding up to, as I believe, a closer relationship between the two than the editors acknowledge. As the editors note, “one must examine each of the questions and their respective issues separately and carefully, bearing in mind the history of thirteenth century discussions of these issues.” But doing so, as I hope to show, eliminates any likelihood that “both sets of passages could likewise originate from some third source available to both authors,” if this author is taken to be someone other than Gonsalvus.⁵⁵ I at least know of no author prior to Gonsalvus who gives such a close approximation of the doctrine in his Q.XI. On the other hand, the editors never make it clear how “the resemblances may be explained by the fact that Gonsalvus and Scotus were together . . . in the late 1280s,” prior to the composition of either work. Do they suggest that the common arguments were developed in conversation together, or by both being present at an unrecorded disputation? One possibility is that Gonsalvus discussed

⁵⁴ Ibid., 124*-125*.

⁵⁵ Regarding the similar parallels between Gonsalvus and Godfrey, this possibility is raised and rejected in Wippel, “Godfrey of Fontaines: The Date of Quodlibet 15,” *Franciscan Studies* 31 (1971), 332: “Perhaps another possibility should be mentioned, however. It might be suggested that there was a third and earlier source for all these arguments, one known both to Gonsalvus and Godfrey. Then one might account for the textual similarities by suggesting that Gonsalvus depended on this source for his defense of his own view, while Godfrey depended on it for his knowledge of the view opposed to his own. Each would have followed it so closely that we are now deceived in thinking that there is direct textual interdependency between them. It would be difficult to deny that this is a metaphysical or even a physical possibility. However . . . there is no evidence for such a common source. Moreover, there is no need to postulate such a source to account for the similarities between the two authors' texts. Again, it would be somewhat surprising to find two authors, writing independently, each of whom would follow this common source so closely that every step of so complex an argument as, for instance, the third one, would be reproduced by each. Consequently, since such a third source is neither known nor necessary, we think it most likely that Godfrey was here directly referring to Gonsalvus.” The reader must judge to what extent these remarks may apply to the solution I will eventually suggest to the problem of the interrelation of Scotus' and Gonsalvus' texts.

spiritual matter in nearly identical terms in another work—his *Sentences* commentary, perhaps—which has not come down to us, but which Scotus heard or read. Given the subject’s importance in the works which we do possess by Gonsalvus this is not unlikely, and if the editors’ dating of Scotus’ questions is to be accepted this is probably the best solution. Before attempting any conclusions, however, we must examine Scotus’ *De anima* Q.15 directly.

In the opening arguments Scotus first gives two versions of the standard argument against spiritual matter from the immateriality of cognition. The third argument is also a standard: it states that the soul is the form of the body, but “matter is not able to be the form of another,”⁵⁶ and so the soul cannot be matter as well as form. In the concluding responses Scotus’ answer to this includes the following passage:

Just as, according to those positing grades in forms, several forms can inform one matter—in that the preceding form takes the part of matter and determines its potentiality, disposing it to the following form—so conversely one form can inform several matters in that one takes the part of form, namely that which is more intimate to itself, and so the whole composite of matter and form informs the body, not by reason of the matter but only by reason of the form principally informing its proper matter. To the major of this argument [namely, “the soul is the form of the body” etc.] it should be said that the whole [*ipsa tota*] informs the body, and in that way it can be said “according to itself as a whole” [*secundum se totum*], nevertheless not by reason of the whole but by reason of the part; and so the “according to itself” bespeaks the manner [*rationem*] of informing, and yet it does not inform according to its totality.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Scotus, *QQ De anima*, Q.15.3: “. . . materia non potest esse forma alterius.” For easy reference I will refer to Scotus’ text throughout the discussion by the editors’ paragraph numbers rather than by page number. Q.15.3 is the third numbered paragraph of Q.15. Regarding this argument, the editors note its similarity to St. Thomas’ *Summa theologiae* I.q.75a.5 corp.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Q.15.42: “sicut secundum ponentes gradus in formis plurae formae possent unam materiam informare—per hoc quod forma praecedens tenet se ex parte materiae et determinat potentialitatem eius, disponendo ipsam ad formam sequentem—, sic e converso una forma potest pluras materias informare per hoc quod altera se tenet ex parte formae, scilicet illa quae est sibi intimior, et sic totum compositum ex materia et forma animae informat corpus, non ratione materiae sed tantum ratione formae principaliter informantis materiam propriam. Ad maiorem igitur rationis [sc. “anima est forma corporis”] dicendum quod ipsa tota informat corpus, et illo modo potest dici quod ‘secundum se totum,’ non tamen ratione totius sed ratione partis; et sic ly ‘secundum se’ praedicat rationem informandi, non tamen secundum se totum informat.”

It should be immediately apparent to the reader that this passage, although in Scotus' typically rather obscure style, is defending the same position defended by Gonsalvus in his Q.XI, and which this study has not found to be defended by anyone else in quite the same way. The whole soul, the composite of matter and form, informs the body, but it does so not by reason of its own proper matter but by reason of its form. At the same time Scotus adds to, or enhances, Gonsalvus' position by adding a comparison between the way the matter in the soul acts quasi-formally in relation to the matter of the body, and the way that, in a substance with a plurality of forms, the more generic form acts quasi-materially in relation to the more specific. Scotus does not directly quote Gonsalvus, but there are distinct verbal echoes.

Where Scotus says "*totum compositum ex materia et forma animae informat corpus, non ratione materiae sed tantum ratione formae*", Gonsalvus says "*tota anima perficit corpus, ratione tamen formae suae.*"⁵⁸ Where Scotus says "*ipsa tota informat corpus . . . non tamen ratione totius sed ratione partis,*" Gonsalvus says "*illa [i.e. materia]. . . non perficit corpus, sed tota a se, ratione tamen formae suae.*"⁵⁹ The phrase which concerns Scotus, and which he finds himself needing to explain, "*secundum se totum,*" is very close to the phrase used by Gonsalvus in the same context, "*secundum totum sui.*"⁶⁰ Especially noteworthy is the fact that in a single passage Scotus echoes three distinct passages in Gonsalvus' question, one from the opening debate and two from the concluding responses.

⁵⁸ See Gonsalvus, Q.XI, 224, sol. ob. 9: "quando arguitur quod si anima habeat materiam tunc perficiet duo perfectibilia, dicendum quod non est verum aequo primo, nam forma animae perficit propriam materiam suam, et illa non perficit corpus, sed tota anima perficit corpus, ratione tamen formae suae, sicut dictum est."

⁵⁹ See Ibid., sol. ob. 10: "Dicendum per praedicta quod forma perficiens materiam propriam ipsius animae est adaequata ei, et illa, ut dictum est, non perficit corpus, sed tota a se, ratione tamen formae suae, ut dictum est."

⁶⁰ Ibid., 197: "—Dicitur quod non sequitur, si non sit forma adaequata uni materiae, quod propter hoc secundum unum gradum perficit unam materiam, et secundum alium gradum aliam materiam, sicut anima intellectiva non est perfecta adaequata uni parti corporis et tamen non perficit unam partem corporis secundum unum gradum, et aliam partem secundum alium gradum, immo ipsa tota secundum totum sui perficit utramque materiam, et secundum totum sui excedit materiam unius."

Two paragraphs later Scotus, still answering the argument in paragraph 3, gives an argument even more directly parallel to one made by Gonsalvus:

It is not unfitting for one and the same form to perfect two matters, if in perfecting [it] it exceeds its own or one matter; such is the case about the soul with respect to the body. For we see that the soul through diverse perfections perfects one part of the body, [as well as] another part otherwise disposed. So in the present case it does not seem unfitting that through its form it perfects matters not equally primary, and which are not altogether [*totaliter*] of the same kind, since one is corporeal and the other is not.⁶¹

Compare this with Gonsalvus' argument, labelled in the previous chapter <M{A[M(A1)]}>:

It is said that it is not unfitting that that form, which in perfecting exceeds its matter, [also] perfects another matter; just as, conversely, it is not inconvenient that matter, whose appetite exceeds the actuality of its form, at the same time desires [*appetit*] another form; but such a form which in perfecting exceeds the matter itself in one part of the body, also [*idem*] perfects the matter in another part of the body, and therefore it does not seem unfitting that it should perfect two matters at the same time.⁶²

Here we see Scotus making the exact same argument as Gonsalvus; although neither passage is a precise quote of the other, they make the same point with notable verbal similarities; note especially the repeated use in each passage of the terms “*inconveniens*” and “*in perficiendo*”. Gonsalvus' argument is found in the center of the knottiest and structurally most complicated part of the reported debate in his Q.XI, and is not immediately contiguous to the other parallel passages I have noted; the impression given by comparing the two questions is that

⁶¹ Scotus, *QQ De anima*, Q.15.44: “non est inconveniens eandem formam perficere plures materias, si in perficiendo excedat suam vel unam materiam; sic est de anima respectu corporis. Videmus enim quod anima per diversas perfectiones unam partem corporis perficit, et aliam et aliter dispositam. Sic in proposito non videtur inconveniens quod per formam eius perficiat diversas materias non aequo primo, et quae non sunt totaliter unius rationis, quia una est corporalis et alia non.”

⁶² Gonsalvus, Q.XI, 195-196: “Dicitur quod non est inconveniens quod illa forma quae in perficiendo excedit suam materiam, quod perficiat aliam materiam; sicut, e contra, non est inconveniens quod materia, cuius appetitus excedit actualitatem formae, appetit simul aliam formam; talis autem forma quae in perficiendo excedit ipsam materiam in una parte corporis, idem perficit materiam in alia parte corporis, et ideo non videtur inconveniens quod simul perficiat duas materias.”

in constructing his response to the opening argument in paragraph 3, Scotus has collected all the “Gonsalvian” passages which interest him and used them in a single place.

In paragraph 6 Scotus gives the following argument:

Again, if it is composite, either the form of the soul is adequate to its matter and proportioned to it, or not. If it is, therefore it is not able to inform the body substantially; if not, therefore according to one grade it perfects [its] matter, and according to another [grade it perfects] the body, namely according to the grade in which it exceeds its own proper matter. Since therefore the separated soul perfects no body, that grade will be superfluous to it.⁶³

Compare this with the following argument made by “Alius” in Gonsalvus’ Q.XI:

If the form of the intellective soul is not a perfection adequate to [its] matter, therefore it perfects its matter according to one grade, and perfects the body according to another grade; therefore when the soul is separate from the body, it perfects its matter only according to one grade, and according to another grade it does not perfect matter, and thus then there will be some grade of the soul which will not be the perfection of the matter in which it is.⁶⁴

These two passages are so similar as not to require further comment. In his response, in paragraph 45, Scotus repeats what both he and Gonsalvus say elsewhere, that the whole soul informs each of its matters without being divided into grades.

In paragraph 46—the final paragraph of the question—Scotus returns to the argument from cognition, specifically addressing the claim, made in paragraph 7, that the substance of the intellect must exist in the same mode as its operations, which are immaterial. Scotus gives the following response:

⁶³ Scotus, *QQ De anima*, Q.15.6: “Item, si sit composita, aut forma animae est adaequata suae materiae et sibi proportionata, aut non. Si sic, igitur non posset corpus informare substantialiter; si non, igitur secundum unum gradum perficit materiam, et secundum alium corpus, scilicet secundum gradum in quo excellit materiam propriam. Cum igitur anima separata nullum corpus perficiat, ille gradus ei superflueret.”

⁶⁴ Gonsalvus of Spain, Q.XI, 197: “si forma animae intellectivae non sit perfectio adaequata materiae, ergo secundum unum gradum perficit suam materiam, et secundum alium gradum perficit corpus; ergo quando anima est separata a corpore, tantum secundum unum gradum perficit suam materiam, et secundum alium gradum non perficit materiam, et ita tunc erit aliquis gradus animae qui non erit perfectio materiae in qua est.”

It should be said that this is not conclusive, since an angel understands singularly, not only universally; therefore it would follow, according to this, that its essence would be singular and material, since it understands materially [i.e. it understands a material object].

Again, either you understand [the claim] to apply to every mode of operation which corresponds with the [thing] operating, [but then] you assume [what is] false, since operation has a temporary mode—but the operating substance or potency is permanent; or [else you understand the claim to apply to] some determinate mode. But if you understand it about some mode other than this about which you make the assumption in the minor, it is irrelevant. But if [you understand it] about this one, you beg the question, therefore, etc.⁶⁵

Compare this with the following passage from the *solutio* in Gonsalvus' Q.XI:

First, [the claim] fails because an angel and the soul not only understand universally and immaterially, but also singularly and materially. –Second, it fails because, since they say that the mode of operation is according to the mode of the substance, either they understand [this] about every mode of operation and substance, and then the proposition is false, because the mode of operation is transient and the mode of substance is permanent; or they understand it about some other mode of operation and of substance, and then either it is about another mode than the mode of immateriality, or about this mode; if about another mode, then it is irrelevant; if they understand it about this mode, then they beg what they ought to prove.⁶⁶

Not only are the two passages directly parallel, but Scotus' version of it reads as a paraphrase and very slight abbreviation of the longer passage in Gonsalvus, who also extends the argument for a few more paragraphs.

⁶⁵ Scotus, *QQ De anima*, Q.15.46: “dicendum quod non concludit, quia angelus intellegit singulare, non tantum universale; igitur sequeretur, secundum hoc, quod sua essentia esset singularis et materialis, quia intelligit materiale.

“Item, aut intelligis de omni modo operandi quod correspondeat operanti, falsum assumis, quia operatio habet modum transeuntem—operans autem substantia vel potentia est permanens; aut de modo determinato. Si autem intelligis de alio modo quam de isto de quo assumis in minori, nihil est ad propositum. Si autem de ipso, petis principium, igitur, etc.”

⁶⁶ Gonsalvus of Spain, Q.XI, 212: “Primo, deficit quia angelus et anima non solum intelligunt universale et immateriale, sed etiam singulare et materiale. –Secundo, deficit quia, cum dicunt quod modus operationis est secundum modum substantiae, aut intelligunt de omni modo operationis et substantiae, et tunc est propositio falsa, quia modus operationis est transiens et modus substantiae est permanens; aut intelligunt de aliquo modo operationis et substantiae, et tunc aut est de alio modo a modo immaterialitatis aut de isto modo; si de alio, tunc nihil ad propositum; si de isto modo intelligant, tunc petunt quod probare debent.”

Paragraphs 8 and 9 present Scotus' two authorities *contra*, and they are old standards. Paragraph 8 gives Boethius's principle⁶⁷ that a simple form cannot be a subject, and 9 points out that the soul can suffer from hellfire. The hellfire example, of course, was a commonplace for proving spiritual creatures' non-simplicity at least since William de la Mare, but we must also recall that it made up the fourth of Gonsalvus' four direct arguments for his position.

The rest of Scotus' question is divided into three parts. Paragraphs 10-30 provide a solution; 31-33 offer objections to the solution; 34-38 reply to these objections. (Paragraphs 39-46 are all devoted to responding to the opening objections, but I have focused only on those with parallels to Gonsalvus.) The critical edition divides the solution into two parts: paragraphs 10-24 are labelled "*Responsio de necessitate materiae in angelis animabusque ponendae ad mentem Guilielmi de la Mare*," while 25-30 are labelled "*Solutio quaestionis*". The reason for this is, presumably, because paragraph 10 begins "*Respondeo quod . . .*", while paragraph 25 begins "*Dicendum est ad quaestionem . . .*" This might seem to indicate two distinct sections, each giving a "solution" or "response" to the central question, with the first giving William de la Mare's position and the second Scotus' own position. The labelling is misleading in several respects, however. As will become clear, the entire section of paragraphs 10-30 would more properly be labelled "*ad mentem Gonsalvi*" than "*ad mentem Guilielmi*". Furthermore, just as the direct argumentation for his position in Gonsalvus' "solution" in Q.XI had two parts, one arguing for spiritual matter and another, shorter one arguing for the unity of spiritual and corporeal matter, so here Scotus' paragraphs 10-24 argue for spiritual matter and 25-30 argue for the unity of matter. It is difficult to understand

⁶⁷ Boethius, *De Trinitate* c.2.

why the editors labelled the latter section “*Solutio quaestionis*” when paragraph 25 says merely “It should be said to the question that if in the soul or the angel there is matter, that it is of the same sort as the matter of corporeal things.”⁶⁸ Although Scotus is still speaking “to the question” in the sense that the discussion is still about spiritual matter, he has already given his “solution” to the question—“Whether our intellect is material”—in the preceding paragraphs.

Scotus’ paragraphs 10-18 argue that the soul must have matter, since there are many souls and matter is the principle of individuation in a species. This series of paragraphs provides a series of parallels to the third of Gonsalvus’ direct arguments for his position, interrupted by passages apparently original to Scotus. Scotus, however, does not wholeheartedly endorse this line of argument (or its conclusion in favor of spiritual matter) as Gonsalvus does.⁶⁹ Rather he asserts that the soul “probably” has matter, and that spiritual matter certainly follows from the premises of Aristotle and opponents of the doctrine:

I respond that it can probably be said that there is matter in the soul, both according to the foundations of the Philosopher and [the foundations] of those who posit the contrary. One of which is that the plurality of individuals in one species requires matter in those individuals . . . This is made clear through diverse [thinkers] positing that matter is the principle of individuation; but in the species of the rational soul there are plural individuals, even when they are separated from the body; therefore, etc.

You will say, as the opponents say, that the soul does indeed [*bene*] have matter which it perfects, or is intrinsically apt to perfect, namely the body. And separated [souls] can be pluralized by reason of [their] aptitude to diverse perfectible bodies, but not have matter from which they are made. Against this: the soul is not for the sake of the body, but rather the converse [is the case]; therefore neither the distinction nor the plurality of souls is on account of the distinction of bodies, but rather the

⁶⁸ Scotus, *QQ De anima*, Q.15.25: “Dicendum est ad quaestionem quod si in anima vel angelo est materia, quod est eiusdem rationis cum materia corporalium.”

⁶⁹ See Martel, *La Psychologie*, 186: “Sur la question de la composition hylémorphique de l’âme, Scot est plus réticent que Gonsalve. Il expose cette théorie comme étant le développement de certains principes aristotéliens qu’il n’endosse pas nécessairement.”

converse. Whence the Commentator in VII *Metaphysics* says that the members of a lion differ from the members of a stag, because their souls differ; and not the converse.⁷⁰

Compare this passage with Gonsalvus' third direct argument:

. . . Whenever there are plural [members] of the same species they have matter . . . but the soul and angels are plural [members] of the same species; therefore they have matter. –The minor is plain in the case of souls, which are plural in the same species, otherwise men would not be plural in the same species nor would have forms of the same species: therefore souls have matter. But for this plurification and distinction of souls under the same species the matter in which they are and which they perfect, namely the human body, does not suffice, since bodies are for the sake of souls, and the soul is end of the body, as it says in I *De anima*; therefore the plurification and distinction of souls is not through the body, but rather the contrary. This is also what the Commentator wishes to say in I *De anima*, that “the members of a stag do not differ from the members of a lion except because soul differs from soul”; and he wishes to say the same thing about individuals, in the same place.⁷¹

The two passages again are practically identical in meaning, though not in wording. The same argument is made with the same steps in each, down to the citation of Averroës. Note however that Gonsalvus cites him correctly, and Scotus does not.⁷² More significant is the fact that in his version of the argument Gonsalvus seems to accept the principle that matter is

⁷⁰ Scotus, *QQ De anima*, Q.15.10-12: “Respondeo quod probabiliter potest dici quod in anima est materia, et secundum fundamenta Philosophi et eorum qui ponunt contrarium. Quorum unum est quod pluralitas individuorum in una specie requirit materiam in illis individuis . . . Hoc etiam patet per diversos ponentes materiam esse principium individuationis; sed in specie animae rationalis sunt plura individua, etiam ipsa a corpore separata; igitur, etc. Dices, sicut contrarii dicunt, quod anima bene habent materiam quam perficit vel est apta nata perficere, scilicet corpus. Et ratione aptitudinis ad diversa corpora perfectibilia, ipsa separata potest plurificari, non autem habent materiam ex qua fit. Contra eos: Anima non est propter corpus, sed potius e converso; igitur nec distinctio nec pluralitas animarum est propter distinctionem corporum, sed potius e converso. Unde Commentator VII *Metaphysicae* dicit quod membra leonis differunt a membris cervi, quia differunt animae eorum; et non e converso.”

⁷¹ Gonsalvus, Q.XI, 215-216: “Tertio, sic: quaecumque sunt plura eiusdem speciei habent materiam . . . sed anima et angeli sunt plures eiusdem speciei; ergo habent materiam. –Minor patet de animabus quae sunt plures eiusdem speciei, aliter homines non essent plures eiusdem speciei nisi haberent formas eiusdem speciei: ergo animae habent materiam. Sed ad hanc plurificationem et distinctionem animarum sub eadem specie non sufficit materia in qua sunt et quam perficiunt, ut corpus humanum, quia corpora sunt propter animas, et anima est finis corporis, sicut dicitur I *De anima*; ergo plurificatio et distinctio animarum non est per corpora, sed magis e contra. Hoc etiam vult Commentator super I *De anima*, quod ‘membra cervi non differunt a membra leonis nisi quia anima differt ab anima’; et hoc etiam vult in individuis, ibidem.”

⁷² See Averroës, *De anima* I com. 53, ed. F.S. Crawford, in *Averroes Latinus* v.4 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1956), 75.

the principle of individuation, or at least that matter is required for individuation, whereas Scotus—who holds that individuation is provided by a unique individuating formal entity—reports the principle as held by others, and so gives the argument as a consequence of *their* principle, not his own. Consequently he accepts the conclusion only provisionally. Note also that in this case Scotus’ version of the argument is slightly longer.

The next argument, a confirmation of the last point made, is also parallel in both authors. Scotus writes, “Again, when the foundation or terminus of a relation is destroyed, there is no relation; but the inclination or aptitude to the body is a certain relation; therefore, when the body is destroyed after death, there is no such inclination of the soul to the body.”⁷³ Gonsalvus makes the same point, again, slightly more briefly and without directly mentioning relations: “Again, if the distinction or plurality of souls were through the body, therefore when the bodies were corrupted or annihilated the distinction of souls would cease, which is impossible.”⁷⁴ For the next four paragraphs Scotus continues to elaborate on why the soul cannot be distinguished by its relation to the body. Paragraphs 14 and 16-18 are independent of Gonsalvus. In paragraph 15, however, he writes, “Again, if the distinction of souls is from the part of [their] bodies alone, God would not be able to create two souls without bodies; since they would not be distinguished through their bodies, nor even through

⁷³ Scotus, *QQ De anima*, Q.15.13: “Item, destructo fundamento vel termino relationis, non est relatio; sed inclinatio illa vel aptitudo ad corpus est quaedam relatio; igitur, destructo corpore post mortem, non est talis inclinatio animae ad corpus.”

⁷⁴ Gonsalvus of Spain, Q. XI, 216: “Item, si distinctio et pluralitas animarum esset per corpora, ergo corruptis et annihilatis corporibus cessaret distinctio animarum, quod est impossibile . . .”

an inclination to them; therefore, etc.”⁷⁵ Compare with Gonsalvus: “it would also follow that God is unable to create souls without bodies, which is false.”⁷⁶

All of Scotus’ paragraphs 10-18 comprise his first “principal argument” in defense of spiritual matter. Paragraph 19 gives his second:

The second principal reason is: just as operation bespeaks [*arguit*] form, so the properties of matter [bespeak] matter; but the properties of matter, so far as its being and its becoming as concerned, are found more truly in spiritual things than in corporeal ones. For the property of matter, so far as its being is concerned, is that it is ingenerable and incorruptible; but as far as its becoming is concerned, that it is only produced by creation. But these [properties] are especially found in spiritual things. Similarly to “substand” accidents [is found more truly in spiritual things than in corporeal ones]; for just as the body underlies corporeal qualities, so the soul [underlies] spiritual [qualities], as [for instance] the soul’s habits. But that this is a property of matter is clear through induction: for a property is not in a composite except by reason of its principles; nor indeed [is it a property] of form, for [it belongs to form] to actuate a contrary property; therefore it belongs to the soul to “substand” accidents by reason of matter. Therefore, etc.⁷⁷

This “principal argument” is not parallel to any single one of Gonsalvus’ arguments. Rather, it appears to be a condensation and amalgamation of *both* Gonsalvus’ first and second direct arguments for his position. Consider the following excerpts:

. . . the properties of matter, whether as far as its being is concerned, or its becoming, are more truly found in all incorporeal things than in corporeal ones; therefore matter will be more and more truly found in incorporeal things than in corporeal ones . . .

⁷⁵ Scotus, *QQ De anima*, Q.15.15: “Item, si distinctio animarum est ex parte corporum tantum, Deus non posset creare duas animas sine corporibus; quia per corpora non distinguerentur, nec etiam per inclinationem ad illa; igitur, etc.”

⁷⁶ Gonsalvus of Spain, Q. XI, 216: “. . . sequeretur etiam quod Deus non posset creare animas sine corporibus, quod falsum est.” Note that this is the second half of the sentence whose first half I quoted in note 70 above. Scotus seems to refer to and slightly amplify both parts of a single sentence, with a paragraph of his own inserted between the adapted portions.

⁷⁷ Scotus, *QQ De anima*, Q.15.19: “Secunda ratio principalis est: sicut operatio arguit formam, ita proprietates materiae materiae; sed proprietates materiae quantum ad suum esse et fieri suum reperiuntur verius in spiritualibus quam corporalibus. Proprietates enim materiae, quantum ad esse, est quod est ingenerabilis et incorruptibilis; sed quantum ad fieri, quod tantum producit per creationem. Haec autem maxime reperiuntur in spiritualibus. Similiter substare accidentibus; sicut enim corpus substare qualitatibus corporalibus, ita anima spiritualibus, sicut habitibus animae. Quod autem haec sit proprietates materiae, patet per inductionem: non enim inest proprietates composito nisi ratione principiorum; nec etiam formae, quia eius est actuare quae est proprietates contraria; igitur ratione materiae inest animae substare accidentibus. Igitur, etc.”

because the property of matter, as far as its being is concerned, is that it is ingenerable and incorruptible; and its property as far as its becoming is concerned is that it is produced in being through creation by the only creating power. But these [properties] are especially consistent with incorporeal things . . . it belongs to the definition [*de ratione*] of a substance that it provides a foundation for other [forms]; but the primary characteristic [*ratio*] of “substanding” is attributed to the matter in a composite, and not to the composite . . . nor is it primarily attributed to form insofar as it is form, since not all forms “substand”; therefore the primary characteristic [i.e. “substanding”] pertains to the perfection of substance inasmuch as a substance is distinct from an accident.⁷⁸

The parallel is very pronounced, but it also seems clear that the passage in Scotus is a consolidation and condensation of the one in Gonsalvus, skipping over the phrases, sentences, and fairly extensive elaborations of the arguments which the above translation omits.

At this point we can observe that paragraphs 9-19 of Scotus’ *De anima* Q.15, taken as a whole, parallel Gonsalvus’ four direct arguments for his position in his Q.XI, taken as a whole, *but in reverse order*. Paragraph 9—the last one before the editors place the beginning of the “*responsio*”—is parallel to Gonsalvus’ direct argument #4. In itself this is

⁷⁸ Gonsalvus, Q.XI, 214-215. These are the passages in full: “Primum ostenditur: 1. Primo, sic: principia debent proportionari principiatis illorum; igitur magis et verius sunt aliqua principia in quibus magis inveniuntur proprietates illorum principiorum; sed proprietates materiae, tum quantum ad fieri tum quantum ad esse, verius inveniuntur in incorporalibus omnibus quam in corporalibus; ergo magis et verius erit materia in incorporalibus quam in corporalibus. —Assumpta patet: quia proprietas materiae, quantum ad suum esse, est quod sit ingenerabilis et incorruptibilis; proprietas vero eius quantum ad fieri est quod producitur in esse per creationem a sola potentia creante. Haec autem singulariter conveniunt incorporalibus; ergo materia, quantum ad proprietates sui esse et fieri magis proportionatur incorporalibus quam corporalibus. Ergo etc. 2. Secundo, sic: quod facit ad perfectionem substantiae in quantum substantia est ens distinctum contra ens diminutum, quod dicitur ens quia entis, et tale ponendum est in entibus nobilioribus sive magis perfectis, ut sunt incorruptibilia omnia; sed materia est huiusmodi, quod ipsa facit ad perfectionem substantiae ut substantia est ens perfectum distinctum contra accidens; ergo etc. —Maior est evidens secundum illud: ‘sicut simpliciter ad simpliciter, et magis ad magis, et maxime ad maxime’; ergo illud quod facit ad perfectionem maxime debet esse in ente perfecto. —Minor probatur: quia de ratione substantiae est quod praestet fundamentum aliis; sed prima ratio substandi attribuitur materiae in composito, non autem composito; vel si sic, tunc habetur propositum quod angelus substans accidentibus sit quoddam compositum; nec etiam primo attribuitur formae unde forma, quia non omnes formae substant; ergo prima ratio pertinet ad perfectionem substantiae ut substantia distincta contra accidens.”

insignificant, since the proof for spiritual passivity from angel's capacity to suffer from hellfire is a Franciscan commonplace, and is no more elaborated in Gonsalvus than in Scotus. Add to this, however, that immediately after this commonplace Scotus, in paragraphs 10-18, gives an extended argument or series of arguments directly parallel to Gonsalvus' direct argument #3, from matter as the principle of individuation, and that in paragraph 19 he gives an argument directly parallel to Gonsalvus' direct arguments #1-2, taken as a single argument but preserving the kernel of each. None of the parallels are direct quotes. If Scotus is using Gonsalvus he paraphrases, adds, and subtracts material. Taken as a whole, however, the parallel between Scotus' paragraphs 9-19 and the third section of Gonsalvus' *solutio* is remarkable, although not a case of wholesale verbatim borrowing.

As his third principal argument Scotus' paragraph 20 presents another Franciscan commonplace: the argument for spiritual matter from the inclusion of spiritual creatures in the genus of substance.⁷⁹ This argument is not found in a similar form anywhere in Gonsalvus, but is essentially the same as arguments given by John Pecham, Matthew of Aquasparta, and Henry of Ghent (not as his own), as seen above in Chapter 3. For a fourth argument Scotus returns in paragraph 21 to the same point made in paragraph 9, this time in a longer form.⁸⁰ Paragraphs 22-24 give commonplace authoritative texts.

⁷⁹ Scotus, *QQ De anima*, Q.15.20: "Tertio sic: angelus habet materiam, igitur anima. Probatio antecedentis: quia in quocumque genere sunt principia communia—non tantum appropriata—et realiter distincta, oportet omnia illius generis esse ex eis composita; materia et forma sunt talia principia communissima in quolibet genere; actus autem in genere substantiae est forma, potentia in eodem genere est materia; igitur materia et forma sunt principia communissima in genere substantiae. . . . Igitur cum angelus sit species substantiae, est ex eis compositus."

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, Q.15.21: "Quarto, idem sic ostendo: sicut impossibile est aliquod agens secundum agere nisi coagente primo, ita impossibile est aliquid pati nisi in virtute primi passivi. Sed certum est quod angeli et animae patiuntur, et bona sicut boni angeli, et mala, etiam ab igne corporali, sic mali angeli; igitur, etc." The editors point out that this is parallel to William de la Mare, *Correctorium*, in *Qq. de anima de fratre Thomae*, art. 6 (ed. Glorieux, 377).

As noted above, paragraphs 25-30 give arguments and authoritative texts to support the provisional claim that, *if* there is matter in the soul and in an angel, then it is of the same sort as the matter of corporeal things. Scotus begins with the observation that one could not say that spiritual and corporeal matters “were of a different sort unless one were more perfect and nobler than another; but a spiritual thing is nobler than a corporeal one.”⁸¹ Recall that Gonsalvus began his second argument for the unity of matter along these lines—but Scotus’ argument in paragraph 25 continues along lines argued by Godfrey of Fontaines in *Quod*. III.3, as seen in the previous section above, rather than following Gonsalvus. In paragraph 26 Scotus points to Augustine’s characterization of matter as *prope nihil*, and argues that if spiritual matter were more perfect than corporeal matter, it would not be “next to nothing”, since corporeal matter would stand between it and nothing.⁸² Paragraph 27 contains a longer argument apparently original to Scotus and of some philosophical interest, but in the interests of brevity, and since my concern here is primarily with the relation between Scotus’ text and that of Gonsalvus, I bypass it in favor of paragraph 28:

Again, if one [matter] were nobler than another, since a nobler perfection ought to respond to a nobler perfectible by an essential perfection, it follows that the matter of the heavenly bodies would be perfected by a nobler form than the matter of the lower bodies; but the matter of some corruptible bodies is perfected by a rational soul; therefore much more will the matter of the heavenly bodies be perfected by a rational soul or by a nobler perfection [than that one], and consequently the heavenly bodies are animated.

Compare with the second of Gonsalvus’ arguments for the unity of matter:

⁸¹ Ibid., Q.15.25: “Dicendum est ad quaestionem quod si in anima vel angelo est materia, quod est eiusdem rationis cum materia corporalium. Quod probro sic: Quia non diceres eas diversarum rationum nisi una esset perfectior et nobilior aliã; sed spiritualis est nobilior corporali; aut igitur est nobilior in potentialitate, aut in actualitate. Si in actualitate, igitur non est materia prima, quia nihil actualitatis habet; si in potentialitate, igitur est imperfectior, cuius oppositum supponebat, quia potentialius est imperfectius.”

⁸² Ibid., Q.15.26: “. . . si alia esset perfectior, scilicet angelorum, non esset prope nihil; igitur, etc.”

Second, I prove the same thing in this way: if in the heavens there were matter of another sort than in these corporeal things [here below], and in spiritual things [there were a different sort of matter] than in corporeal things, it would require that matter in the heavenly bodies would be nobler than the matter of these lower things . . . Therefore the form perfecting the matter in the heavens would be nobler than the form perfecting the matter in generable animated things; and so heaven would be animated with an intellective soul, which yet is false according to the truth of the matter.⁸³

Again, the arguments make an identical point and the wordings are similar, but the Gonsalvus passage is buttressed with additional supports in the middle, which are left out in Scotus' version of the argument.

As noted above, paragraphs 31-38 offer objections to the solution Scotus recounts, along with responses. Both objections and replies are more or less standard commonplaces in this debate, without particular relation to Gonsalvus' text.

In sum, we have seen that a large proportion of Scotus' *De anima* Q.15 is closely parallel to a number of passages in Gonsalvus' Q.XI, significantly more than the three sets of passages considered by the editors in their introduction. Is there enough data, however, to prove either that Scotus is dependent on Gonsalvus, or vice versa? The editors point to three criteria necessary to assert dependence between the two authors: "To show borrowing, one must be able to point to sections where there are parallels that are unique, close, and unidirectional. . . . it is this last feature that seems to be wanting in the case at hand."⁸⁴ The

⁸³ Gonsalvus, Q.XI, 220. Here is the entire passage: "Secundo, hoc idem probatur sic: si in caelo esset materia alterius rationis quam in istis corporalibus, et in rebus spiritualibus quam in rebus corporalibus, oporteret quod materia in corporibus caelestibus esset nobilior quam materia istorum inferiorum; aliter si essent in aequali gradu non essent alterius rationis; sed perfectibili nobiliori debetur perfectio naturalis nobilior, aliter enim esset aliqua potentia naturalis in perfectibili frustra cum non posset perfici; unde quamvis non tenet in perfectibilibus perfectione supernaturali, ut de gratia, tamen tenet de eo quod est perfectibile naturaliter, et quod vere habet rationem perfectibilis; quod dico propter compositum quod perficitur forma accidentali, quod proprie non est perfectibile essentialiter. Ergo forma perficiens materiam in caelestibus esset nobilior forma perficiente materiam in generabilibus animatis; et sic caelum esset animatur anima intellectiva, quod tamen falsum est secundum rei veritatem."

⁸⁴ *QQ De anima*, 124*.

additional data offered here allows us to recognize that, while Scotus is clearly familiar with the wider Franciscan tradition of argumentation for spiritual matter, and particularly with William de la Mare's *Correctorium*, nevertheless the parallels between Scotus and Gonsalvus are unique and close to an even more significant degree than has hitherto been recognized. But can we now make a judgement about their directionality? One must begin by admitting that absolute certainty on this question is probably unattainable. The editors, arguing that Scotus' text was written before Gonsalvus', and cautioning the reader against succumbing to the "tyranny of print," nevertheless offer no positive evidence of Gonsalvus' dependence on Scotus. They assign an earlier date to the *De anima* questions based on historically plausible considerations, but this date forces upon them an ambivalent attitude towards Scotus' relations with Gonsalvus. At one point they give a long list of contemporary doctors to whom Scotus is "heavily indebted," in which Gonsalvus is not included.⁸⁵ A few pages later, however, they include Gonsalvus among several authors "whom he recites or abbreviates tacitly."⁸⁶ But what is Scotus reciting or abbreviating from Gonsalvus, if not the latter's surviving set of Disputed Questions? And if he does use them, how can he do so without writing after they were disputed? The parallels in Scotus' Q.15, largely passed over by the editors, are much closer than most of the parallels with William de la Mare which they do recognize, and one suspects that their chronology determined Gonsalvus' exclusion from the *apparatus fontium*, rather than the content of the question determining its chronology. Again, while admitting that positive certainty is impossible, the following considerations incline me to accept Scotus' dependence on Gonsalvus rather than vice versa: 1) the nature of the

⁸⁵ Ibid., 136*.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 139*.

parallel passages; 2) the positions of the passages within their respective questions; 3) the natures of the respective works in which the passages are found; 4) the positions of the respective questions in the context of their authors' works.

1) In the case of many of the parallels we have examined, the version given by Gonsalvus is longer, sometimes significantly longer, than that given by Scotus. (Contrary to some claims,⁸⁷ I have found no passages in which one is *literally* copied from the other, despite many verbal similarities.) Gonsalvus tends to explain and defend the principles and consequences of his arguments at rather greater length, while Scotus gives a more abbreviated, even terse, version of the argument's kernel.⁸⁸ This is most notable in Scotus' paragraph 19 and Gonsalvus' direct arguments 1-2, but is also in evidence in other passages. Scotus tends to condense and abbreviate where Gonsalvus is more expansive. On the other hand, when Scotus' version is longer or contains additional material, it does not read as though it were a more expansive version of an argument abbreviated in Gonsalvus, but rather as though the additional material occurred to Scotus separately and then was interpolated. This is especially evident in Scotus' paragraphs 13-15, but, again, is also evident elsewhere.

2) The parallel passages in Gonsalvus come from all three portions of his Q.XI: the opening debate, the *solutio*, and the concluding responses. The parallels to Gonsalvus' opening debate and concluding responses are in Scotus' opening arguments and their responses. The parallel of Scotus' paragraph 6 with one of the arguments by "Alius" in Gonsalvus' opening debate is particularly significant. If we presume that Gonsalvus'

⁸⁷ See Sondag, *Prologue de l'Ordinatio*, 10: "... bien que cet ouvrage soit traditionnellement attribué à Scot, on y relève certaines divergences avec d'autres oeuvres qui sont, elles, certainement authentiques; certains passages sont repris littéralement de Gonsalve d'Espagne".

⁸⁸ Wippel notes the same relationship between arguments shared by Gonsalvus and Godfrey: Gonsalvus' versions tend to be "more drawn out" and thorough. See e.g. "Godfrey of Fontaines: The Date of Quodlibet 15", 328.

disputation was accurately reported, this parallel gives us strong reason to think that Scotus' text was written after the debate took place. Otherwise one must argue not only that Gonsalvus took arguments from Scotus, but also that "Alius" brought up a Scotist argument in the debate, to which Gonsalvus gave a Scotist response. This seems intrinsically improbable—unless, perhaps, "Alius" is taken to be Scotus himself! This is, in fact, an attractive and possible (though partial) solution, since Scotus is known to have been a respondent under Gonsalvus and to have assisted in his disputations. I will return to this possibility below. The alternative explanation, that Scotist arguments were interpolated into Gonsalvus' text, not only in the *solutio* but also into the unusually detailed report of the opening debate—putting Scotus' words into another participant's mouth—lacks any evidence and also seems *prima facie* improbable. There seems to be no way to assign a principle why just these Scotist arguments would be interpolated, and why they should be put just here in the opening debate and concluding responses. If Scotistic material were to be inserted, why not insert it in a block rather than scattering it throughout the question? Furthermore, it seems improbable that the content of the passages would be invented by Scotus, for the reasons argued under 4) below.

We have seen that Scotus' *solutio* has the same overall structure as the final section of Gonsalvus', and that the ordering of their parallel passages in Scotus is the inverse of that in Gonsalvus. In addition to the "Gonsalvean" material Scotus includes more generically Franciscan material. The impression I receive from reading the whole question is that Scotus most likely composed his Q.15 with both Gonsalvean material and other Franciscan sources (including William de la Mare's *Correctorium*) close at hand, but—given the lack of direct quotation—not actually copying from them. The use of Gonsalvus' concluding arguments in

his own opening objections and concluding responses, and the reversal of the order of arguments in the *solutio*, combined with the close verbal similarities, suggest Scotus' consulting Gonsalvus' text by flipping through the pages from back to front in order to refresh his memory, setting the book down, and composing his own text rapidly, rewording, compressing, and adding additional arguments or considerations as they occurred to him. This explanation accounts for both the nature and the positions of the parallels in Scotus. (It would also account for Scotus' incorrect citation of Averroës in paragraph 12, where Gonsalvus cites him correctly. If Scotus is picking up material from Gonsalvus hastily or from memory, the mis-citation is an understandable slip; on the other hand, if Gonsalvus is lifting from Scotus we must presume that he remembers the passage from Averroës well enough to correct the citation, or that he made the additional effort to check it.) If, on the other hand, Gonsalvus is dependent on Scotus, the position of the parallel passages in Gonsalvus seems very hard to account for, placed haphazardly as they would be throughout the opening debate and responses, as well as the *solutio*. If we presume, however, that Gonsalvus' Q.XI was reported as the disputation actually took place, no further explanation for the order of the arguments there need be looked for.

3) The editors of the critical edition give the following description of the nature of Scotus' *QQ. De anima*:

. . . they were designed as teaching materials for introductory uses. The argumentation is not elaborate or complicated. Essentially, the author presents standard contrary opinions on the question and exposes the basic logical outlines of the arguments and solutions. The solutions are not magisterial or determinative. The questions are dialectical strictly speaking, that is, they yield probable opinions that seem *verior* than the alternatives.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ *QQ De anima*, 139*.

This describes Q.15, as it does the other *De anima* questions, perfectly well. If one posits that Scotus composed this question shortly after Gonsalvus' Q.XI was disputed, Scotus' use of Gonsalvus is eminently intelligible. Gonsalvus' treatment of spiritual matter inspired spirited debate during the dispute itself, and attracted later responses. It both summed up most of what the Franciscan tradition up to his day had to say about spiritual matter, as well as added to it. Someone compiling "teaching materials for introductory use" for young Franciscans would find in Gonsalvus an ideal place to begin presenting the question, if sufficiently pared down and supplemented with such a textbook author as William de la Mare. Scotus in particular would be likely to turn to Gonsalvus' text for material, given their intimate personal and professional acquaintance, and (a point I shall return to in a moment) Scotus' own lack of interest in the question. Scotus does indeed present the doctrine of spiritual matter as a "probable opinion," hedging twice about whether he fully accepts either the doctrine or the premises of the arguments supporting it. Placed in an introductory teaching course, however, Scotus' presentation of typically Franciscan thinking on an important question without either opposing or wholeheartedly endorsing such thinking need not seem extraordinary or be taken as evidence of personal inconsistency.

On the other hand, Gonsalvus' *Quaestiones Disputatae*, and Q.XI in particular, is everything that Scotus' *De anima* questions are not: the argumentation is elaborate and complicated, giving not only standard opinions but also a wide range of unusually detailed and sophisticated ones; the solution is magisterial and determinative, yielding not what Gonsalvus sees as a "probable opinion," but a truth of central metaphysical importance. The question is not a minor compilation of teaching materials for an introductory course, but a major public disputation attracting attention from luminaries of the contemporary intellectual

scene. Even given Gonsalvus' "long experience" with Scotus, positing that Scotus' questions were written in the 1290s does not make it any more intelligible why Gonsalvus would choose this material to expand and elaborate on rather than, say, Olivi's or other more thorough, more enthusiastic, more authoritative treatments of the question—especially for what are some of the most distinctive and original parts of Gonsalvus' treatment, including several of the arguments specifically targeted by Godfrey of Fontaines.

4) Finally, consider spiritual matter in the writings of Gonsalvus, on the one hand, and in those of Scotus on the other. As we saw in the previous chapter, spiritual matter is of central and unusual importance for Gonsalvus. It is mentioned with surprising frequency throughout his small surviving corpus, and Q.XI is eminently consistent with and representative of Gonsalvus' other writings. Of particular note is Gonsalvus' third direct argument for spiritual matter, which argues from the necessary presence of matter wherever there are multiple individuals of the same species. Not only does Gonsalvus present this argument in Q.XI without any hint of reservation about the premise, but as we saw above in section IV.2.1., Gonsalvus tacitly accepts this premise in the *Conclusiones metaphysicae*, where one would expect him to object to it otherwise. Scotus, on the other hand, pointedly refrains from accepting this premise in his paragraph 10, presenting the argument as a consequence of a premise held by others. Elsewhere in his writings he positively rejects it. Here, perhaps more than anywhere else, the evidence for positing Gonsalvus as the original and Scotus as the borrower seems as strong as the evidence Wippel gives for Gonsalvus' preceding Godfrey rather than vice versa.

One of the primary arguments against the authenticity of Scotus' *QQ De anima* has been their "inconsistency" with his other authentic writings, especially on the issue of

spiritual matter. As we have seen and as the editors point out, Scotus accepts spiritual matter in Q.15 only conditionally and with reservation. Is it more likely that he would construct a number of new arguments of his own, suitable for borrowing by a figure like Gonsalvus—for whom the matter was of such importance—in a rather minor collection of introductory teaching materials, on a subject in which he had little interest, although it was popular at the time? Or is it more likely that he would take such arguments where he could find them, from well-known and authoritative sources illustrating the common position of his order, even if he did not completely accept them?

While admitting, therefore, that complete certainty is not attainable, and that other possible scenarios can be constructed, it seems to me that the preponderance of the available textual evidence and of probability points to Gonsalvus as the original source of the parallel passages in the two questions, and Scotus as the borrower. How then to account for the editors' dating of the *QQ De anima*, on other grounds, to the 1290s? It seems to me that the most probable solution is a complex one. I suggest that the parallels between the *solutio* in each of the two questions likely point to a discussion of spiritual matter by Gonsalvus in an earlier work, no longer extant, very similar in content to the *solutio* of his Q.XI. It's not improbable that the latter question reflects Gonsalvus' long-settled position, and therefore not unlikely that it borrows from previous work. Moreover, this may explain why Scotus' text follows the details of Gonsalvus' argumentation so closely without ever directly quoting it—the *De anima* question may have reflected an earlier, similar text even more closely. But then what about the parallels from the live debate? Here the possibility that Scotus may have actually taken part in the debate becomes very attractive. Recall that Gonsalvus' debate with "Alius" was the most complex part of Q.XI, a rapid-fire exchange of responses and counter-

responses ultimately nested many layers deep, suggesting an excited and deeply involved discussion, contrasted with (for instance) John of Paris' formal and orderly setting-out of objections and Gonsalvus' equally orderly set of replies. It's tempting to speculate that in this part of the debate Gonsalvus is resuming an old argument with a familiar sparring partner of whom he has "long experience", an argument which has also left traces in Scotus' *De anima* Q.15.

This solution seems to be the best way to interpret both the textual data and the information and arguments offered by Scotus' editors and quoted above. Relying, however, on not one but two suppositions for which there is otherwise no evidence—the existence of an earlier lost work of Gonsalvus, and that Scotus is the "Alius" of the 1302-1303 disputation—it must remain no more than an attractive hypothesis. I do not intend in any case to speculate or offer any implications about the rest of the *QQ De anima* or the overall chronology of Scotus' career in the 1290s and early 1300s, as spelled out by the editors of Scotus' *Opera Philosophica*, or otherwise⁹⁰: this would be entirely beyond the scope of the present chapter.

In any case, as I have noted already, outside of the *QQ De anima* Scotus takes very little interest in the problem of spiritual matter.⁹¹ Earlier in the last century, when the work

⁹⁰ Certainly alternative reconstructions of the relevant chronology have been formulated. For a fairly recent one, see e.g. Antoine Vos, "Duns Scotus at Paris," in *Duns Scot à Paris, 1302-2002: Actes du colloque de Paris, 2-4 septembre 2002*, ed. O. Boulnois et al. (Brepols, 2004), 3-19. In formulating his own account of Scotus' career, however, Vos makes little or no mention of Scotus' philosophical works, including the *QQ De anima*.

⁹¹ Denys the Carthusian notes that he has not found the question dealt with by Scotus. See his *In Librum II Sententiarum* Dist. III Q.1, 202: "Hanc autem quaestionem non reperi motam in Scoto." In *Dionysii Cartusiani Opera Omnia*, v. 21 (Tornaci: 1903). For some discussion of the subject see Scotus, *A Treatise on God as First Principle*, Translated and Edited with Commentary by A. Wolter, (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1966, 2nd ed. 1982), 200, 204, 207, 336, 338.

*De rerum principio*⁹² was attributed to Scotus, it was assumed that Scotus accepted spiritual matter, since the doctrine is argued for extensively there. When the work was reassigned, scholars doubted whether or not he accepted the doctrine, generally claiming that he rejected it.⁹³ For instance, in his recent book Vos states that “In his view, angels are not material.”⁹⁴ He gives no reference here, however, and elsewhere claims that the subject has little importance for Scotus.⁹⁵ Similarly, the editors of the *QQ De anima* state that the position Scotus takes in Q.15 seems “diametrically opposed to that which he defends in all of his other known writings.”⁹⁶ No reference, however, is given to any of Scotus’ writings. In fact it seems that Scotus never devoted another question to spiritual matter, and one must glean his opinion where one can find it.

The clearest statement seems to be in his *Quodlibet* Q.II. Significantly, in this question Scotus spends a good deal of time arguing against the principle he pointedly refused to endorse in his *De anima* Q.15.10, that members of the same species are multiplied by matter. Along the way he points out that angels and souls can be multiplied within their species without matter: “the soul is able to exist without matter, not only according to

⁹² Vital du Fuor, *Quaestiones disputatae de rerum principio* [attr. to Scotus], ed. M.F. Garcia, O.F.M. (Quaracchi, 1910). Vital discusses spiritual matter in Q.VII, “Utrum substantia spiritualis per se subsistens, vel apta nata subsistere, innitatur fundamento materiae?” His position is similar to that of Gonsalvus and of Scotus in the *QQ De anima*, but not so similar to either of them as they are to one another. See, e.g., 145: “. . . est dare tertiam formam, cuius ambitus excedit ambitum suae materiae, qualis est forma rationalis animae, quia non solum ad materiam suam spiritualem, imo etiam ad materiam corporalem informandam se extendit.” I mentioned at the end of Chapter 1 Zavalloni’s claim that Vital is the first thinker in the thirteenth century to allude to Avicembron directly in defense of any position. Vital does so, not in the question just cited on the existence of spiritual matter, but in the following one on the unity of matter, Q. VIII, “Utrum, supposito quod in omnibus substantiis, tam spiritualibus quam corporalibus, sit materia, an sit in omnibus eadem secundum rationem univocam?” See 164-166: “Quarto, inquirenda est unitas materiae, quae, ut videbitur, vario modo accipitur, secundum variam rationem primitatis eius, et ideo ille articulus est singulariter praemissus. Circa quod secundum, quod Avicembronus in libro *Fontis vitae* dixit unam in omnibus esse materiam. . . . Ego autem ad propositionem Avicembronis redeo . . .”

⁹³ See F. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, v. II, 513.

⁹⁴ Antoine Vos, *The Philosophy of John Duns Scotus* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 402.

⁹⁵ Vos, *The Philosophy of John Duns Scotus*, 372.

⁹⁶ *QQ De anima*, 126*.

substance and essence, but [also] according to existence and as a terminus of the divine creation; therefore it is able to exist without being united to matter . . .”⁹⁷

In the *Ordinatio* II. Dist. 3 Pars 1, where other commentaries on the *Sentences* tend to have questions about spiritual matter, Scotus instead gives an extended discussion (6 questions and 100 pages in the Vatican edition) on the principle of individuation, followed by a question on whether or not there can be a plurality of angels within the same species. These questions are of course related to the text just given from the *Quodlibet* and to the relevant principle in *QQ De anima* 15.10. Scotus’ own solution to the problem of individuation, not requiring matter, makes his refusal to endorse spiritual matter (or the multiplication of individuals in a species) on the grounds of matter as the principle of individuation perfectly intelligible. In *Ordinatio* II Dist. 3 Pars 1, however, Scotus simply assumes the immateriality of spiritual creatures throughout, without arguing for it directly.⁹⁸ In *Ordinatio* I Dist. 8 Pars 1 Q.2, he argues briefly that a creature can be simple in the sense of not composed of other things, and yet composed in the sense of being in privation to some grade of entity to which it is in potency—for instance, accidents.⁹⁹ Elsewhere in the *Ordinatio* Scotus mentions the immateriality of the angels, but as though reporting the position of others.¹⁰⁰ He briefly endorses the immateriality of the soul in the *Lectura* as well.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Scotus, *Cuestiones Cuodlibetales*, ed. F. Alluntis, O.F.M., Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos (Madrid, 1968), Quod. 2.17: “. . . anima autem non solum secundum substantiam et essentiam, sed secundum existentiam et ut terminus creationis divinae potest esse sine materia; ergo potest esse sine hoc quod uniatur materiae . . .” See also Gerard Sondag, “La matière dans *La Métaphysique* d’Aristote d’après l’interprétation de Duns Scot,” in *Documenti e Studi Sulla Tradizione Filosofica Medievale* XVI (2005), 23-55.

⁹⁸ See e.g. Scotus, *Ordinatio* II Dist. 3 Pars 1 Q. 1, n. 1 and *textus interpolatus*, Q.7 n. 230, 239 and its *adnotatio interpolata*. (Vat. VII)

⁹⁹ Scotus, *Ordinatio* I Dist. 8 Pars 1 Q.2 n.32-34 (Vat.IV).

¹⁰⁰ See e.g. Scotus, *Ordinatio* I Dist. I pars 1 q.3 n.94 (page 197-8): “. . . multa entia simplicia ponuntur in genere, sicut angeli, secundum ponentes eos esse immateriales, —accidentia etiam, secundum ponentes ea esse simplicia.”; *Ordinatio* I. Dist. II Pars 1 Q. 1-2.n.140-141 (Vat. II, 211): “Ultimo ostenditur propositum ex

While it is clear that Scotus does reject spiritual matter, then, it also seems clear that he did not consider the subject of sufficient interest or importance to devote any extended discussion to it. The special features of Scotus' own metaphysical system seem to have made the problem more or less irrelevant in his eyes. There is no difficulty in admitting that creatures can be simple, when what distinguishes a creature from God is not God's simplicity but his infinity.¹⁰² The substantiality of spiritual creatures does not imply their materiality,¹⁰³ for the genus of substance is itself indifferent to the presence or absence of matter.¹⁰⁴ Accidents in spiritual creatures can be understood not as forms separate from substantial forms, each inhering in an underlying matter, but as more determinate formal perfections determining less determinate ones, just as specific differences determine genera, neither wholly identical nor separable, but formally distinct from them.¹⁰⁵

All this shows us that, as I mentioned at the beginning of this section, with Scotus' mature thought philosophy, especially among Franciscan thinkers, undergoes a huge and

negatione causae extrinsecae, quia forma finitur per materiam; ergo quae non est nata esse in materia, est infinita. Haec ratio non valet, quia secundum ipsos angelus est immaterialis; ergo in natura est infinitus."

¹⁰¹ Scotus, *Lectura* II.12.57, (Vat. XIX, 91): "Praeterea, aliqua forma est per creationem (ut anima humana intellectiva), et per consequens erit alterius rationis et non eiusdem naturae cum materia; . . ."

¹⁰² Scotus, *Ordinatio* I d.3 q. 1-2 n.60 (Vat. III 40-42).

¹⁰³ Scotus, *QQ In Metaphysicam* VII.19.65: "Item, tunc substantia vel includet solam materiam, et ita secundum aliquos non praedicabitur de angelis; vel erit composita ex materia et forma, et nec sic, secundum illos, praedicabitur de illis. . . ."

¹⁰⁴ Scotus, *QQ In Metaphysicam* VII.19.73: "Ad tertium dico quod illa ratio realis, a qua sumitur generalissimum quod est substantia, est simplex negative, id est non includens compositionem; non contrarie, id est repugnans compositioni. . . ."

¹⁰⁵ See Scotus, *QQ In Metaphysicam* VII.19.67: "Aliter potest dici quod differentia sumitur per se ab actualitate essentialiter perfectiva. Quandoque autem talis est realiter forma, et perfectibile materia simplex vel composita. Sic Avicibron posuit omni differentiae correspondere propriam formam. Quandoque actualitas, a qua sumitur differentia, non est forma sed perfectio formalis, et hoc sufficit pro differentia. Et tunc perfectibile non est materia, sed totum ut perfectibile secundum aliquam rationem realem perfectivam. Licet igitur quandoque ascendendo abstrahatur vere materia composita a forma vel formato, ut 'corpus' ab 'animato'—et secundum multos ab 'inanimato'—tamen ulterior abstractio fit tantum a ratione reali formali, et ita non statuitur in materia prima sed in ente summe potenciali respectu rationum realium perfectivarum. Tale est ens communissime sumptum. Genus autem communissimum omnium materialium non tantum a materia sumitur, sed etiam ab aliqua forma secundum se indistincta et perfectibili per omnes actualitates specierum, sicut per rationes reales alias perfectivas." Note the reference to Avicibron!

irreversible shift. Scotus neither defends some variant of the Bonaventurean doctrine of spiritual matter with the vigor and sophistication of Peter Olivi or Gonsalvus, but nor does he attack it. Rather he renders it (apparently) unnecessary and irrelevant, and turns the focus of debate into other channels. If after the thirteenth century spiritual matter disappears as a central topic of particular metaphysical import for Franciscans, this is not, as scholars have long claimed, because of the devastating refutations of St. Bonaventure's opponent St. Thomas Aquinas, but rather because of its neglect by his heir the Bl. John Duns Scotus.

Epilogue

As I noted in the Preface, this study had its origins in a recognition that the doctrine of spiritual matter, and the metaphysical principles that underlie it, are substantially the same in St. Bonaventure and in Gonsalvus of Spain, despite the fifty eventful years of intellectual development—among the most fertile periods of scholastic thought—which separate them. Having completed the investigation of both the philosophical and the historical roots of the doctrine, as well as traced its continuity throughout the second half of the thirteenth century, we are now in a position to take stock of the results.

Again, as indicated in the Preface, this study fell into three parts of roughly equal length. The first two chapters traced the origins of the problem of the composition of spiritual creatures from the conflicting conceptions of matter laid down by Plato and Aristotle, to the early assertions of a form of the doctrine of spiritual matter by Augustine and Avicbron, through the debate among the scholastics until the two classical alternative solutions were formulated by St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas Aquinas in the mid-thirteenth century. The third chapter traced the Bonaventuran solution, and its response to the Thomist one, through the end of the century, as espoused by a variety of Franciscan thinkers. In addition it considered a number of non-Franciscan alternatives to the doctrine from the same period. The fourth and fifth chapters focused in much greater detail on Gonsalvus of Spain as the last major proponent of the Bonaventuran approach before his student Bl. John Duns Scotus permanently altered the course of Franciscan thought.

The differences between the Bonaventuran Franciscan solution to the problem of spiritual composition and its contemporary alternatives stem from conflicting metaphysical principles which go back as far as Plato and Aristotle (see section I.1). For Plato matter is primarily a stable receptacle of becoming, a vessel into which form is poured, the correlative of form and yet in some way prior to it, a yielding and receptive principle which takes its determination from the form which fills it and yet retains some properties in its own right. Like Plato, Aristotle conceives of matter as an underlying subject of form and the substratum of change. However, for Aristotle matter and form are elements of the composite substance, neither of which has any real being prior to their composition. Matter is not a pre-existent receptacle, but a subject in potentiality which becomes actual through the form.

Plotinus seems to be the first thinker to hold a recognizable theory of spiritual matter, though apparently this has not been recognized hitherto (see section I.2). Plotinus presents matter and form as mutually complementary principles, so that whatever has form also has matter, including spiritual substances. For Plotinus the role of matter as the subject of change is subordinated to its role as the underlying substrate or support of form. Furthermore, since everything in the corporeal world is derived from the spiritual world, the presence of matter in bodies demands its presence in spiritual substances as well. Any being intermediate between the divine and nothingness is derived, composite, mixed with potentiality, and hence material. Plotinus also seems to affirm a matter in some way other in kind than corporeal matter.

Augustine also affirms spiritual matter (see section I.3). For him matter is recognized by mutability, and it is precisely the accidental mutability of angels and souls which demands their material composition. Besides the notion of matter and form as mutually

complementary, it is above all the Christian conception of spiritual creatures as subject to various kinds of alteration which gives rise to the problem of potentiality and composition in their nature for Christian thinkers, and most later thinkers who accept spiritual matter cite Augustine as a primary source of the doctrine. Augustine, like Plotinus, speaks of spiritual and corporeal matter as somehow different in kind.

In both Plotinus and Augustine spiritual matter is an incidental and peripheral aspect of their metaphysics, but for Avicenna (see section I.4) it becomes central as never before or since. Avicenna's original system of metaphysics is Neoplatonist in inspiration, and despite some superficially similar elements has fairly little in common with Bonaventuran and later Franciscan metaphysics. Ever since Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, the common wisdom has asserted that Avicenna is the originator and primary source of the doctrine of spiritual matter; but after careful examination I conclude that in fact Avicenna's direct influence on the thinkers examined in this study is secondary and negligible. His limited impact on those affirming spiritual matter comes only as mediated through the pseudo-Boethian *De unitate* of Dominicus Gundissalinus (see section II.1).

Interest in the subject of spiritual composition grows slowly as the thirteenth century progresses (see section II.1). Robert Grosseteste lays some of the metaphysical groundwork for what eventually becomes the standard Franciscan position, but without engaging the problem directly. A number of thinkers now begin to grapple with the subject, although the different schools of thought have not yet hardened. Significant among the early discussions of the subject are those by Alexander of Hales, Albert the Great, and Roger Bacon, but the classical alternative solutions are formulated by Bonaventure (see section II.2) and Thomas

Aquinas (see section II.3), whose influence will dominate the debate for the rest of the century.

Bonaventure defends spiritual matter with a metaphysical sophistication hitherto unseen among the scholastics, and lays the ground for all of his successors through Gonsalvus of Spain, anticipating most of the significant arguments which will be offered in the ensuing debate. He utilizes both the Platonic or Plotinian conception of matter as the complementary substrate or prop of form (while also affirming Aristotle's view of matter as pure potency which derives its being from form), as well as the Augustinian emphasis on the internal accidental mutability of created spiritual natures. His insistence on the importance of distinguishing between physical and metaphysical approaches to the problem, with his reflections on the different ways matter is conceived of in the different sciences, is especially noteworthy.

Thomas Aquinas rejects spiritual matter as vehemently as Bonaventure supports it. For him the hylomorphic composition of spiritual creatures provides a foil for his doctrine of the essence-existence composition of everything other than God. This places the potentiality of spiritual creatures in their essential form, eliminating the need for the potentiality of matter. In addition to being unnecessary for their composition, matter is precluded from spiritual creatures by their intellectuality. As noted above, Thomas considers spiritual matter to be an absurd philosophical aberration originating with Avicbron, a throwback to pre-Aristotelian and pre-metaphysical conceptions of substance. I note, however, that the doctrine of Bonaventure and his successors is not really Avicbronian, while Thomas' doctrine is not really Aristotelian, and in some crucial respects perhaps less Aristotelian than that of his Franciscan opponents. Both Thomas and Bonaventure produce metaphysical

innovations which are mutually incompatible. They differ in their first principles about the nature of matter and form, potency and act, and the proper relation of physics and metaphysics. Bonaventure envisions a universe in which all created substances share certain common properties, in which potency, act, and change are univocal across corporeal and spiritual beings, while for Thomas there is a great rift between the two kinds of substances, so that accidents and alteration bear an entirely equivocal sense for each. These fundamental differences, as well as the various concrete arguments, are reflected in the debate throughout the remainder of the thirteenth century.

The debate in the latter half of the century is considered in the third and central chapter, examining in some detail the positions and arguments for spiritual matter of a number of Franciscans (see sections III.1.1-6), and alternatives to spiritual matter by a number of non-Franciscans (see sections III.2.1-4). The individual results are summarized in the conclusion to the chapter (see section III.3). The Franciscans, while generally following the outlines of Bonaventure's approach, differ among themselves in a variety of details, including the essential complementarity of matter and form, matter as pure potency, and the generic unity of corporeal and spiritual matter. In addition, there is a wide variation in the thoroughness and sophistication of the various treatments. The best Franciscan thinkers of the period give complex and extensive discussions of the problem, and many consider very carefully the relation of essence to existence and the relevance of this issue to spiritual composition. Among the non-Franciscans examined, however, Thomistic essence-existence composition is not utilized in the refutation of spiritual matter, even by those thinkers who affirm it. Instead other Thomistic approaches predominate, such as the necessary correlation of intellectuality and immateriality on the one hand, and matter and quantity on the other, or

the relegation of matter to physics, that is, to the domain of things capable of substantial transformation and corruption. Consequently, when we come to Gonsalvus of Spain's defense of spiritual matter, the latter considerations predominate, while the relation of essence and existence goes unnoticed.

Spiritual matter has an unusually prominent place in Gonsalvus' works and thought, appearing even in places where one would not expect to find the subject (see section IV.2.1). His question devoted to spiritual matter can be seen as both the capstone and endpoint of the debate in the latter half of the thirteenth century. In an exceptionally long and complex debate among a number of participants (see section IV.3.1) and a carefully organized and multifaceted *solutio* (see section IV.3.2) Gonsalvus and his interlocutors encapsulate and summarize the debate of the preceding half-century, addressing nearly the entire range of positions seen in the course of the third chapter. In addition to the almost encyclopedic character of his treatment, Gonsalvus is unusually attentive to the roots of the disagreement over spiritual composition in competing metaphysical first principles, and revives and expands on the insights of Bonaventure into the difference between fundamentally physical versus fundamentally metaphysical approaches to the problem. Although the metaphysics of his position is thoroughly Bonaventuran, Gonsalvus adds a number of original contributions to the doctrine and marshalls an array of unusual arguments and techniques. With him Bonaventuran metaphysics reaches the high point of its complexity and sophistication.

In the fifth chapter I examine the reactions of Godfrey of Fontaines (see section V.1) and John Duns Scotus (see section V.2) to Gonsalvus' treatment of spiritual matter. Godfrey examines Gonsalvus' primary arguments carefully before rejecting them in favor of his own brand of Aristotelianism. With Scotus the case is more complex. In his early and relatively

minor work *QQ De anima* Scotus presents a defense of spiritual matter which is almost certainly dependent on Gonsalvus' work—though accepting his own conclusions only hesitantly and provisionally—and much of section V.2 is devoted to examining the relationship between them. In his mature thought, however, Scotus shows very little interest in the subject of composition in spiritual creatures. He never devotes another question to it and, while he clearly rejects spiritual matter, he seems less to have any deep aversion to the doctrine so much as to regard it as unnecessary and irrelevant in the light of the innovations of his own metaphysics. As the force and influence of Scotus' thought marks a revolution in the orientation of fourteenth-century philosophy, it also gives a terminus to the Bonaventuran impetus, and so provides this investigation with its natural stopping-point.

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