

## II.5: On the Simplicity of the Necessary

1. [551] We also say it cannot be the case that the necessary existent has principles that are gathered together and the necessary existent is constituted of them. [In other words], it has neither quantitative parts nor the parts of a definition and account, whether they are like the matter and form, or in any other way as the parts of the account explaining the sense of its name, where each one of them would indicate [552] something that is different essentially from the other with respect to the existence. That is because with anything described thus, each of its parts is neither the same as any other part nor the same as the composite. So either (1) each of its two parts, for instance, can exist independently, but the composite cannot exist apart from them, and so the composite would not exist necessarily. Or (2) one of them can [exist necessarily], but the composite cannot exist apart from it, and then neither the composite nor the other parts can exist independently, and so again [the necessary existent] would not exist necessarily. But it is precisely the necessary existent that can exist necessarily! If those parts cannot (1) exist separately from the whole, and (2) the whole cannot exist separately from the parts, but the existence of each one is attached to another and neither is essentially prior, then none of it exists necessarily. I<sup>d</sup> have already explained this for (a) the parts' being essentially prior to the whole. [In this case] the cause necessitating existence would first necessitate the parts and then the whole, but neither of its parts exists necessarily. We cannot say (b) that the whole is essentially prior to the parts, and so it is either later or simultaneous—how could it be?!—since then it would not exist necessarily.

2. From this it has become clear that what exists necessarily is not a body, nor any matter of a body, nor a form of a body, nor an intelligible matter of an intelligible form, nor an intelligible form in an intelligible matter, nor divisible—whether in quantity, principles, or account—and so it is one from these three perspectives.

## IX. THE SALVATION, "METAPHYSICS," II.12–13<sup>a</sup>

### II.12: The Proof of the Necessarily Existent

1. [566] Undoubtedly there is existence, and all existence is either necessary or possible. [567] If it is necessary, then in fact there is a necessarily existent being, which is what is sought. If it is possible, then we will show that the existence of the possible terminates in a necessarily existent being. Before that, however, we will advance some premises.<sup>84</sup>

2. These include that at any one and the same time there cannot be for anything that is possible [in] itself a cause that is itself possible ad infinitum. This is because all of them exist either all together or they do not. If they do not exist all together but rather one after another, there is no infinite at one and the same time—but let

<sup>84</sup> Only one is advanced here, but additional ones are advanced in the next chapter, pp. ••–••.

us defer discussion of this for now. As for their existing all together, and none is a necessarily existing being, then either the totality, insofar as it is that totality, whether finite or infinite, exists necessarily through itself or possibly in itself. If, on the one hand, the totality exists necessarily through itself, but each one of its members is something possible, then what exists necessarily subsists by means of things that exist possibly, which is absurd. On the other hand, if the totality is something existing possibly in itself, then the totality needs for existence [568] something that provides existence, which will be either external or internal to the totality.

3. If it is something internal to it, then one of its members is something existing necessarily, but each one of them exists possibly—so this is a contradiction. Or it is something existing possibly and so is a cause of the totality's existence, but a cause of the totality is primarily a cause of the existence of its members, of which it is one. Thus, it would be a cause of its own existence, which is impossible. Despite this impossibility, if it is correct, it is in a certain way the very thing that is sought; for anything that is sufficient to necessitate itself is something existing necessarily, but it was [assumed] not to exist necessarily, so this is a contradiction.

4. The remaining option is that [what gives existence to the totality] is external to it, but it cannot be a possible cause, since we included every cause existing possibly in this totality. So since [the cause] is external to it, it also is something existing necessarily in itself. Thus, things existing possibly terminate in a cause existing necessarily, in which case not every [effect] that exists as something possible will have simultaneously with it a cause that exists as something possible, and so an infinite number of causes existing at a single time is impossible.

#### II.13: That Possibly Existents Cannot Be Causes of One Another in a Circular Fashion at One and the Same Time If They Are Finite

1. [568] Furthermore, the causes cannot be finite in number when [569] each of them exists possibly in itself but is necessary through another to the point that one reaches the other circularly.

2. So let us advance another premise. To set down a finite number of possible existents, each one of which is a cause of the others in a circle, is as absurd and obvious as the first problem. Particular to it, however, is that each one of them would be a cause and an effect of its own existence, where  $x$  comes into existence from  $y$  only after  $y$  itself comes into existence, but anything whose existence depends on the existence of what exists only after its own later existence cannot exist.

3. Any case of two *relata*, however, is not like this. For the two exist simultaneously, and the existence of one of them is not dependent such that it must be after the existence of the other. Rather, the cause productive of them and necessitating them produces them both simultaneously. If one of them has a priority and the other a posteriority, like father and son, and its priority is not with respect to the relation, then its priority is with respect to existence itself. [570] However, the two are simultaneous with respect to the relation that is present after the occurrence of the thing.