

investigate essential identity not accidental identity. It explains how [metaphysics] is associated with dialectic and the discipline of sophistry.

6.6. The sixth chapter [Z] verifies the definition of the identity that is predicated essentially, especially with respect to its substance.ⁱ It classifies the divisions of substance as matter, form, and the composite. [It explains] that, if real definition belongs to existents, then to which existents it belongs, that is, if it belongs to substance, then to which substances it belongs. [It explains] how to define composite beings,^j and which parts are in definitions, and which forms are separable and which are not. And [it verifies] that^k the [Platonic] Paradigms do not exist.

6.7. The seventh chapter [H] summarizes the [preceding] chapter and completes the doctrine concerning the Platonic Forms³¹ and [the doctrine] that generated things have no need of [Platonic Forms] in order to be generated. It verifies the doctrine concerning the definitions of the separable forms when they exist, and that their definitions are the same as their essences.

6.8. The eighth chapter [Θ] concerns potentiality and actuality and their priority and posteriority.

6.9. The ninth chapter [I] concerns the one, the multiple, otherness, difference, and contrariety. [38]

6.10. The tenth chapter [K] makes distinctions about the principles and accidents of this science.

6.11. The eleventh chapter [Λ] concerns the Principle of substance and of all existence. It establishes Its identity and establishes that It knows Itself as Itself.^l [This chapter also concerns] the separate existents that come after [the Principle] and how their existence is ordered from [the Principle].

6.12. The twelfth chapter [M] concerns the principles of natural and mathematical things.

This, then, explains the aim and the parts of this book.

V. *THE PRINCIPLES OF EXISTING THINGS*^a

[Part One]

1. [31] The principles by which the six types of bodies and accidents subsist are divided into six major levels, each one comprising a single kind. The First Cause is in the first level. The secondary causes are in the second. The Active Intellect is in the third. The soul is in the fourth. Form is in the fifth. Matter is in the sixth. In the first level there cannot be many but rather only a single one. In each of the other grades,

³¹ See the last sentence of par. 6.6.

there are many. The first three levels (namely, the First Cause, the secondary causes, and the Active Intellect) are neither bodies nor are they in bodies. The second three levels (namely, soul, form, and matter) are in bodies, although they themselves are not bodies. There are six genera of bodies: celestial bodies, rational animals, non-rational animals, plants, minerals, and the four elements. The composite whole of these six genera of bodies is the universe.

2. With regard to the First, one should be convinced that it is the divinity and the proximate cause of the existence of the secondary causes and the Active Intellect. The secondary causes are the causes of the existence of the celestial bodies, since it is out of them [32] that the substances of these bodies come, and the existence of each one of the celestial bodies is a necessary consequence of them. The highest level of the secondary causes necessarily entails the existence of the first heaven; and the lowest level of the secondary causes necessarily entails the existence of the orbit containing the Moon. The secondary causes in between these two necessarily entail the existence of each of the spheres in between these two spheres. The number of secondary causes equals the number of celestial bodies. One ought to call the secondary causes “spiritual beings,” “angels,” and similar names.

3. The function of the Active Intellect is to watch over the rational animal and endeavor to have him reach the highest level of perfection that man can reach, namely, ultimate happiness, which is for man to arrive at the level of the Active Intellect. The way that occurs is by attaining separation from bodies, without needing anything below in order to subsist (whether it be body or matter or accident), and by remaining in that state of perfection forever. Although the Active Intellect itself is singular, its rank nonetheless accommodates whatever part of the rational animal is freed of matter and attains happiness. The Active Intellect ought to be called the “protective spirit” and the “holy spirit”—since it is given names similar to these two—and its rank ought to be called “the heavenly kingdom” and other such names.

4. At the level of the soul, the principles are many. Some are the souls of celestial bodies, some are the souls of rational animals, and some are the souls of nonrational animals. The rational animal possesses the faculties of reason, appetite, imagination, and sensory perception.

5. The faculty of reason is what [33] enables man to acquire the sciences and technical disciplines, to discern the difference between virtuous and vicious actions and ethical dispositions, to deliberate on what he should and should not do, and moreover to perceive what is beneficial and what harmful, what is pleasurable and what painful. The faculty of reason is divided into the theoretical and the practical [faculties], and the practical [faculty] is divided into vocational and deliberative [faculties]. The theoretical faculty is what allows man to gain knowledge of anything that he does not act upon in any way, whereas the practical faculty is what allows man to gain knowledge of anything that man does act upon through his volition. The vocational faculty is what allows man to acquire crafts and vocations, while the deliberative faculty is what allows him to think and reflect on any of the things that he should or should not do. The faculty of appetite allows man to seek out or flee from something,

to desire something or be repulsed by it, and to prefer something or avoid it; it is also the faculty that occasions hatred, love, amity, enmity, fear, security, anger, satisfaction, cruelty, mercy, and all the other accidental affections of the soul.

6. The faculty of the imagination stores impressions of the objects of the senses once they are no longer present to sensory perception. It combines and separates [the impressions] while one is awake and asleep such that some are true and others false. It also perceives what is beneficial and what is harmful, what is pleasurable and what is painful, but not what are virtuous and vicious actions and dispositions.

7. What the faculty of sensory perception does is obvious. It perceives the objects of the five senses (as commonly accepted by all) and what is pleasurable and what is painful, but it does not discern the difference between what is harmful and what is pleasurable, nor what is virtuous and what vicious.

8. The nonrational animal includes those that have the three faculties other than that of reason, with the faculty of imagination in [those animals] functioning in place of the faculty of reason in rational animals. Others have the faculties of sense perception and appetite only.

9. The souls of the celestial bodies belong to a species different from the souls [of rational and nonrational animals] [34], entirely separate from them in their substances. The celestial souls have substance by virtue of [this difference in species], and they move in circular fashion by virtue of their [souls]. In terms of their existence they are nobler, more perfect, and more excellent than the souls of the species of animal that we have. [This is] because they are in no way and at no time in potentiality. On the contrary, they are always in actuality, due to the fact that the objects of their intellect are present in them from the very beginning, and they are always intellecting what they intellect. Our souls, on the other hand, are at first in potentiality and then later in actuality. [This is] because, at first, they are [simply] configured to receive and prepared to intellect the intelligibles, and [only] later do the intelligibles come to be in them, at which point they become actual. The celestial souls have neither sensory perception nor imagination; rather, they have only the soul that intellects, which in some sense is congeneric with the rational soul [in humans]. It is by virtue of their substances that the celestial souls intellect the intelligibles, which substances are separate from matter. Each of their souls intellects the First, and itself, and whichever secondary cause that gave it its substance.

10. The celestial souls definitely do not intellect the majority of the intelligibles that humans intellect from things in matter because, they are far too high in rank by virtue of their substance to intellect the intelligibles that are below them. The First intellects Itself, which, in a certain way, is all of the existents; for when It intellects Itself, It intellects, in a certain way, all of the existents, because it is only out of Its existence that every other existent receives its existence. Each of the secondary causes intellects itself and the First.

11. The Active Intellect both intellects the First, all of the secondary causes, and itself, as well as makes intelligibles of things that are not in themselves intelligibles. Things that are intelligibles in themselves are separate from material bodies and do

not subsist in any matter whatsoever. These are the intelligibles by virtue of their substances. These substances both intellect *and* are intellected, for they intellect on account of the fact that they are intellected, what is intelligible about them being the very thing that intellects. The other intelligibles are not like that, because neither the stone nor the plant, for example, is an intelligible, and it is certainly not the case [35] that whatever is intellected of them is also what intellects. Nothing that is a body or that is in a body is an intelligible by virtue of its substance, and the substance of none of them is at the rank of an actual intellect. The Active Intellect is what makes them actual intelligibles and makes some of them actual intellects by raising them from their level of existence to a level higher than the one given them by nature. For example, the rational faculty, by virtue of which man is man, is not in its substance an actual intellect and was not given by nature to be an actual intellect; instead, the Active Intellect causes it to become an actual intellect and makes everything else an actual intelligible for the rational faculty. Once the rational faculty becomes an actual intellect, that intellect (which is now actual) comes to resemble the separate things, by intellecting itself as actually an intellect, and what is intellected of it is the very thing that is intellecting, at which point it is a substance that intellects by virtue of being an intelligible, which in turn is due to the fact that it is intellecting. At that point, the thing that intellects, the thing that is intellected, and the act of intellecting is one and the same thing. It is as a result of this that it arrives at the rank of the Active Intellect. Once man arrives at this rank, his happiness is perfect.

12. The relation of the Active Intellect to man is like that of the Sun to vision. The Sun gives light to vision, and by the light acquired from the Sun, vision actually sees, when before it had only the potential to see. By that light, vision sees the Sun itself, which is the cause of its actually seeing, and furthermore actually sees the colors that previously were [only] potentially the objects of vision. The vision that was potential thereby becomes actual. In the same manner, the Active Intellect provides man with something that it imprints in his rational faculty. The relation of that thing to the rational soul is like that of light to vision. It is by reason of this thing that the rational soul intellects [36] the Active Intellect, that the things that are potentially intelligible become actually intelligible, and that man, who was potentially an intellect, becomes actually and perfectly an intellect, until he all but reaches the rank of the Active Intellect. So [man] becomes an intellect *per se* after he was not, and an intelligible *per se* after he was not, and a divine [substance] after being a material one. This is what the Active Intellect does, and this is why it is called the Active Intellect.

13. Form is in the corporeal substance the way the shape of the bed is in the bed, matter being like the wood of the bed. The form is that by virtue of which the substance that can be corporeal becomes an actual substance. The matter is that by virtue of which it is potentially a substance. For the bed is potentially a bed due to the fact that it is wood, whereas it becomes an actual bed once its shape occurs in the wood. Form subsists through matter, and matter is a subject for bearing forms. Forms do not subsist by themselves, as they need a subject in order to exist,^b and their subject is matter, whereas matter exists only for the sake of forms. It would seem that the

existence of forms is the primary aim, but since they subsist only in a given subject, matter was made a subject to bear forms. For this reason, as long as forms do not exist, the existence of matter is in vain. But none of the natural beings is in vain.³² Therefore, prime matter cannot exist devoid of a given form. Matter, then, is a principle and cause solely by way of being the subject for bearing the form; it is not an agent, nor an end, nor something that can exist independently of some form. Matter and form are both called [37] “nature,” although form is more aptly named such. By way of example, vision is a substance, the body of the eye is its matter, the potentiality by which it sees is its form, and by virtue of them both combined, vision is vision in actuality. This is the same for all other natural bodies.

14. In the case of souls,³³ as long as they do not seek perfection and undertake activities to that end, they remain but potentialities and configurations, in a state of preparation to receive the imprints of things. Examples of this are vision before it sees and receives the imprints of visible objects, and the faculty of imagination before it receives the imprints of objects of the imagination, and reason before it receives the imprints of the intelligibles (that is, forms). Once the imprints are actually in them—I mean the imprints of objects of the senses in the faculty of sensory perception, the objects of the imagination in the faculty of imagination, and the imprints of the intelligibles in the faculty of reason—the forms become distinct from what they were. Now, while the imprints present in the prior configurations are like forms in matters, they are definitely not called forms, unless equivocally. Those most unlike forms are the imprints of the intelligibles present in the rational, for they are almost completely separate from matter, and their manner of existing in the faculty is extremely unlike the existence of forms in matter. In the case of the actual intellect’s becoming like the Active Intellect, the intellect is not a form nor even *like* a form. Despite this fact, one group calls all noncorporeal substances “forms” equally by homonymy, and divides them into those that are separate from matter by not needing it and by being free of it, and those that are not [38] separate from matter (which are the forms we discussed), but the latter is a category of forms only by homonymy.

15. There are different orders of forms that require matter to subsist. The lowest order contains the forms of the four elements, that is, four different forms in different matters, though the species of the four matters is one and the same; for the matter of fire can itself bear the form of air and the other elements. The remaining orders, arrayed in ascending rank, contain the forms of bodies that come to be out of the blend and mixture of the elements. The forms of mineral bodies are above the order of elemental forms. The forms of plants in all their differences are above the order of mineral forms. The forms of the species of nonrational animals in all their differences

³² Nature does nothing in vain; compare Ibn Sīnā’s articulation of this Aristotelian axiom in Ibn Sīnā, “Selections on Psychology from *The Cure*, “The Soul,” V.4, par. 4, p. 196.

³³ I.e., in the case of souls considered as forms.

are above the plant forms. Finally, the forms of the rational animals—that is, the natural configurations that rational animals have by virtue of being rational animals—are above the forms of nonrational animals.

16. Form and prime matter are the most deficient of the principles in terms of existence, because in order to exist and subsist they each need the other. Form can subsist only in matter; and matter, in substance and nature, exists for the sake of form, and *that*^c it exists is that it bears forms. As long as form does not exist, matter does not exist, since *this* particular matter does not in fact have a form in itself at all. Therefore, for it to exist devoid of form is vain, and no natural thing can be vain. Equally, as long as matter does not exist [39], form does not exist, on account of the fact that form requires a subject in order to subsist. Next, both form and matter have a deficiency and a perfection that are proper to it and not the other, as follows. It is by virtue of its form that the body has its more perfect state of being, that is to say, its actual existence, whereas it is by virtue of its matter that the body has its more deficient state of being, that is to say, its potential existence. The form exists neither because through it the matter exists, nor because it was created for the sake of matter, whereas matter exists for the sake of the form (I mean in order that the form subsist by it). This is how form is superior to matter. Matter is superior to form by virtue of the fact that it does not require a subject in order for it to exist, whereas form does. Matter has neither a contrary to it nor a privation that would be its opposite, whereas form does have a privation or a contrary. Anything that has a privation or a contrary cannot exist forever. Forms are similar to accidents in that they both need a subject in order to subsist, but forms are different from accidents by the fact that the subjects of accidents are not made so that accidents would exist or in order to bear the accidents, whereas the subjects of forms (that is, matters) were made solely for the purpose of bearing forms. Matter is a subject for contrary forms, that is, it is receptive to the form and to the contrary, or privation, of that form. Matter transfers from one form to another, always without lagging and without any one form being more appropriate than its contrary; rather, matter receives all contraries equally.

17. In the case of the noncorporeal substances, none of the deficiency characteristic of form and matter attaches to them. Each one of them exists not in a subject. The existence of each one of them is not for the sake of something else, whether that be as matter, or as the instrument of something else, or as something that serves something else, or by needing to be replenished by an existence it would receive in the future by its action on something else, or by being acted upon by something else. Moreover, there is no contrary to any one of them, nor any privation opposing any one of them. These more properly deserve to be [called] substances [40] than form and matter. Now, even though none of these deficiencies attach to the secondary causes and Active Intellect below the First, they are nonetheless not entirely free of another type of deficiency. [This is] because their substances derive from something else, and their existence is consequential to the existence of something else. The perfection of their substances does not extend so far that in themselves they do not need

to receive existence from something else; it is rather the case that their existence is bestowed on them by something more perfect in existence than they are. This is a deficiency common to all existents other than the First.

18. In addition to this, none of the secondary causes or the Active Intellect is capable of acquiring the splendor and adornment of existence, not to mention the joy, pleasure, and beauty of such only by intellecting itself alone; instead, it needs to intellect, in addition to itself, another being more perfect and magnificent than itself. In this respect then, there is a certain multiplicity in the very being of each of them, since anything that intellects some other given thing does itself, in a certain manner, become that other thing while simultaneously being its own proper self. It is as though the excellence of its being is completed only through the support of a certain multiplicity, but it is also that very multiplicity in what makes the thing a substance that is a deficiency in terms of that thing's existence. However, it is no part of their nature to gain the splendor, beauty, and adornment of existence by intellecting anything existing below them, or anything that comes to be out of each one of them, or anything that is consequential to the existence of each of the existing beings; none of that is associated with any one of them or inheres in any one of them. Furthermore, in order to come to be out of something else, none of them stands in need of any instrument [41] or other circumstance, except its very being and substance. In point of fact, on its own it is capable of bringing something *else* into being without seeking the help of any instrument or circumstance beyond its own substance.

19. The souls of the celestial bodies are completely free from the aspects of the deficiency found in form and matter, except that they are [also] in subjects. In this respect they resemble the forms, although their subjects are not matters; instead, each of them is proper to one subject that cannot be a subject of any else. In this respect, [the souls of the celestial bodies] are different from form. Although they have all aspects of the deficiency found in the secondary causes, the multiplicity whereby they are substances is significantly greater than the multiplicity whereby the secondary causes are substances; for they attain the beauty and joy [of existence] only in as much as they intellect themselves, the secondary causes, and the First. Next, a consequence of the existence whereby they are substances is that they bring into existence other beings^d external to their substances, though they are also incapable of bestowing existence on something else without an instrument or any other circumstance belonging to them.^e In both cases, then, [the souls of the celestial bodies] need other things external to themselves (by "both cases" I mean their subsistence and their providing other things with existence), whereas the secondary causes are entirely free of the need for anything external to themselves in both cases. Nevertheless, [the souls of the celestial bodies] certainly do not receive the splendor and beauty of existence either by intellecting the beings below them or by virtue of their existence being limited to them without any existence issuing from it to another.

20. [42] In the case of the souls that are in animals, once their faculties of sensory perception and imagination reach a perfection through the appearance in them of the imprints of sensible and imaginable objects, a certain resemblance to the separate

things comes about in them. When the rational part of the soul is perfected and it then becomes an actual intellect, it very much resembles the separate things, except that it receives perfection, actuality, and the splendor, adornment, and beauty of existence only by intellecting not just the things above it in rank but also the things below it in rank, making the multiplicity in what affords its substance very great. Moreover, its existence is limited to itself alone and is not bestowed on anything other than it when it achieves complete separation from all other parts of the soul. Once it separates from the appetitive, imaginative, and sensing faculties, it receives existence from something else. It would appear that anything something else might acquire from it serves the sole purpose of making it itself more perfect in existence by virtue of doing that, so once it separates from the corporeal instrument, it can have no effect on anything else and continues to be restricted in its existence. Apparently, it is not a part of its substance to bestow existence on something else; instead, it suffices that its existence in its substance be preserved forever and that it be a cause among the causes—a final cause, that is, *not* an efficient one.

21. In the First there is no deficiency in any way whatsoever. There can be no existence more perfect and superior than Its existence. There can be no existence prior to It nor at a rank equivalent to It that is not Its own [43] existence exclusively. Therefore, the bestowal of existence [on It] from anything other than and prior to It is as equally unlikely as the possibility that such bestowal would come from anything less perfect than It. Thus, It is also completely different in Its substance from everything other than it. The existence that It has cannot belong to more than one, because there cannot be a difference between whatever has this existence and something else that has the very same existence. If there is a difference, then that difference would itself be something other than what they have in common, in which case what makes the one different from the other would be one part of what sustains both of their existences, <and what they share in common would be another part>.^f Then, each of them would be divisible in definition, in which case each one of the two parts that each of them has would be a cause for its subsistence. Then it would not be First; instead, there would be an existent that is prior to it that sustains it. That is an absurdity, since *It* is First. And, as long as there is no difference between the two, they cannot be multiple, neither two, nor more.³⁴

22. Moreover, if it were possible for something other than the [First] to have the very same existence [It has], then it would be possible for there to be an existence outside of Its existence, which It would not possess alone and which would be at the same rank. Then Its existence would be less than whatever had both existences together, and then there would be a deficiency in Its existence, because the complete is that outside of which nothing exists that it could have. Then, Its existence cannot belong to anything else outside of Itself, and therefore It cannot have any contrary whatsoever, because the existence of the contrary of something is at the same rank as

³⁴ For a fuller version of this argument, see *Opinions*, ed. Walzer, Ch. I, §2.

its existence. But there can be no existence at the same rank that It does not possess alone, as otherwise, Its existence would be deficient.

23. [44] Moreover, the perfection of the existence of anything that has a contrary is through the absence of that contrary, because something that has a contrary can exist at the same time as its contrary only if it is preserved by things outside and things external to its being and substance; for there is no way that the substance of one of the two contraries is sufficient to preserve itself against its contrary. It necessarily follows from this that the First would have some cause by which It exists. Therefore, [that cause] could not be at the same rank as [the First]; instead, [the cause] alone would be unique. So [the First] is one in this regard.³⁵

24. Next, It cannot be divided essentially in definition—I mean, it cannot be divided into things through which It would subsist—because each part of the definition that would explain what it is could not designate each part of what makes it subsist. [The reason for this is] that in such cases, the parts by which something subsists are the causes of its existence, in the sense that the factors designated by the parts of the definition are causes for the existence of the defined thing, the way that matter and form are causes for the existence of the thing constituted of them. That is not possible for It, since It is First. Since It cannot be divided in this manner, it is even less likely that It could be divided by quantity and the other manners of division. So It is also one in this other respect.³⁶

25. In light of this, Its existence, by which it is distinguished from all other beings, also cannot be other than that by which It is an existent in Itself. Therefore, Its distinction from everything else is through a unity that is Its being. One of the meanings of “unity” is [45] the proper existence by which every existent is distinguished from another, and it is by virtue of this that each existent is called “one,” in the sense that it has an existence proper to it alone, and this particular connotation [of the term “unity”] goes along with existence.^g In this respect, the First is also One, and more deserving of that name and connotation than anything else.³⁷

26. Because [the First] does not have matter nor is <in matter>^h in any way, It is an intellectⁱ in Its substance, because it is matter that prevents something^j from being an intellect and from actually intellecting. It is [also] an intelligible by virtue of being an intellect; for the one whose identity is intellect is likewise an intelligible to that one whose identity is intellect.^k It has absolutely no need for anything outside of itself to intellect It in order to be an intelligible. On the contrary, It Itself intellects Itself and, by intellecting Itself, It is an intellect and, by Its intellecting Itself, It is an intelligible. Thus, in order to be an intellect and something that intellects, It has absolutely no need to receive any other being or thing outside of Itself. On the

³⁵ For a somewhat different version of this argument, see *Opinions*, Ch. I, §3.

³⁶ For another version of this argument, see *Opinions*, Ch. I, §4.

³⁷ For a variant of this argument, see *Opinions*, Ch. I, §5.

contrary, It is an intellect and something that intellects by virtue of intellecting Itself; for the thing that intellects is the very thing that is intellected.³⁸

27. This is equally the case with [the First's] being a "knower." To be a knower, It has absolutely no need outside of Itself for any other thing from which It would receive excellence by knowing it; nor does It need to know any other being in order to be known. On the contrary, It is sufficient in Its substance to be knower and known. Its knowing Itself is not different from Its substance; for knower, known, and knowing are one being and one substance.³⁹

28. The same is the case with [the First's] being "wise," for wisdom is intellecting the perfect thing by the perfect knowledge. [46] By virtue of intellecting and knowing Itself, It knows the perfect thing by the perfect knowledge. Perfect knowledge is the complete knowledge that always belongs to what is always eternal. Likewise,¹ [the First] is wise not by a knowledge that It receives through knowing something outside of Itself. On the contrary, It is sufficient in Itself to be wise in knowing Itself.⁴⁰

29. The beauty, splendor, and adornment of every being is to exist as perfect and to reach its final perfection. Now, since the existence of the First is the most perfect existence, Its beauty surpasses that of every beautiful being, as does the adornment and splendor^m It has in Its substance and being. [All of] that It has in Itself and by virtue of intellecting Itself.⁴¹

30. Now, since pleasure, happiness, delight, and joy result all the more by perceiving the most beautiful by means of the most accurate perception, and since [the First] is the most beautiful absolutely and the most splendid and most adorned, and Its perception of Itself is the most accurate perception and perfect knowledge, the pleasure that the First enjoys is a pleasure the real nature of which we cannot understand and the massive extent of which we cannot grasp but by reference and in relation to the minuscule pleasure we have when we suppose that we have perceived what we take to be most beautiful and splendid by means of some accurate act of perception, whether that be through sensory perception, imagination, or the intellect. Since in this state we experience a pleasure that we suppose surpasses all others in sheer extent, and we experience the ultimate degree of happiness in ourselves as a result, then to compare the knowledge and perception [that the First has] of what is most perfect and beautiful to our knowledge and perception of what [we take to be] the most perfect and most splendid, is to compare Its delight, [47] pleasure, and joy in Itself to the pleasure, delight, and joy we have in ourselves. But since there is no way to relate our perception to Its perception, nor our knowledge to Its knowledge—though if there is some relation, it is minuscule—there is then no way to relate our pleasure,

³⁸ Cf. *Opinions*, Ch. I, §6.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, Ch. I, §7.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Ch. I, §8.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Ch. I, §13.

delight, and joy in ourselves to that of the First.⁴² Even if there is some relation, it is incredibly minuscule; for how could there be any relation between a minuscule part and something that has no temporal measure, between something deficient in so many ways to something of the utmost perfection? Since It takes greater pleasure, joy, and happiness in Itself, and so loves and desires Itself all the more, it is obvious that the relation between the First's necessary desire, love, and adoration of Itself to our own desire and pleasure of the perfection of ourselves is like the relation of Its excellence and perfection to our own excellence and the perfection we adore of ourselves.⁴³ [In the case of the First], lover and beloved are one and the same, and what desires and what is desired are one and the same, so It is the First Beloved and the First Desired.⁴⁴

31. Since the existence that belongs to the First is due to Itself,ⁿ it necessarily follows that naturally existing things—that is, those things not due to human choice—derive from It whatever existence they have (some types of which are available to sensory perception, while others are knowable through demonstration). The existence of anything derived from It is by way of a bestowal that comes to be for the sake of the existence^o of something else and by the existence of something else being bestowed from Its existence. In this respect, the existence of anything derived from It [48] is not a cause for It in any way whatsoever, nor is it a final cause for Its existence,⁴⁵ nor does it provide It some sort of perfection, the way that such does with the majority of things that we bring about; for in our case we are disposed to bring many things into being where those things are final causes for the sake of which we exist, and many of those final causes afford us some perfection that we did not have before.

32. The aim of the existence of the First is not the existence of the other things, such that those would be the final causes of Its existence, since then there would be a cause apart from Itself for Its existence. It is also not the case that in providing existence It gains another perfection apart from what It is or Its own Perfection the way that one who gives money or something else to another gains pleasure, honor, status, or some other good or perfection as recompense, in which case the existence of the other is a cause of some good he acquires and a [state of] being he did not have. It is absurd for any of these things to apply to the First, because they would preclude Its being the First and necessarily entail the priority of something other than It and make that a cause of Its existence. On the contrary, it is on account of It and as a consequence and result of Its substance that anything other than It derives existence from It. Therefore, the existence It has through which It bestows existence on

⁴² Cf. *Opinions*, Ch. I, §14.

⁴³ In other words, since the First's perfection is greater than the perfection of humans, and one loves the perfection in a thing, the love It has for Itself is greater than the love humans have of themselves.

⁴⁴ Cf. *Opinions*, Ch. I, §15.

⁴⁵ In the *Opinions*, Fārābī provides as an example of this the son *qua* son's being a final cause of the parent's *qua* such; cf. *Opinions*, ch. 2 §1.

[everything] else is in Its substance. The existence It has through which It is in Itself a substance is that very existence that It has through which everything else derives existence from It. [The First] is not divisible into two things, one through which Its essence is substance, and another through which something else comes to exist from It. [The First] also does not need anything other than Its very being and substance to bestow the existence of something else from Its existence, the way that we and many other agents do. Its existence through which It bestows the existence of something else is not more perfect than the existence It has through which It is substance. Therefore, although the existence of what derives existence from It is not temporally posterior to It, it is certainly so in every other way.⁴⁶ [49]

33. The terms that should be employed for [the First] are the terms that designate those existents among us that are perfect and excellent without, however, any of those terms designating the excellence and perfection that the First has in the way that those terms customarily designate such existents among us. On the contrary, they should designate the perfection that is specific to It in Its substance. Moreover, the types of perfections that different terms customarily designate are multiple, but one absolutely should not thereby suppose that the types of perfection that It has that are so designated by multiple terms are multiple species into which It could be divided and through the aggregate total of which It would have substance. On the contrary, those terms, though multiple, should designate a single substance, a single absolutely indivisible existence. Finally, whenever such a term is conventionally agreed to designate an excellence and perfection outside of the substance of such an existent among us, that term when employed for the First ought to be made to designate an excellence and perfection in Its very substance. For example, “beautiful” is used to designate a perfection of color, shape, or position *pertaining to* many a thing but not *in the substance* of that thing.⁴⁷

34. The terms that designate the perfection and excellence pertaining to things among us include the following. There are terms that designate what belongs to something in itself, not as something relating to something else, like “existent,” “one,” and other such terms. There are terms that designate what belongs to something in relation to something external to it, like “just” and “generous.” With respect to the things among us, these terms designate an excellence and a perfection of a part of the thing that is the relation it has to another thing apart from it, such that this relation constitutes a part of the whole of what [50] that term designates, and in that excellence and that perfection subsisting through something being related to something else. Now, whenever these terms are made to apply to the First and intended to designate the relation that It has to something else through the existence bestowed from It, the relation should not be thought to constitute a part of Its perfection as designated by that term, nor in the sense that the perfection subsists through that

⁴⁶ For pars. 31–32, cf. *Opinions*, Ch. 2, §1.

⁴⁷ Cf. *Opinions*, Ch. 2, §4.

relation. Instead, that term should be thought of as designating Its substance and Its perfection, whereas the relation should be viewed as a result and consequence of that perfection, in the sense that the relation subsists by virtue of Its substance and the perfection belonging to It, where the relation is viewed as necessarily resulting from and consequential to what has the substance so described.⁴⁸

35. Homonymous terms that apply to the First and something else include those that apply generally to all existing beings and those that are homonyms for some of them. In the case of many homonyms applied to It and something else, such a term designates *Its* perfection primarily and something else secondarily, according to its order of existence from the First. For example, the terms “existent” and “one” primarily designate that by virtue of which the First is substance, and then secondarily anything else on the strength of the fact that its substance derives from the First, that its existence is acquired and received from the First.

36. In the case of many homonyms that designate the substance and existence of the First, [51] if they designate something else, they designate whatever one imagines to be similar, whether very much so or just a little, to the First Existence. Now, these terms are applied to the First in the most prior and true manner and to anything else only by posteriority, but it is not unacceptable if our application of these terms to the First came after our application of them to something else—for clearly our application of many of them to the First is only by way of transferring them from something else to It and after we had applied them to something else for a time—because it is impossible for what is prior by nature and existence to be posterior in time and for any deficiency to be associated with what is prior.

37. Now, since we have numerous terms that designate particular perfections commonly accepted by us, and many of them we use simply to designate those perfections as particular perfections and not as species of perfection, clearly the most excellent perfection of them all is necessarily most deserving of that term. Every perfection among existing beings that we perceive to be more complete we consider more worthy of the term [perfection], until we arrive at the knowledge of what constitutes the upper limit of that perfection and we naturally call It, that is, the First, by that term, and we then rank all other beings according to their relation to that term from the First. Examples of [such terms] are “existent” and “one.” [We also have] other terms that designate one species of perfection to the exclusion of another. Such species include whatever is in the substance of the First in the most excellent manner that the species can be, and is so elevated in the estimation to the highest level of perfection of that species that absolutely no deficiency remains. Examples of such terms are “knowledge,” “intellect,” [52] and “wisdom.” With such terms, it necessarily follows that the term for that species is most appropriately and truly applied to [the First]. In the case of any species of perfection that is associated with a deficiency and a certain diminution of existence, and whose separation from what is associated with it would eliminate

⁴⁸ Cf. *Opinions*, Ch. 2, §5.

its substance completely, the term for that species of perfection should not be applied [to the First]. Since this is the case, it is as inappropriate as applying terms that designate diminished existence [to the First].

38. After the First Cause, there are the secondary causes and the Active Intellect. The secondary causes are ranked in order of existence, besides which each of them not only has an existence through which it is a substance in itself but also an existence proper to it that is the very same existence from which it bestows the existence of another thing. They do not require anything else apart from themselves in order for something else to exist from them or to bestow the existence of something else from their existence, whereas all of them derive their existence from the First. Each one of them intellects the First and itself, since none of them is capable in itself of finding joy in itself by itself alone; instead, it finds joy in itself by intellecting the First while intellecting itself. The relation of the excellence of the First to the excellence of [a given secondary cause, x] is commensurate with the joy that x takes in intellecting the First in relation to the joy x takes in intellecting itself. Equally, the comparison of the pleasure it finds in itself by intellecting the First to the pleasure it finds in itself through intellecting itself is commensurate with the additional excellence of the First in relation to the excellence of itself. So too in the case of its delight through itself and its desire of itself where the object of love and the object of delight it has initially is what it intellects of the First and secondarily what it intellects of itself. The First, then, in relation to these is again the First Beloved and the First Desired. [53]

39. All of these [secondary causes] are divisible in a certain way. The perfection and deficiency in each of them, and [consequently] what each of them should be called, is easy following this model, when we apply that to what was said about the First. Each of these secondary causes has received from the outset the complete measure of the existence it has, and there is no remaining existence due it that might come to it in the future and toward which it would strive, besides what was provided it at the outset. Consequently, they have not been set in motion and do not strive toward anything whatsoever, but each one does bestow the existence of each heaven from its existence. So there follows from the first of them the existence of the first heaven all the way down to the last heaven containing the Moon. The substance of each heaven is composed of two things: of a subject and of a soul. Despite the fact that the soul that is in each of them is something existing in a subject, it is the parts of the soul that is an actual intellect in that it intellects itself, intellects the other [secondary cause] from which it derives its existence, and intellects the First.

40. The substances of the celestial bodies are divided, in as much as they are substances, into many things. They are in the first rank of the ranks of beings that are deficient, due to the fact that the thing⁴⁹ by virtue of which they are actually substances requires a certain subject. Thus they resemble the substances that are composed of matter and form. Moreover, they are insufficient in their substances for anything

⁴⁹ I.e., the soul.

else to come about from them. The degree of their perfection and excellence certainly does not reach the point that any effect on another would issue from them unless something external to their substances and to the things that constitute their substances comes about for them. The thing external to what constitutes their substances [and] part of the existents is quantity or quality [54] or other such categories. As a result of that each of these substances possesses determinate size, shape, other determinate qualities, and the rest of the categories that necessarily result from these. Each of them, however, possesses only the most excellent of these [categories]. Subsequent to that, they possess the place most excellent for them, since it follows necessarily that every body is delimited by a determinate place. These substances have also received already nearly all of their existence, with but a little of it remaining, since they are not such as to receive it entirely all at once from the outset; rather, there is always a little more for them in the future. Thus they strive to acquire it, and they acquire it only by eternal motion. Therefore, they are in motion eternally and without interruption. They are in motion toward and strive for the best of their existence. As regards what is most noble and what most approximates the most noble in terms of their existence, that is what they have received in full from the outset. The subject of each one cannot receive another form different from the one present in it from the very outset. Consequently, their substances have no contraries.

41. The existents below the celestial bodies are at the lowest degree of deficiency in terms of existence, because they did not receive fully at the outset all of what constitutes their substance. Instead, the substances that they received are merely in a state of remote potentiality, not actuality, since they received only their prime matter. Consequently, they forever move toward the form that will give them substance. Prime matter can potentially be all of the substances under heaven. In a certain respect, then, they are substances in potentiality that are always in motion toward becoming substance in actuality. Their posteriority and diminished existence is of such a degree that they are incapable of even undertaking on their own behalf any effort to acquire their self-perfection in the absence of an external mover. What sets them in motion from without is [55] the celestial body and its parts and then the Active Intellect; for both of these together perfect the existence of things below the celestial body.

42. The substance, nature, and activity of the celestial body is such that there immediately follows from it the existence of prime matter. It then gives prime matter whichever of the forms that is in its nature, possibility, and predisposition to receive. The Active Intellect is disposed in its nature and substance to examine everything that the celestial body prepares and gives, and whatever is receptive in one way to being freed and separated from matter, it frees from matter and privation, as a result of which [that thing] comes to be closest in rank to it. [This means] that the intelligibles that are potential become actual intelligibles, and, as a result of that, the intellect that was a potential intellect becomes an actual intellect. Humans alone can become like that, and this is the ultimate happiness, that is, the most excellent perfection that humans can reach. It is as a result of the agency of [the celestial body and the active

intellect] that the existence of the things that came after⁵⁰ is rendered perfect, and their emergence into existence is made requisite by virtue of the ways through which they are brought into existence as well as by virtue of the ways through which they can have eternal existence.

43. The celestial bodies are numerous. They move variously in circular fashion around the Earth. All are connected to the power of the first heaven, which is one, and consequently they all move by virtue of the motion of the first heaven. They have other powers by virtue of which they are distinct from one another and because of which their motions differ. A necessary result of the power common to the whole celestial body is the existence of the prime matter common to everything below the heaven, and a necessary result of the things by virtue of which [the celestial bodies] are distinct from one another is the existence of many different forms in prime matter. As a consequence of their different positions in relation to one another and to the Earth, they are made [56] to approach something sometimes and recede from it at others, to be in conjunction with one another sometimes and to be in opposition at others, to be visible sometimes and occluded at others, to happen to speed up sometimes and to slow down at others. These contrary features are not attributable to their substances but to their positions relative to one another, to the Earth, or to both.

44. It is a necessary result of these contrary features that are a consequence of their relative positions, that contrary forms come to be in prime matter, and contrary accidents and alterations come to be in the bodies below the celestial body. This is the first cause for the contraries found in prime matter and in the bodies below the heaven. [This is so] because contrary things exist in matter either on account of contrary things, or on account of one thing that has no contrary in its essence and substance. Matter can be in contrary states and relations, and while the celestial bodies are not themselves subject to contrariety in their substances, their relations to prime matter are contrary relations, since they are in contrary states relative to it. So it is through prime matter and the contrary forms necessarily existing that possibly existing things come together.

45. Possibly existing things are the latterly existing things that are most deficient in terms of existence. They are a mix of existence and nonexistence because, between what cannot not exist and what cannot exist—which two are the absolute extremes—there is something for which the opposite of both holds true, that is, the thing that can exist and can not exist. This is what is a mix of existence and nonexistence, namely, the existent to which nonexistence is opposed but with which a certain privation is associated, privation being the nonexistence of what can exist.

46. [57] Now, since the “possibly existent” is one of the two modes of the existent, and “possible existence” is one of the two modes of existence, the First Cause, whose existence in Its substance bestows the existence not only of what cannot not

⁵⁰ I.e., the existence of the human souls, which came after the existence of the celestial bodies and the Active Intellect.

exist but also of what can not exist, is such that there is no mode of existence but that It gives it. The nature of the possibly existent is such that it simply cannot have a single determinate existence; rather, it can exist as F and not, and it can exist as *x* and its opposite. Its actuality with respect to both of the opposing existences is one and the same, and its being *this* existent is no more likely than its being the opposite of *this* existent—"opposite" here is either a privation or a contrary or both of them together. Therefore, it necessarily follows that existents opposing one another can exist. This can happen in only three ways: either at two different times; or at one time from two different perspectives; or there are two things each one of which exists as an opposite of the other. A single thing can be two mutually opposing existents only in two ways: either at two different times, or from two different perspectives.

47. It is only through contrary forms that there are mutually opposing existents. The occurrence of something as one of two contraries is its settled existence. What allows for the two contrary existences is matter. So it is through matter that the existence the thing will have is unsettled, whereas it is through form that its existence will be settled. [The thing], then, has two existences: a settled existence through one thing and an unsettled existence through another thing. Therefore, its existence by virtue of its matter is to be at one time *this* and at another time not-*this*, and its existence by virtue of its form is to be *this* only and not its opposite. It necessarily follows, then, that it is given two existences, one when considered with respect to *this* at one time, and one with respect to not-*this* at another.

48. [58] The "possible" can be viewed in two ways. One is what is possible to be *x* and to be not-*x*—this is matter. The other is what is possible to exist *per se* and to not exist—this is the composite of matter and form. The possibly existing things have the following orders. The lowest order comprises what has not had any settled existence, not even through one of two contraries—this is prime matter. The second order comprises those things that have settled existence by virtue of contraries occurring in prime matter—these are the elements. When these come to have particular forms, they thereby acquire the possibility of being other equally contrary existences, in which case they become matters for additional forms, until, when they come to have those secondary forms also, they thereby come to have the possibility of being again still other contrary existences by virtue of still other contrary forms, in which case those also become matters for still other forms until, when they come to have those forms also, they thereby come to have the possibility of being again still other contrary existences, in which case they become matters for still other forms. It continues like this until it reaches forms by virtue of which the existents that are becoming settled *cannot* become matters for still other forms. The forms of those existents, then, are those of each form that preceded. These last existents are the most noble of the possibly existing things, while prime matter is the lowest of the possibly existing things.

49. The existents falling between these two also have an order. Everything closer to prime matter is more debased and everything closer to the form of the forms is nobler. Prime matter exists to belong [59] to something else, having absolutely no

existence on its own. Consequently, when that for the sake of which it was brought into being does not exist, neither does it. For this reason, when one of these forms does not exist, it does not exist. Thus, it is impossible for prime matter to exist separate from a given form at any time at all. In the case of the existents whose form is the form of the forms, they exist always for the sake of themselves, and it is impossible that through their forms they would be brought into being for the sake of anything else—I mean so that something else could have substance through them and that they would be matters for something else.

50. In the case of the intermediate existents, they are brought into being sometimes for their own sake and sometimes for the sake of something else. Next, each one of them has adaptive and reticent [qualities] through its matter, and adaptive and reticent [qualities] through its form.⁵¹ What it has by virtue of its matter is that it will become something else contrary to the existence that it has; what it has by virtue of its form is that it remain in the existence it has and not cease. When there are two contrary reticent [qualities], the state of equilibrium is that [the existent] receive each of its two measures in full, existing for a time as one particular thing, then being finished, and existing for a time as something contrary to the first existence, remaining that way for a time and then being finished, and existing as something else contrary to the former, and so on forever. Furthermore, the matter of each of these contrary existents is the matter of its opposite, so with each of them there is something that belongs to another and something that belongs to itself, since they share in common their primary matters. Thus, it is almost as though, from this perspective, each one has an adaptive [quality] each of which ought to go to one [60] from the other. The state of equilibrium in that is clear: what each one has should belong to the other so that both receive their full measure.

51. Now, since the possible existents are not sufficient in themselves to strive on their own behalf for their remaining existence—not only have they received just prime matter, but also once they come to be they are incapable of maintaining their existences for themselves and, moreover, when the fair measure of their existence is with their opposite they cannot on their own strive to claim their full worth—it necessarily follows that each has an external agent that sets it in motion and directs it toward what it is due and to what will maintain the existence it has. The primary agent that directs them toward their forms, and maintains it for them once they have it, is the celestial body and its parts. It does that in the following ways. One, it sets each one

⁵¹ We speculate that *ḥaqq wa-istihāl* translates the Greek *euorizon kai dusorizon* (“easily determined and difficultly determined”) from Aristotle’s *Meteorology* (IV I, 378b24, and IV 3 and 4), whose context loosely follows the context that al-Fārābī presents in our text. In the *Meteorology* Aristotle distinguished between active powers, hot and cold, and passive powers, moist and dry. The active powers are associated with the form and the passive powers with the matter. He further divides these powers into powers that are determined easily, hot and moist, and powers that are determined with difficulty, which by implication (but left unstated by Aristotle) would be cold and dry.

of them in motion, without intermediary or instrument, toward the form by virtue of which each exists. Two, it gives matter the potential whereby on its own it can undertake to move toward the form by virtue of which it exists. Three, it provides a certain thing with a potential whereby that thing can set something else in motion toward the form by virtue of which that other thing exists. Four, it gives a certain thing a potential whereby that thing can provide something else with a potential through which it sets in motion that other as a particular matter moving toward the form whose nature is to exist in the matter. In this, it will have set matter in motion by means of two things. Equally, it may set matter in motion through three things and more in this sequence.

52. Likewise, it gives each possible existent the means to maintain its existence, either by providing, along with the form by virtue of which [61] it exists, some other potential, or by putting the means for maintaining its existence in another body apart from it, in which case its existence is maintained by that other body that was made for this one. That other body is the servant of this one in maintaining its existence for it. The maintenance of its existence is either through one body serving it or through the help of numerous bodies disposed to facilitate the maintenance of its existence. In addition to that, many bodies have associated with them another potential through which they can make out of matter things similar to themselves by giving them forms similar to their own.

53. Often the agent finds these matters to contain forms that are contrary to the forms toward which the agent is accustomed to set them in motion, in which case another potential is needed to eliminate those contrary forms. Also, since it is certainly not impossible for something else to act on it the way it acts on something else in order to try to eradicate it the way it eradicates something else, it follows that there is another potential in these [matters] to resist the contrary that seeks to destroy it. The thing by which it eliminates something else and detaches it from the form through which it exists may be a potential in itself connected to the form through which it exists, but often that potential is in another body apart from it, in which case that potential is either an instrument or servant for it in extracting the matter disposed to it from the contraries of that body. An example of this is vipers, for this species is an instrument or servant of the elements in extracting from other animals the matters for the elements.⁵² Likewise, the potential through which it produces out of matters something similar to itself in species may be connected to its form in one body, or it may be in another body apart from itself, like the sperm of the male animal, for it serves as its instrument. These potentials are also forms in the bodies to which these potentials belong, but there are things similar to these belonging to others—I mean that they are brought into being as [62] instruments or servants for something else. When these instruments are connected to the forms in a single body, they are inseparable instruments, and when they are in other bodies they are separate instruments.

⁵² See par. 64 for further details.

54. Each of these existents has a reticent quality by virtue of its matter and a reticent quality by virtue of its form. The reticent quality that is through its matter is an existence contrary to the one it has. The reticent quality through its forms is the existence it has either on its own account, or on account of something else, or the reticent quality it has through its form is that it have something else—I mean to have something else brought into being for it—or that it have a type of unity that combines both, that is, that it be for its own sake for the sake of something else, in which case part of it will be for its own sake and part will be used for the sake of something else. That which is for the sake of something else by virtue of its form is either its matter, or an instrument or servant for it. That which has something else brought into being for it has it brought into being for it either as matter or an instrument or servant of it.

55. The first thing to come into existence from the celestial bodies and the differences in their motions is the elements, then the minerals, then the plants, then the nonrational animals, and finally the rational animal, with the individuals of each species coming into being with modes of the powers too numerous to count. Now these powers that are put in each species are not sufficient in themselves to act and maintain the existence [of their species], unless the celestial bodies, again through the types of their motions, aid one another and prevent one another from acting in such an alternate and sequential fashion that when one aids another against its contrary for a time, it then prevents it at another time by aiding its contrary [63], for example, by a certain increase in heat or coldness or a decrease of one or the other in something that acts or is affected by heat or coldness, for they sometimes increase one and sometimes decrease it. As for the bodies below [the celestial bodies], due to the fact that they share in common prime matter and much of their proximate matters and because some have forms similar to some and contrary to others, some of them aid one another and hinder others, whether for the most part, or rarely, or equally, depending on the similarity or contrariety of their powers; for the contrary one hinders and the similar one aids, and these actions come together and combine in the possible existents, and from them diverse mixtures come to be.⁵³

56. Once [the mixtures] combine, however, they move into a combination, a harmonious balance, and a just distribution through which each existent receives the fair measure of existence naturally allotted to it, commensurate with either its matter, or its form, or both. The measure commensurate with its form is either for the sake of itself, or something else, or both. With the rational animal, however, the measure it receives according to its form is not for the sake of any other species, neither as matter, nor as instrument, nor servant. [In general, however], each of the existents [below the celestial bodies receives a measure] by virtue of its form, either for the sake of something else only, or through a combination of existence for its own sake and existence for the sake of something else, although it would be just that it receive each

⁵³ Cf. *Opinions*, Ch. 8, §5.

of its two measures in full. All of these things occur either equally, or for the most part, or but rarely. Whatever is generated but rarely is a necessarily unavoidable feature of the nature of the possible existent and introduces nothing strange. [64] In this manner and by this process, the possible existents are so equitably regulated and ordered that each one receives the measure of existence commensurate with its reticent quality.

57. The activities of the celestial bodies are sometimes contrary to the powers of acting and maintaining that the possible existents have received, in which case the possible existents are not affected by those actions. Equally, however, the celestial bodies may prevent one possible existent from acting on another, when one is weaker than the other. Thus, the possible existents that have such powers of action may not act, either because of their weakness, or because contrary actions prevent them, or because the power of their contraries is too great, or because their contraries are aided by something external to them but with similar forms, or because another contrary thing opposes the action of the agent from another direction. In the case of the celestial bodies, they sometimes do not have an effect on [the sublunar world], and no action of theirs that is directed at the subjects below them may result, but not on account of any feebleness in them, but rather because their subjects are prevented from receiving their actions, or because one of the possible existents acts as an agent to help and strengthen their subjects [against the action]; for the possible existents are able to produce actions both contrary or similar to the celestial beings—whether or not the celestial beings, after giving them those powers, aid or oppose them—as long as they received their powers at the outset and refrained from acting on others.

58. These bodies that are possible existents by nature include the following categories: what exists for its own sake and is not employed in any other thing, not even for a given action to issue from it; what is prepared to produce a given action, either in itself or in something else; and what is prepared to receive the action of something else. The type that is brought into being for its own sake and for nothing else [65] whatsoever may produce a particular action as a bestowal of its existence on something else. For all of these, once they exist in such a way that there can issue from them whatever can issue from them without anything of their own opposing it, that state of their being is their final perfection. (An example of this is the state of vision when it sees.) When they are in a certain state of existence such that nothing more can issue from them as a result of that state without their being moved to an existence more perfect than what they have now, then that state is their first perfection. An example of this is the relation between the sleeping writer in terms of writing and his state when awake, or like the relation between his state with regard to writing when he is exhausted and resting and his state with regard to it when he is actually writing. Whenever something is at its final perfection and that thing is such that a given action can issue from it, its action is not delayed and comes out of it instantaneously. The action of something at its final perfection is delayed only by something apart from itself hindering it, like, for instance, sunlight being blocked from something hidden by a wall. Things that are separate from matter are in their substances at their

final perfection from the very beginning and cannot be divided into two states, one in which it would be at its first perfection, the other in which it would be at its final perfection. Because they have neither contraries nor subjects, there is nothing to hinder them in any way. Therefore, their actions are not delayed.

59. The celestial bodies are, in their substances, always in a state of final perfection. What first issues from them is their actual sizes, magnitudes, the configurations of their relative distances from one another, and everything else they possess that is not subject to change. What next issues from them is their motions, which come out of their final perfections and in which they have no contraries and no external opposites. Therefore, their motions are never interrupted, not even for an instant. [66]

60. The possibly existing bodies are sometimes in their first perfections and sometimes in their final perfections. Because there is a contrary to each one of them, their actions can be delayed for both of these reasons or for one; for the writer does not produce an action either because he is sleeping, or engaged in something else, or because the various elements involved in writing are not called to his attention at that time, or because everything involved is completely present but there is an external obstacle. The aim of the existence of all these is to be in their final perfections. The final perfection of anything that is in its first perfection by nature and not by force is obtained from [nature] only because there is either an unimpeded way to [the final perfection] or because there is something to aid it, for instance, the animal sleeps or rests from action after being exhausted, whereby it recovers the power to act.

61. Moreover, the deficiency of these [possibly existing bodies] is of such a degree that they are incapable of achieving their [final] perfections through their substances alone, without other [modes of existence] from the rest of the categories external to their substances, and that is by having size, shape, position, and the rest of the categories, such as being hard or soft, hot or cold, etc. Now, the individuals arrayed under many of these species subsist on the basis of similar parts, but their shapes are indeterminate, for example, the elements and the mineral bodies, whose shapes depend on the chance action of their efficient cause or on the shapes of things that contain them. Equally, the magnitudes of their sizes are indeterminate, though they do not have an infinite [variety of] sizes. Their parts are sometimes combined and sometimes separated; there are some that become continuous [bodies] when [their parts] are combined in one place, and others whose [parts] come into contact only and do not become continuous. The separation and combination [of their parts] does not occur in a set order but in a chance manner depending on the agent that combines and separates them. Consequently, the individuals under each of these species are distinct from one another not by necessity but rather [67] by chance, because their perfections result regardless of whatever state these accidents in them happen to be. So these things [all] have equal possibility.

62. In the case of plants and animals, however, the individuals under each species are distinct from one another by nature, and each is singular through an existence that does not belong to another. Thus, their individuals have number by nature.

Each one of them is a composite of dissimilar parts of determinate number, and each part has determined size, shape, quality, position, and level. As we have stated, the genera of possibly existing things have different levels of existence, the lowest helping the highest in the possible existence of each one. The elements aid the others through all of their parts in three ways: as matter, and by being servants and instruments. The mineral bodies aid the remainder, but not in every one of their species nor through every manner of help; rather one species [aids] as matter, another species by being servant to it (for example, mountains with respect to the generation of water's trickling down from springs), and another species by being instruments. The species of plants often aid animals in these three ways, and so too the nonrational animals aid the rational animal in these three ways; for some of them help as matter, some by being servants, and others by being instruments.

63. With the rational animal, however, since there is no species of possible beings more noble than it, [68] it provides none of the three types of help to anything nobler than it. [This is so] because, by virtue of reason⁵⁴ it does not serve as matter for anything whatsoever, whether above or below it, nor as instrument for anything other than it at all, nor by virtue of nature is it servant to anything else. As for whether it aids anything else in as much as it is rational, then it is by virtue of reason and volition, not by virtue of nature, that it aids other possible beings, and the individuals of its species aid one another (let us postpone talk of that now); for the actions of [the rational animal] might accidentally serve the purposes of many other natural things—namely, directing the flow of water, cultivating trees, planting seeds, breeding and herding animals—but it is not by virtue of nature that [any rational animal] serves a species other than its own, nor does it possess by nature anything through which another species may be served, nor are any of them by nature an instrument for another species. In the category of help from the noblest genera of possible things to the lowest, however, as we said, no rational animal serves or aids any lesser species, where that would be by virtue of its form. This is what should be understood when we talk about species helping other species.

64. With the nonrational animal, in as much as it is an animal, it is not matter for anything lesser than it; for none of them, by virtue of its form, is matter for plants. It is not impossible, however, for it to help by being a servant or instrument. In fact, some animals are brought into being by nature to serve the elements by dissolving things distantly removed from them [in composition] into [the elements]; for example, poisonous animals that by nature are enemies of other species of animal, like the viper that serves the elements through its poison by breaking down species of animals into [the elements]. A similar example is the poison in plants and, [in this case], they are poisons relatively, so that species aids two things. One should know that predatory animals are not like vipers, because the poison of vipers is not fit to be nutritious to other animals; on the contrary, [vipers] are hostile [69] by nature to all species of

⁵⁴ *Nutq* (lit. the power of speech).

animals in as much as they seek to destroy them. Predatory animals, on the other hand, instinctively kill not because of a natural enmity but because they seek nutrition. Vipers are not like that. [Finally], in the case of mineral bodies, in as much as they are such, they are not matter for the elements, but they do aid them by being their instrument, the way the mountain aids in the generation of water.

65. [For the purposes of survival], the species of plants and animals include the following types. There are those species that cannot obtain what they need to survive unless they all come together as a group of individuals. There are other species in which each individual might achieve what is necessary for survival even if some individuals remain apart, but they will not collectively arrive at what is best for them unless they all come together as a group. In other species, every individual might achieve in full both what is necessary for survival as well as what is best, even if some individuals remain apart from the others, although if they do come together as a group, no individual prevents another from having what it has. In other species, if they come together as a group, they do hinder one another from obtaining either what is necessary to survival or what is best, and consequently in some species of animals the individuals always stay away from one another even for procreation (for instance, many species of sea animals). In other species, the individuals do not keep apart from one another except for procreation. Finally, with other species the individuals never keep apart in anything, like ants and bees and many others, like the birds that feed and fly together in flocks.

VI. *DIRECTING ATTENTION TO THE WAY TO HAPPINESS*^a

1. [47] Happiness is an end that everyone desires, and everyone who strives to direct himself toward it does so precisely because it is a known perfection. This requires no explanation since it is so completely well known. Man desires every perfection and every end precisely because it is a certain good, which is unquestionably something preferred. Now, while there are many ends that are desired because they are preferred goods, happiness is the most advantageous of the preferred goods. It is thus clear that of all goods, happiness is the greatest, [48] and of all preferred things, happiness is the most perfect end that man has ever desired.

2. Some goods are preferred in order to obtain by them some other end, like physical exercise or taking medicine, while other goods are preferred for their own sake. It is obvious that those that are preferred for their own sake are more preferable and more perfect than those that are preferred for the sake of something else. Moreover, some of those preferred for their own sake are also sometimes preferred for the sake of something else. An example of this is knowledge; for sometimes we might prefer it for its own sake [and] not in order thereby to obtain something else, and sometimes we might prefer it in order to obtain wealth or something else that can be obtained by leadership or knowledge. Other [goods], by their very nature, are always preferred for their own sake and at no time are preferred on account of something