

QUESTION 115

The Action of a Corporeal Creature

Next we have to consider the action of a corporeal creature (question 115) and fate, which is attributed to certain bodies (question 116).

There are six questions concerning corporeal actions: (1) Are there active bodies? (2) Are there any seminal natures [or ideas] (*seminales rationes*) among bodies? (3) Are the celestial bodies a cause of things that are done here below through lower bodies? (4) Are celestial bodies a cause of human acts? (5) Are the demons subject to the actions of the celestial bodies? (6) Do the celestial bodies impose necessity on those things that are subject to their actions?

Article 1

Are there active bodies?

It seems that no bodies are active:

Objection 1: Augustine says, “Among things there is something that is acted upon and does not act, viz., bodies, and something that acts and is not acted upon, viz., God, and something that acts and is acted upon, viz., spiritual substances.”

Objection 2: Every agent except the first agent requires for its action a subject that is susceptible to its action. But a corporeal substance has no substance lower than itself that might be susceptible to its action, since this sort of substance occupies the lowest grade among beings. Therefore, a corporeal substance is not active.

Objection 3: Every corporeal substance is enclosed by quantity. But quantity impedes a substance’s acting or effecting motion (*impedit substantiam a motu et actione*), since it surrounds the substance and the substance is immersed in it—just as a cloudy atmosphere impedes the reception of light. An indication of this is that the more a body’s quantity grows, the more ponderous and heavy it is to move. Therefore, no corporeal substance is active.

Objection 4: Every agent has its power to act from its proximity to the first agent. But bodies, which are maximally composite, are as remote as possible from the first agent, which is maximally simple. Therefore, bodies are not agents.

Objection 5: If there is a body that is an agent, then it actively contributes to either a substantial form or an accidental form (*agit ad formam substantialem aut formam accidentalem*). Not a substantial form, since in bodies there is no principle of action except an active quality, which is an accident, and an accident cannot be a cause of a substantial form; for a cause is more powerful than its effect. Similarly, not an accidental form, since, as Augustine says in *De Trinitate* 9, “An accident does not extend further than its own subject.” Therefore, there are no active bodies.

But contrary to this: In *De Caelesti Hierarchia*, chap. 15 Dionysius says that among the other properties of corporeal fire, “it shows its greatness as something active and powerful on the materials that it lays hold of.”

I respond: It is apparent to the senses that some bodies are active. But there are three sorts of mistakes that have been made with respect to the actions of bodies:

There have been some who have completely removed actions from bodies. This is Avicbron’s opinion in *Fons Vitae*, where by means of the arguments touched on [in the objections] he tries to prove that no body acts, but that instead all the actions which seem to belong to bodies are the actions of a spiritual power that penetrates all bodies—so that, according to him, it is not the fire that produces

warmth, but rather the spiritual power that penetrates it. This opinion seems to have been derived from an opinion of Plato's. For Plato asserted that all the forms that exist in corporeal matter are participated forms and have been determined and contracted to *this* matter, whereas the absolute and, as it were, universal forms are separated; and so he claimed that these separated forms are causes of the forms that exist in matter. Thus, because a form existing in corporeal matter is determined to *this* matter which is individuated by quantity, Avicenna claimed that a corporeal form is contained and limited by quantity, as a principle of individuation, so that the form cannot extend itself by its action to any other matter. Instead, only a spiritual and immaterial form, which is not limited by quantity, can by its action have an effect on another.

However, this argument does not show that a corporeal form is not an agent; rather, it shows that a corporeal form is not a *universal* agent. For to the extent that a corporeal form participates in something, it must participate in what is proper to that thing; for instance, something participates in light to the extent that it participates in the nature of the visible. But to act (*agere*), which is nothing other than to make something actual (*facere aliquid actu*), is a *per se* property of an actuality insofar as it is an actuality (*est per se proprium actus in quantum est actus*), and this is why every agent effects what is similar to itself. So, then, from the fact that something is a form not determined by matter that is subject to quantity, it follows that it is an undetermined and universal agent; on the other hand, from the fact that something is determined to *this* matter, it follows that it is a contracted and particular agent. Hence, if, as the Platonists claimed, the form of fire were separated, then it would in some sense be a cause of every action of igniting (*causa omnis ignitionis*). But *this* form of fire, which exists in *this* corporeal matter, is a cause of *this* action of igniting, which passes from *this* body into *that* body; hence, this sort of action occurs through contact between the two bodies.

Still, Avicenna's opinion goes far beyond Plato's opinion (*superexcedit opinionem Platonis*). For the only substantial forms that Plato posited were separated, whereas he reduced accidents to material principles, viz., the large and the small, which he claimed to be the primary contraries, just as others had claimed that the primary contraries were the rare and the dense. And so both Plato and Avicenna, who followed him to a certain degree, claimed that (a) corporeal agents act through accidental forms to dispose matter for a substantial form, but that (b) the ultimate perfection, which occurs through the introduction of the substantial form, comes from an immaterial principle. And this is the second opinion concerning the action of bodies; we spoke about it above when we were discussing creation (q. 45, a. 8).

The third opinion was that of Democritus, who claimed that (a) acting occurs through the emission of atoms from a corporeal agent and that (b) being acted upon occurs through the reception of those same atoms in the pores of a corporeal patient. Aristotle disproves this position in *De Generatione et Corruptione* 1. For it would follow that (a) a body does not receive an action as a whole, and that (b) a corporeal agent's quantity would decrease by the very fact that it acts—both of which are manifestly false.

Therefore, one should claim that a body acts insofar as it is actual, and that it acts on another body insofar as the latter is in potentiality.

Reply to objection 1: The passage from Augustine should be understood to be about the whole of corporeal nature taken together, which does not have any lower nature below it on which it might act in the way that spiritual nature acts on corporeal nature and that uncreated nature acts on created nature. But it is nonetheless the case that one body is lower than another in the sense that it is in potentiality with respect to what the other body has in actuality.

Reply to objection 2: This makes clear the reply to the second objection. Note, however, that when Avicenna argues as follows, the argument should be conceded: 'There is something that effects motion without being moved, viz., the first maker of things; therefore, conversely, there is something that is only moved and acted upon'. But this is primary matter, which is pure potentiality in the way that God

is pure actuality. A body, however, is composed of potentiality and actuality, and so it both acts and is acted upon.

Reply to objection 3: As has already been explained, quantity does not altogether prevent a corporeal form from acting; rather, it keeps the form from being a universal agent, because the form is individuated insofar as it exists in a matter that is subject to quantity.

Moreover, the point introduced in the argument concerning the ponderousness of bodies is irrelevant. For, first of all, as is shown in *De Caelo et Mundo* 4, the addition of quantity is not a cause of heaviness. Second, it is false that ponderousness makes for slower movement; to the contrary, the heavier something is, the more it moves by its own proper movement. Third, an action does not occur through local motion in the way Democritus claimed; rather, it occurs through something's being brought from potentiality into actuality.

Reply to objection 4: It is not bodies that are maximally distant from God, since a body has some participation in a likeness of God's *esse* because of the form that it has (*secundum formam quam habet*). Rather, what is maximally distant from God is primary matter, which is in no way an agent, since it exists only in potentiality.

Reply to objection 5: A body actively contributes to both accidental forms and substantial forms.

For even if an active quality, such as heat, is an accident, it nonetheless acts in the power of the substantial form as the substantial form's instrument. And so it can actively contribute to a substantial form (*potest agere ad formam substantialem*), just as natural heat actively contributes, as an instrument of the soul, to the generation of flesh [in nutrition].

On the other hand, a body actively contributes to an accident by its own power.

Nor is it contrary to the nature of an accident that it should extend beyond its own subject *in its acting* (*in agendo*); rather, what is contrary to the nature of an accident is that it should extend beyond its own subject *in its being* (*in essendo*)—unless, perhaps, someone were to imagine that numerically the same accident flows from the agent into the patient, in the way that Democritus claimed that action occurs through the outward flow of atoms.

Article 2

Are there any seminal natures [or ideas] in corporeal matter?

It seems that there are no seminal natures [or ideas] (*rationes seminales*) in corporeal matter:

Objection 1: Idea (*ratio*) implies something with spiritual *esse*. But it is not the case that something exists spiritually in corporeal matter; instead, it is only the case that something exists materially in corporeal matter, i.e., in accord with the mode of that in which it exists. Therefore, there are no seminal ideas in corporeal matter.

Objection 2: In *De Trinitate* 3 Augustine says that the demons perform certain works by means of hidden movements by making use of certain seeds which they recognize in the elements. But what is employed by means of local motion are bodies and not ideas. Therefore, it is incorrect to claim that there are seminal ideas in corporeal matter.

Objection 3: A seed (*semen*) is an active principle. But there are no active principles in corporeal matter, since, as has been explained (a. 1), it is not the role of matter to act. Therefore, there are no seminal natures in matter.

Objection 4: In corporeal matter there are said to be "causal natures" (*rationes causales*), which seem sufficient for the production of things. But seminal natures are different from causal natures, since

miracles are effected outside of seminal natures but not outside of causal natures. Therefore, it is incorrect to claim that there are seminal natures in corporeal matter.

But contrary to this: In *De Trinitate* 3 Augustine says, “All the things that come into being corporeally and visibly have certain hidden seeds (*occulta semina*) which are latent in the corporeal elements of this world.”

I respond: As *De Anima* 2 says, denominations are normally made from the more perfect thing. Now in all of corporeal nature the more perfect things are living bodies, and so even the name ‘nature’ itself is transferred from living things to all natural things. For as the Philosopher says in *Metaphysics* 5, the name ‘nature’ (*natura*) was first imposed to signify the generation of living things, which is called a nativity (*nativitas*); and since living things are generated from a principle that is conjoined to them—e.g., the fruit from the tree, and the fetus from the mother, to whom it is tied—the name ‘nature’ was afterwards transferred to every principle of motion that exists within a thing which is moved.

Now it is obvious that the active and passive principles of the generation of living things are the seeds from which the living things are generated. And so Augustine appropriately labels as ‘seminal natures’ all the active and passive powers that are principles of generation and natural motion.

Now active and passive powers of this sort can be thought of according to a multiple ordering. For, first of all, as Augustine explains in *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 6, they exist principally and originally in the very Word of God as ideal natures (*rationes ideales*). Second, they exist in the elements of the world, where they were produced together at the beginning, as in universal causes. In a third way, they exist in the things that are produced from the universal causes in temporal sequence; for instance, they exist in *this* plant and in *that* animal as in particular causes. In a fourth way, they exist in the seeds that are produced by animals and plants. Again, the latter are related to other particular effects in the way that the primordial universal causes are related to the first effects they produce.

Reply to objection 1: Even if the active and passive powers of natural things cannot be called ‘ideas’ insofar as they exist in corporeal matter, they can nonetheless be called ‘ideas’ relative to their origin, insofar as they are derived from the ideal reasons.

Reply to objection 2: Active and passive powers of the sort in question exist in certain corporeal parts, and when these parts are employed by means of local motion to bring about certain effects, the seeds are said to be used by the demons.

Reply to objection 3: The male’s seed is an active principle in the generation of an animal. But what comes from the female, which is a passive principle, can also be called a ‘seed’. And so both active and passive powers can be included under ‘seed’.

Reply to objection 4: When Augustine speaks of seminal natures of the sort in question, one can plausibly infer from what he says that the seminal natures are themselves causal natures, just as a seed is likewise a certain cause. For in *De Trinitate* 3 he says, “Just as mothers are pregnant with their fetuses, so the world itself is pregnant with the causes of the things that are being brought forth.”

On the other hand, the ideal natures can be called ‘causal’—though not properly speaking ‘seminal’, since a seed is not a separated principle—and miracles are not effected outside of natures of this sort. Similarly, miracles are not effected outside of the passive powers instilled in a creature, with the result that whatever God has commanded can be effected from that creature. By contrast, when one claims that miracles are effected outside of the seminal natures, the miracles are being said to be effected outside of the active natural powers and outside of the passive powers that are ordered to those active powers.

Article 3

Are the celestial bodies a cause of what is effected here below in lower bodies?

It seems that the celestial bodies are not a cause of what is effected here below in lower bodies:

Objection 1: Damascene says, “But we claim that they [read: the celestial bodies] are not a cause of any of the things that are done or of the corruption of the things that are corrupted; rather, they are instead signs of storms and of atmospheric changes.”

Objection 2: An agent and a matter are sufficient for effecting something. But among lower bodies there is matter to be acted upon and there are contrary agents, viz., the hot and the cold and so on. Therefore, in order to cause the things that are effected here below, it is unnecessary to attribute causality to the celestial bodies.

Objection 3: An agent effects what is similar to itself. But we see that everything that is effected here below is effected through things being heated and cooled, and being moistened and dried, and altered by other qualities of this sort, which do not exist in the celestial bodies. Therefore, the celestial bodies are not a cause of what is effected here below.

Objection 4: In *De Civitate Dei* 5 Augustine says, “Nothing is more corporeal than a body’s sex.” But a body’s sex is not caused by the celestial bodies. An indication of this is that of two twins born under the same stellar configuration (*sub una constellatione*), one is male and the other female. Therefore, the celestial bodies are not a cause of corporeal things here below.

But contrary to this: In *De Trinitate* 3 Augustine says, “Crasser and inferior bodies are ruled with a certain order by more subtle and powerful bodies.” And in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 4, Dionysius says, “The sun’s light contributes to the generation of sensible bodies, and it moves them to life and nourishes them and makes them grow and perfects them.”

I respond: Notice that since (a) every multitude proceeds from oneness, and since (b) what is unchangeable (*immobilis*) remains the same, whereas what is changed has many forms, every change in all of nature proceeds from what is unchanged. And so to the extent that certain things are more unchangeable, they are more a cause of what is more changeable. But the celestial bodies are more unchangeable than other bodies, since they are changed only by local motion. And so the changes among lower bodies here below, which are varied and multiform, are traced back to the motion of a celestial body as a cause.

Reply to objection 1: What Damascene says should be understood to mean that the celestial bodies are not a first cause of the generation and corruption of things that are made here below, in the way asserted by those who claimed that the celestial bodies are gods.

Reply to objection 2: The only active principles in bodies here below are the active qualities of the elements, viz., the hot and the cold and the others of this sort. And if it were the case that the substantial forms of lower bodies were diversified only with respect to accidents of this sort, whose principles the ancient natural philosophers claimed to be the rare and the dense, then it would be unnecessary to posit an active principle in addition to the bodies here below; instead, they would themselves be sufficient for action.

However, to those who consider the matter correctly, it is apparent that accidents of this sort behave as material dispositions for the substantial forms of natural bodies. But matter is not sufficient for action. And so, in addition to these material dispositions, one must posit some active principle.

Hence, the Platonists posited separated species, by participation in which lower bodies acquire substantial forms.

But this does not seem adequate. For separated species are always in the same condition, since they

are posited as unchangeable, and so it would follow that there would not be any variation with respect to the generation and corruption of lower bodies—which is patently false.

Hence, according to the Philosopher in *De Generatione et Corruptione* 2, it is necessary to posit some active changeable principle that by its presence and absence is a cause of variety with respect to the generation and corruption of lower bodies. And the celestial bodies are things of this sort. And so whatever effects generation among lower bodies moves its subject toward the species as an instrument of a celestial body. Accordingly, *Physics* 2 says that a man and the sun generate a man.

Reply to objection 3: The celestial bodies are similar to lower bodies not by a likeness of species, but rather insofar as they contain within themselves, by their universal power, whatever is generated among lower bodies—in a way similar to that in which we say that all things are similar to God.

Reply to objection 4: The actions of celestial bodies are received in diverse ways in lower bodies in accord with the diverse material dispositions. However, it sometimes happens that the matter of a human conceptus (*materia conceptus humani*) is not completely disposed toward the masculine sex, and so part of it is formed into a male and part into a female (*partim formatur in masculum, partim in feminam*). Hence, the case in question is introduced by Augustine in order to refute divination that is made through the stars; for the effects of the stars likewise vary among corporeal things in accord with the diverse dispositions of the matter.

Article 4

Are the celestial bodies a cause of human acts?

It seems that the celestial bodies are a cause of human acts:

Objection 1: Since, as was explained above (q. 110, a. 3), the celestial bodies are moved by spiritual substances, they act in the power of those spiritual substances as their instruments. But those spiritual substances are higher than our souls. Therefore, it seems that they can affect our souls and in this way be a cause of human acts (*possint imprimere in animas nostras et sic causare actus humanos*).

Objection 2: Everything that is multiform is traced back to some uniform principle. But human acts are varied and multiform. Therefore, it seems that they are traced back to the uniform motions of the celestial bodies as their principles.

Objection 3: Astronomers (*astrologi*) frequently make true pronouncements about wars and other human acts, the principles of which are the intellect and the will. But they would not be able to do this by appeal to the celestial bodies if the celestial bodies were not a cause of human acts. Therefore, the celestial bodies are a cause of human acts.

But contrary to this: Damascene says, “The celestial bodies are in no way a cause of human acts.”

I respond: As has already been explained (a. 3), celestial bodies have an effect on bodies *directly and per se*. Moreover, they have an effect *directly and per accidens* on those powers of the soul that are acts of corporeal organs. For the acts of these powers are necessarily obstructed by impediments to their organs; for instance, an irritated eye does not see well. Hence, if the intellect and will were powers tied to corporeal organs—as some have claimed, asserting that the intellect does not differ from the sensory power—then it would necessarily follow that the celestial bodies are causes of human choices and actions. And from this it would follow that man is driven by natural instinct in his actions in the same way as the other animals, in which there exist only powers of the soul that are tied to corporeal organs. For what happens in these lower bodies through the influence of the celestial bodies happens naturally.

And so it would follow that man does not have free choice, but instead has actions that are determined, just as other natural things do. But these claims are manifestly false and contrary to the human way of life (*conversacioni humanae contraria*).

However, note that the influence of the celestial bodies can affect the intellect and the will *indirectly and per accidens*, viz., insofar as both the intellect and the will are in some way receptive to the lower powers that are tied to corporeal organs. But on this score the intellect and the will behave in different ways. For the intellect receives necessarily what it receives from the lower apprehensive powers, and so when the cogitative power or the power of imagination or the power of memory are disrupted, the intellect's action is necessarily disrupted (*ex necessitate turbatur*). The will, on the other hand, does not necessarily follow the inclination of the lower appetite. For even though the passions that are in the irascible and concupiscible parts of the soul have a certain power to incline the will, it nevertheless remains within the will's power either to follow the passions or to resist them. And so to the extent that the celestial bodies are able to affect the lower powers, their influence touches the will, which is the proximate cause of human acts, to a lesser degree than it does the intellect.

Thus, the claim that the celestial bodies are a cause of human acts is characteristic of those who assert that the intellect does not differ from the sensory power. Hence, some of them asserted that "the will in men is like the day brought on by the father of men and gods."

Therefore, since it is clear that intellectual understanding and willing are not acts of corporeal organs, it is impossible that the celestial bodies should be a cause of human acts.

Reply to objection 1: The spiritual substances that move the celestial bodies act on corporeal things by the mediation of the celestial bodies, but they act directly on the human intellect by illuminating it. However, as was explained above (q. 111, a. 2), they cannot affect the will.

Reply to objection 2: Just as corporeal motions in their multiformity are traced back to the uniform motions of the heavens as to their cause, so too the multiform acts that proceed from the intellect and the will are traced back to that uniform principle which is God's intellect and will.

Reply to objection 3: The majority of men follow their passions, which are movements of the sentient appetite with which the celestial bodies can cooperate, whereas a few wise men resist passions of this sort. And so in many cases (*in pluribus*) the astronomers can make true predictions, especially general predictions (*possunt praedicere et maxime in communi*). However, they cannot make specific predictions, because nothing prevents a man from resisting his passions through free choice. Hence, even the astronomers themselves admit that "a wise man dominates the stars," viz., to the extent that he dominates his own passions.

Article 5

Can the celestial bodies have an effect on the demons themselves?

It seems that the celestial bodies can have an effect on the demons themselves (*possint imprimere in ipsos daemones*):

Objection 1: As is clear from Matthew 4:24 and 17:14, the demons vex certain men, who are thereby called 'lunatics', according to the fixed phases of the moon (*secundum certa augmenta lunae*). But this would not be the case if the demons were not subject to the celestial bodies. Therefore, the demons are subject to the actions of the celestial bodies.

Objection 2: Necromancers make observations of the fixed constellations in order to invoke the demons. But the demons would not be invoked through the celestial bodies if they were not subject to

them. Therefore, the demons are subject to the actions of the celestial bodies.

Objection 3: The celestial bodies are more powerful (*virtuosiora*) than the lower bodies. But according to Porphyry, as quoted by Augustine in *De Civitate Dei* 10, the demons are restricted to certain lower bodies, viz., “to herbs, rocks, and living things, and to certain sounds, words, figures, and forms.” Therefore, *a fortiori* the demons are subject to the action of the celestial bodies.

But contrary to this: The demons are higher in the order of nature than the celestial bodies. But as Augustine says in *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 12, “an agent is higher than what it acts upon.” Therefore, the demons are not subject to the action of the celestial bodies.

I respond: There have been three opinions about the demons:

The first is that of the Peripatetics, who claimed that the demons do not exist. Instead, the things attributed to the demons according to the art of necromancy are effected by the power of the celestial bodies. And on this score Augustine quotes Porphyry in *De Civitate Dei* 10 as saying that “men manufacture on earth those powers of the stars that are suitable for producing various effects.”

However, this position is manifestly false. For there are many things which are known by experience to be done by the demons and for which the power of the celestial bodies is insufficient, e.g., that delirious men should speak unknown languages, that they should recite verses and passages of which they have no prior knowledge, that necromancers should make statues speak and move, and so on.

The Platonists were moved by these considerations to claim that the demons are animals with an ethereal body and a passive mind (*corpore aerea, animo passiva*); in *De Civitate Dei* 8, Augustine cites Apuleius as having made this claim. This is the second opinion, in accord with which one could say that the demons are subject to the celestial bodies in the same way that has already been explained (a. 4) for the case of men.

However, given what was said above (q. 51, a. 1), this opinion is clearly false. For we explained that the demons are intellectual substances not united to bodies.

Hence, it is clear that the demons are not subject to the action of the celestial bodies either *per se* or *per accidens*, either directly or indirectly.

Reply to objection 1: There are two reasons why the demons vex men according to the fixed phases of the moon.

First, in order to “dishonor a creature of God’s,” viz., the moon, as Jerome and Chrysostom explain.

Second, because, as was explained above (q. 114, a. 4), since they are unable to operate except by the mediation of natural powers, in their actions they take into account the aptitude of bodies for their intended effects. Now as Aristotle points out, it is obvious that “the brain is the most moist of all the parts of the body,” and hence the brain is especially subject to the action of the moon, which has the property of effecting motion in what is wet. But the animal powers are brought to perfection in the brain, and this is why the demons perturb a man’s imagination according to the fixed phases of the moon, when they take the brain to be disposed for this.

Reply to objection 2: There are two reasons why the demons come when they are summoned in certain constellations.

First, in order to lead men into the error of believing that the stars have some divine power (*aliquod numen*).

Second, because they think that in conjunction with certain constellations corporeal matter is more disposed toward the effects for which they are summoned.

Reply to objection 3: As Augustine puts it in *De Civitate Dei* 21, “The demons are lured through various kinds of rocks, herbs, trees, animals, songs and rites, not in the way that animals are lured by food, but in the way that spirits are lured by signs”—viz., insofar as these things are offered to them as a sign of divine honor, which they themselves are desirous of.

Article 6

Do the celestial bodies impose necessity on the things that are subject to their action?

It seems that the celestial bodies impose necessity on the things that are subject to their action:

Objection 1: When a sufficient cause is posited, it is necessary for the effect to be posited. But the celestial bodies are a sufficient cause of their effects. Therefore, since the celestial bodies, along with their movements and dispositions, are posited as necessary beings (*ponantur sicut ex necessitate entia*), it seems that their effects follow by necessity.

Objection 2: An agent's effect in matter follows by necessity when the agent's power is so great that it can totally subject the matter to itself. But all the matter of lower bodies is subject to the power of the celestial bodies as to something more excellent than it. Therefore, the effect of the celestial bodies is received by necessity in corporeal matter.

Objection 3: If a celestial body's effect does not occur by necessity, this is because of some impeding cause. But any corporeal cause that can impede a celestial body's effect must be traced back to some celestial principle, since the celestial bodies are a cause of everything that occurs here below (*causa omnium quae hic fiunt*). Therefore, since this celestial principle would likewise be necessary, it follows that it is by necessity that the effect of the other celestial body is impeded. And so everything that occurs here below happens by necessity.

But contrary to this: In *De Somno et Vigilia* the Philosopher says, "It is not strange that among the signs found in bodies of celestial events such as rain and wind, many are not fulfilled." So, then, not all the effects of the celestial bodies occur by necessity.

I respond: This question has been solved in part by what has already been said, but in part it presents a difficulty.

For it has been shown (a. 4) that even though certain inclinations come to exist in corporeal nature because of the influence of the celestial bodies, the will does not follow these inclinations by necessity. And so nothing prevents an effect of the celestial bodies from being impeded through voluntary action, not only in the man himself but also in the other things to which human action extends.

However, no such principle that has the freedom to follow or not to follow celestial influences is found in natural things. Hence, it seems that at least among these kinds of things everything occurs by necessity—this according to the ancient argument of those who, having assumed that (a) everything which exists has a cause and that (b) once a cause is posited, its effect is posited by necessity, concluded that everything happens by necessity.

In *Metaphysics* 6 Aristotle refutes this opinion with respect to the two points that they assume.

First, it is not true that once any given cause is posited, it is necessary for its effect to be posited. For there are some causes that are ordered to their effects not by necessity but in the greater number of cases (*in pluribus*), and that at times fail in a minority of cases (*deficiunt in minore parte*). However, since they fail in a minority of cases only because of some impeding cause, the aforementioned incongruity is still not avoided, since even the impediment posed by such a cause occurs by necessity.

And so, second, one must claim that everything that exists in its own right (*quod est per se*) has a cause, but that what exists incidentally (*quod est per accidens*) does not have a cause, since it is not truly a being (*non est vere ens*), given that it is not truly unified (*non sit vere unum*). For instance, the white has a cause (*album causam habet*), and so does the musical (*similiter et musicum*); but the white-and-musical does not have a cause (*album musicum non habet causam*), since it is not truly a being or truly unified. Now it is clear that a cause which impedes the action of some other cause that is ordered

in the greater number of cases toward its own effect sometimes acts with that other cause incidentally (*concurrit ei interdum per accidens*). Hence, to the extent that this sort of concurrence is incidental, it itself does not have a cause. For this reason, what flows from such a concurrence is not traced back to any preexisting cause from which it would follow by necessity. For instance, the fact that a certain fiery body made of the element earth (*aliquod corpus terrestre ignitum*) is generated in the higher part of the atmosphere and falls downward has some celestial power as a cause; similarly, the fact that there is a certain piece of combustible matter on the surface of the earth can be traced back to some celestial principle. However, the fact that the falling fire strikes this particular matter and incinerates it does not have any celestial body as a cause, but is instead incidental (*per accidens*).

And so it is clear that not all the effects of the celestial bodies occur by necessity.

Reply to objection 1: The celestial bodies are causes of lower effects by the mediation of particular lower causes, which are able to fail in a minority of cases.

Reply to objection 2: A celestial body's power is not infinite. Hence, it requires a determinate disposition in the matter in order to induce its effect, both with respect to the distance from the place and with respect to the other conditions. And so just as the distance from a place impedes the effect of a celestial body—for instance, the sun does not have the same heating effect in Dacia that it does in Ethiopia—so too the bulkiness of the matter (*grossities materiae*), or its cold or hot temperature, or some other disposition of this sort can impede a celestial body's effect.

Reply to objection 3: As has been explained, even though a cause that impedes another cause's effect is traced back to some celestial body as its own cause, nonetheless, since the concurrence of the two causes is incidental, it itself is not traced back to any celestial cause.