

Whether it is appropriate for God to emplace seminal reasons into matter.

[5043] Arg 1. In regards to the second issue, it proceeds as follows. It would appear that it is inappropriate to say that God has placed seminal reasons into matter. For that which is received in sensible matter, is in it by the being of nature, not by the being of intention; because cognoscible matter is not of the forms which it receives, but by means of them it is perfected in specific being. But "reason" does not name a form according to the being of nature, but in the mode of intention. Therefore the virtues placed into sensible things should not be called "reasons".

[5044] Arg 2. And further, seed/seed, as is stated in Physics II, is called an active principle. But the potency of matter is not active, but rather is passive, given that nothing acts except according to that which is in act. Therefore "seminal reason" should not be attributed to matter.

[5045] Arg 3. Further, that which is in something, is not produced from it except by way of issuance. If, therefore, God put the seeds of all things in nature beforehand, it would seem that the generation of things would be by the issuance of one thing from another, and thus this would repeat the error of Anaxagoras, who stated that any given thing to be in all things, and nothing to be purely this or that, such as bone or flesh; but only according to the name of that which predominates: this was disproved in Physics I. improbatur.

[5046] Arg 4. Next, for the generation of natural things it is not only necessary that there be active virtues, but also passive ones. And since passive virtues are not included in seminal reasons, it is clear that in addition to seminal reasons there are also other reasons which must be emplaced into things.

[5047] Arg 5. Next, in an inferior nature the effects are not produced from their causes always and necessarily, but rather [only] frequently. Since, therefore, in the text the seminal reasons are described as being necessary in order that something come to be, it is apparent that at least for inferior natures seminal reasons are not to be posited.

[5048] SC 1. Sed contra: because, as Gregory states, the blessing of God is said to be the combination of his good things and their multiplication. Since therefore God said in Genesis I to have blessed his works, it is clear that he gave them virtues by which their multiplication would come about. But this indicate a seminal reason. Therefore seminal reasons have been emplaced by God in things.

[5049] SC 2. Next, Deuteronomy 32, 4 says: The works of God are perfect. But any given thing is perfect, as is stated in Meteorology 4, when it can produce another thing which the same as itself. Therefore the virtue by which this can come about, are attributed to things, and these are seminal reasons, ergo etc.

[5050] CO. I respond by saying that the emanation of creatures by God is just like the issuance of artifacts from an artisan; therefore just as by the art of the artisan there issue artificial forms into matter, in the same way from the ideas existing in the divine mind there flow all forms and natural virtues. But because, as Dionysius states, those things which are from caused things abundantly are pre-existing in the causes, the forms received in matter are not adequate to the uncreated virtue or art from which they proceed; thus in the case of the artisan it must be that by his art there is some virtue that continues otherwise operating concerning the same artificially created things, which are not bound to the virtue of the art: and similarly concerning the divine virtue, it is such that it adds to, changes or removes something from created things.

However, the operation of God differs in two ways from the operation of the artisan. First due to the material aspect: Since the artisan does not produce matter, but must operate based on the matter given, he does not confer on matter the potency for receiving the forms which are emplaced, nor can insert [this

potency] into matter. God, however, who is Author of all things, does not only confer forms and natural virtues on things, but also confers the potency for receiving that which he himself desired to produce in the matter. Second, due to the formal aspect: because the forms which the artisan emplaces in things, do not produce [others] similar to themselves: for a rotting bed does not sprout into a bed, but rather into a plant, as is clear from Physics I. Natural forms, however, can produce [others] similar to themselves, and thus have the property of a seed, and can be said to be seed-like. But the forms of things, insofar as they exist in the divine art, are said to be primordial, by which they themselves are the first principles, simply, of the things which will be produced. The potency, however, which is emplaced in things, is for drawing out that in itself which the will of God disposes, are said to be reasons which are obedient to certain things, according to which things the potency is in the matter so that it might come to be from those things which God desires. But these same virtues emplaced in matter, by which natural effects follow, are said to be seminal reasons. But that which according to the thing are seminal reasons, are assigned to diverse things diversely.

For some say, that the form of the form of the species is not received in matter except via the form of the genus; and it is precisely that it is numerically another form by which fire is fire, and by which fire is a body. This generic and incomplete form is called a seminal reasons, because as a result of such a form there is a certain inclination emplaced in the matter for receiving specific forms. But this appears to not be true: because every form which is acquired after something exists substantially, is an accidental form. For if, after existing in the genus of substance, that which is constituted came to be, therefore if these things were taken away, the individual would remain in the genus of substance, which is contrary to the idea of substantial form, as is stated in De anima II. Next, since every form gives being to something, and it is impossible that there be any thing which has substantial being doubly, it is necessary, if the first substantial form which comes to matter gives it its substantial being, that the second which comes give accidental being; and thus there is not another form by which fire is fire, and by which fire is body, as Avicenna wishes to sustain. And if the Commentator were to say in Metaphysics II, the genus is not matter, but an intermediate form in between matter and the ultimate form, this he does not say in order to indicate the order of forms in reality, but rather in reason. This is because although the genus signifies the whole, as Avicenna says, it nevertheless signifies it indistinctly, and thus it is close to the notion of matter. Next, it follows that the thing signified by the genus would be a part of the species constituted by a superadded form, and thus it could not be predicated of the species. But this is not correct, according to the intention of Augustine as well: for from the virtue of the generic form the specific form does not necessarily follow. Thus it is not such a virtue according to which it is necessary that it come to be, but according to which it is able to come to be.

Similarly, others say that since all forms, according to the Philosopher, are educed from the potency of matter, it must be the cases that these same forms pre-exist incompletely in matter, in the manner of something inchoate; and because they they are not in being in regards to their perfection, they do not have the perfect virtue of acting, but rather an incomplete virtue. Therefore, they cannot exist of themselves in act, unless there be an external agent which excites the incomplete form to act, as though it were cooperating with the external agent, for otherwise there would not be the coming to be of natural change, but rather violent change, since, as is stated in Ethica III, the violent is that whose principle is external, with the patient conferring no active force. Therefore these incomplete virtues which pre-exist in matter, are said to be seminal reasons, because they in matter according to complete being, just as the formative virtue in the seed. This does not appear to be the case, however, because although forms are educed from the potency of matter, that material potency is not active, but merely passive, for as the Commentator says in Physics 8, in local motion there the mover must be distinct from the moved. The same is true in the motion of alteration, and he gives of the example that when a natural body becomes healthy, the heart is the health-giver and the other

members are what are made healthy.

Similarly, in regards to the simple bodies we do not say that they would be moved by themselves according to location, since fire cannot be divided into mover and moved, but it can also not be the case that something be altered by itself, as though some potency existing in matter in some way were to act on the matter in which it is, educing it into act. But both of these occur in ensouled beings, which are moved according to location by themselves, and are also altered, according to the distinction of organs or parts, of which one is the mover and alterer, and another is the moved and altered. Therefore it cannot be accepted that there is a seminal virtue in other things as there are in things which have a soul. But nevertheless it does not follow that if in the matter there is only a passive potency, that there would not be natural coming to be, because matter assists in coming to be not by acting, but insofar as it is capable for receiving such an action, which aptitude is also said to be the "appetite of matter", and the inchoateness of form. For not all natural motions are said to be in the same way, as is stated in Physics II, and in De caelo I. et Mund. The Commentator says that some motions occurs due to an active principle existing in [the being], as in the case of the local motion of the heavy and the light, and some motions occur due to a passive principle, which occurs according to an innate potency educed into act by a natural agent, as in the generation and alteration of simple bodies, so that nature too is divided into matter and form.

And indeed I concede that in matter there is no active potency, but only purely passive potency, and that seminal reasons are said to be complete active virtue in a nature with passive properties, such as heat and cold, and the form of fire, and the virtue of the sun, and things of the sort; and they are said to be "seeds" not due to the imperfect being which they would have, due to the formative virtue in the seed, but because this sort of virtues are brought together in the individuals first created among the things, by the work of the sixth day, as from them as from certain seeds natural things are produced and multiplied.

[5051] Ad 1. In response to the first objection, that this kind of active virtues in nature are said to be "reasons", not that they are in the matter in the manner of intention, but because they are produced by divine are, and there remains in them an order and direction of the divine intellect, just as in artificial things there remains the direction of the artisan towards a determined end.

[5052] Ad 2. In response to the second objection, seminal reasons are said to be emplaced in matter, but not because they would be understood to preexist in matter prior to the advent of the complete form, as though pertaining to the essence of matter, or to its notion, insofar as it is matter, but rather in the same way by which a complete form is said to be in matter.

[5053] Ad 3. In regards to the third objection, that Anaxagoras supposed that in air, from which fire is generated, there pre-exists certain parts of fire in act latently, by whose outflow and collection, fire was seen to be generated. But this we do not say, but rather than in the matter of air there precedes an aptitude for the form of fire, and in the generating fire there is an active virtue, by which this aptitude is led into act, and this is not inappropriate.

[5054] Ad 4. In regards to the fourth objection, that under the notion of "seminal reasons" there are comprehended both active and passive virtues, which can be perfected by natural agents, just as in the generation of animals the name "semen" is applied not only to sperm, but also to the menses.

[5055] Ad 5. In regards to the fifth objection, I state that with all the natural causes concurring, from all of which a perfect cause is present, it is necessary that the effect occur, unless something impede, and in this way Augustine spoke.