

# Metaphysical Exercise on Universals in General

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With the whole universe aspiring to the Lord,

The doctrine of universals is, I do not think, to be overcome without great toil and many difficulties, since all yet cry out with one voice. Hence various opinions about them are fostered by different persons. For some fiercely dispute these matters together with their affects as if they were Ideas; no less does Aristotle stoutly defend his own opinion. Others occur who dare to relegate universals to an empty order of mere words and a naked class of names; others who acquire them in the concept of the common thing. It is not undeserved that Porphyry calls this logical doctrine βαθυτάτην πραγμάτων καὶ μεγάλης δεόμενην ἰχνεώσεως. Since indeed not even two contradictory opinions can be obtained at once as true — which however must be chiefly regarded in all things — we must look and follow the opinion of those who have treated this doctrine more logically (λογικώτερον διελεχθησι). Innumerable knotted folds and pleatings are woven here by the Scholastics. For hardly today do you see any logic (I mean metaphysics) which does not approach the size of a small book, in which many pages are spent when a very great heap of terms and distinctions, very tangled and proposed to this intricate matter, are expended. We shall be brief, and will present this doctrine, which at other times is sufficiently prolix, in a manner suited to the abilities of those of slender comprehension.

§1. Before we proceed to the treatment itself, certain things about the name must be prefixed. That which the Greeks call τὸ καθόλου, and the Latins call *universum* or *universale*, is said πολυλεχὲς — a word of many senses. It is not badly distinguished into complex and simple. Complex is said of a universal proposition which asserts that something is in every or in no one, and is opposed to the particular and the indefinite. In another sense universal is said to be that which is in every thing, and *per se* and *qua itself* is, and so is in something as the first subject; thus when one reciprocally attributes, as when the sensitive is attributed to the animal, whence the Catholic (i.e. universal) and especially necessary proposition arises. Hence Scholastics are wont to distinguish between the Καθόλου *prioristicum* and the *posterioristicum* (though barbarously). To complex universals may also be referred when the first and common principles, which are the causes of many conclusions, are called universals. But complex universals do not pertain here. By simple universal Scholastics mean one thing in causing — it is called a universal cause, which can produce various effects, whose universality consists in that its power extends its effects to many. Thus although God is the most singular Being, yet He is the most universal cause. Thus heaven, the Sun, etc., are called universal causes. Another sense is in representing: if in signifying it signifies and represents many, thus words, notions, species, images, etc., that signify many are called universals — with respect to the objects which they signify or represent — although considered in themselves they are singular; thus indeed Platonic ideas are called universals. Another sense is in predicating: that which is apt to be predicated univocally of many is called predicable universal. Another sense is in being: that which is in many so that it can be predicated univocally of them, which two [senses] differ only in name from the concept but in reality are the same. For this reason alone can a universal be predicated of many, because it is in

many. Universal in being, simply called universal, i.e. universal being, is named *ens universale*; and it is of this that our present discourse is.

§2. Moreover universal is divided into that which is *ante rem* (i.e. before the thing, or before many), *in re* (i.e. in the thing, or in many), and *post rem* (i.e. after the thing, or many). By the universal *ante rem* (which some also call metaphysical) some understand the idea in the divine mind, others the Platonic ideas. The universal *in re* (which they call physical and in *potentia*) they say is that which is common in the singulars (without the operation of the mind intervening). The universal *post rem* (which they call logical and in act) they call that which arises in the mind by collection from individuals through the operation of the mind. Others explain this distinction differently. See Albertus Magnus in *Metaphysics* book 5 chapter 5 and *Ethica* I, tractate 5, ch. 13. But since the Platonic ideas are pure figments, and the universal is likewise constituted only by an operation of the mind, the very thing is ἀτοποντατον, the contrary of which will be shown below; we cannot therefore prove this distinction in every respect.

§3. Furthermore, the universal for Aristotle is the same as the confused whole; the singular the same as what is distinct and considered in its parts. Thus the passage in Aristotle, *Physics* I, chapter 1, is usually explained, where he says that the universal is better known with respect to us (πρὸς ἡμᾶς) than the singular — namely with a confused knowledge — since elsewhere, *Posterior Analytics* I, chapter 2, it is said that those things are prior and more known by nature which are farthest removed from the senses, such as the most universal things; and *Physics* I, chapter 5, line 49: “the universal according to reason is the whole, but according to sense it is afterwards a part of the whole.” Thus the universal is known by reason, the singular by sense. Sometimes the universal is taken *comparatively* for the more universal, the singular for the less universal. Thus in *Posterior Analytics* II, chapter 13 (12), it is said that it is easier to define that which is a universal less universal than a universal — i.e., than what is more universal. And, to conclude many things briefly, speaking broadly, anything is called universal which is wider and more common than something else — whether univocally, or equivocally, or analogically, or merely insofar as it is prior or posterior, granted to several. Thus also *being* is said to be the most universal in *Metaphysics* III, chapter 4, because it is common to all (*Metaphysics* IV, chapter 2). But when Aristotle speaks strictly, he numbers that among universals which he mentions in *Metaphysics* III, chapter 3 and IV, chapter 2, since moreover he recognizes no universal truly univocal in individuals. For in *Ethics* I, chapter 4 (6) when he denies that the good is universal, he says: ἵσπερ, *inquit*, ἀγαθὸν ἰσαχῶς λέγεται τῷ ὄντι· ὅπερ οὐκ ἔστι τι καθόλου καὶ ἓν—“the good is said in as many ways as being; wherefore it is not something universal and one.” Since the good is said in the same modes as being, and he enumerates several which are not universal in the same way; *Metaphysics* III (IV), chapter 2: τὸ ὄν ἢ τὸ ἓν οὐκ ἔστι καθόλου—“being or the one is not a universal.” To the distinctions of the name also belongs that the universal is posited as one thing in act, another in potency. Thus the universal is said to be in potency in singular things, but in act in the mind. But the universal in potency is not universal simply, but only can be. They also are accustomed to distinguish between the universal simply so called, which is

abstracted from inferiors, and the universal as instantiated in the singular, which is represented in a certain individual, as “man” in Peter. But concerning these and other distinctions of the name, see the Scholastics, *Metaphysics* disputation 6, section 8; Marcus, disputation 1 *De universalibus*; Columba, book 1 *De rationibus sic dictis*, section 2, chapter 3, etc.

§4. We here treat of universals simply so called, in act. And, for a proper understanding of the matter itself, we think it contributes much to distinguish well between the universals themselves — for example, genera or species — and the notions or concepts of the universals — for example, the notion of genus or of species — and the universal terms signifying them — for example, the word “genus” or “species.” If these three were distinguished accurately by the Scholastics, a controversy which is otherwise sufficiently intricate could easily be untangled. For those who wish the universals to be the very words take the words by which universal things are denoted as the universals themselves; they hold that the notions and concepts of universals produce universals, after which they seize upon the concepts of universals themselves as the universals. Those, however, who contend that universals exist in things speak of the universals themselves considered absolutely. And both the words and the notions do not come under the name of universals, but universals in themselves and considered through themselves will appear below to be things existing outside the mind. Therefore let us be warned in advance that our discourse here will not be about the words or names of universals — or about words simply — but about universals so called in the proper sense.

§5. And further, to which discipline the treatment of these matters belongs is not without reason asked. The Scholastics customarily dispute sharply concerning them in logic, around Porphyry’s *Isagoge*; whence the Coimbra commentators in the preface to Porphyry’s *Isagoge* dispute about them at such length that they exhaust the subject more than the subject itself requires. And beginners also are sometimes burdened and detained at the very outset of logic by these questions concerning the nature of universals. But this is less suited to Porphyry’s purpose, who—since, with Chrysostom, he did not intend to place those five words (genus, species, difference, property, and accident) before raw beginners—undertook to explain them; whereas he wished to exempt himself from treating, with those more advanced and exercised, whether genera and species exist in the nature of things, or are placed only in the naked opinions of the mind; and, if they do subsist in the nature of things, whether they are bodies or rather devoid of body, and whether they are separate [from particulars], or exist in sensible things and around these. He wished to keep himself distinct from that part of the questions which in such a manner proposed do not belong to logic, still less ought they to be set before novices at the very threshold of logic. Indeed, no one has rightly removed the doctrine of the *praedicabilia* (as they are called) from logic, since neither the things which pertain to making definitions or demonstrations, nor those which pertain to demonstration itself, nor those that pertain to dialectical disputations, can be sufficiently understood without them — as Porphyry also indicates in the preface to his *Isagoge*. Hence also Aristotle, *Topics* I, chapter 1, treats of definition, genus, property, and accident, insofar as dialectical problems are taken from these. But it is one thing to treat of universals logically, as they enter into predication or serve for

demonstrations and dialectical disputations; it is another to treat of universals as such. And that this doctrine must be assigned to metaphysics is indubitable. For since the universal and the singular are found in all the categories, it is clear that, because of the common nature they have, they belong to the class of those things called “transcendent,” and therefore must be numbered among those things which belong to being as being, and thus they yield a general division of being, namely that every being is said to be either universal or singular (*De Interpretatione* chap. 7 (5) and *Prior Analytics* I, chap. 27 (29)). That such things are founded in metaphysics is admitted. Hence in *Metaphysics* IV, chapter 2, Aristotle says that it belongs to one science to contemplate being as being, and the things that belong to it as such; and that this science ought to contemplate not only substances but also place and quantity and the rest, and also to treat of priority and posteriority, of genus and species (which are themselves universals), and of whole and parts and other such matters. Upon which passage Thomas, in his commentary, says that first philosophy deals with all these things because they are accidents of being insofar as it is being. Therefore, if genus and species are affections of being in themselves, assuredly the universal—of which species are the species and genus the genus—will altogether be an affection of being, and ought likewise to be investigated, as Joachimus says. And on this account, just as the Philosopher derives the various significations of other common terms, so also he derives the various significations of “genus” in *Metaphysics* V, chapter 28, and in *Metaphysics* VII, chapter 13 and the following, where he treats of universals. Compare Schalciur, Treatise 1 *De universalibus*, Disputation 1.

§6. But letting the preliminaries pass, let us proceed to the matter itself, where the question arises whether universals exist, and in what they consist. Among the ancient philosophers, no doubt can be raised on this point. For Heraclitus of Ephesus, and his disciple Cratylus, as also all the Epicureans, because they thought that nothing at all existed except the things perceived by the senses, plainly denied universals, and abolished all science, as Plato testifies in the *Theaetetus*, and Aristotle in *Metaphysics* I, chap. 6, and IV, chap. 5. This opinion is akin to that of those “wild beasts,” as he calls them, whom one encounters in Porphyry, *Isagoge*, chap. 1, and Thomas, *Summa Theologiae* I, q.14, art.18. These are called Nominalists, and before them Anselm, in *De Incarnatione Verbi*, chap. 2<sup>1</sup>, is cited as one who taught that there is absolutely no universal and common thing, but that universals are merely bare names. This view was again brought to light by William of Ockham, an Englishman and disciple of Scotus (whom, on this account, Gabriel Biel, *Sentences* I, dist. 2, q.1, at the beginning, calls “the venerable initiator”), who defended this opinion so vigorously that he found no small number of supporters of his view, and produced that sect which is still called the Nominalists, because these philosophers placed all science in bare names — since to abolish science entirely seemed to them altogether absurd.

§7. This opinion, as being absurd, is rightly attacked by others with these arguments. 1) It is absurd to say that the word “man” is something — whether internally or externally — in Socrates or in Plato. For what man in his right mind would grant the proposition “Socrates is

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<sup>1</sup> This is false; Anselm was certainly not a nominalist.

man” if you understand it of the bare sound? Likewise, in these propositions, “Man is an animal,” “The beast is an animal,” who would say that the discourse is about bare words, since the genus is predicated essentially of the species? 2) When we conceive the thing expressed by the word “man”, we do not consider here any singular as such, but something else that is common to many singulars, not proper to any of them. For example, when Plato and Socrates are represented to the intellect as men, they agree entirely; but if you consider them in the singular, they have something by which they differ. Hence it necessarily follows that there is some universal nature of man, of which all those things that essentially belong to men can be predicated. Thus the proposition “Man is a rational animal” does not apply to the sound alone; for how could the sound be rational? Nor is one single individual understood here, because singulars, being corruptible, admit neither definition nor demonstration — nor do their bare names, according to the opinion of the philosophers. Nor again is the discourse properly about all men taken together, for in that case the statement would not belong to each individual. It remains, therefore, that the statement must be understood of the common nature.

§8. 3) It is necessary that science exist, from the natural appetite by which all men by nature desire to know (*Metaphysics* I, chap. 1). But who would believe that nature has implanted this appetite in men in vain? Experience also confirms the same. For in the mathematical disciplines we gather a necessary conclusion by necessary demonstration, from which, because of the premised demonstration, we cannot depart — e.g., that a triangle has three angles equal to two right angles. Since, therefore, it is clear that science exists, it must necessarily be of universals, because, as Aristotle says (*Metaphysics* III, chap. 1): “He who knows something *qua* universal knows it of all.” For science is of universals and not merely of sense-objects, both because the latter are infinite (*Metaphysics* II, chap. 15) and therefore unfit for demonstration, and because demonstration must be so constituted that to deny it gives no ground for doubt — which cannot be done with infinite things. And since singulars are corruptible, therefore they do not fall under science: “But knowledge is of that which is always and in the same manner.” For to say that science is sometimes true, sometimes false, is absurd; for then it would not be science, which must be certain and immovable. Nor should one think that the singular, as such, can be the object of science (*Metaphysics* VII, chap. 15). Therefore it is necessary that there be universals, under which both demonstration and science fall — which, if they are not bare sounds or bare concepts, are something real. Consult Aristotle, *Metaphysics* III, chap. 4. For these and other arguments, see also Scaliger, *Exercitationes*, in the first prolusion, question 1, article 2; and Monteverius, *Tractatus de Universalibus*, chap. 1.

§9. But as to what the Nominalists object — that no thing can be universal and singular; and yet that everything which is under the sun is singular, and hence that nothing is universal — we grant that everything which exists simply and in itself is singular. But universals do not exist in themselves; rather, they exist *in* others, namely in singulars. Therefore nothing exists outside the intellect in the world *as* numerically universal. Nor does what they say hold, that everything which exists in the world is assigned to a definite place and time, whereas the universal is not limited to any definite place and time, and that such non-limitation belongs only to God. For to

be determined to a particular place and time belongs to singulars *per se*; to universals *per accidens*, insofar as they are numbered in singulars. Nor, in any other way, does Aristotle in *Posterior Analytics* I, ch. 18–19, and *Metaphysics* VII, ch. 13 — where he says that universals are nothing apart from singulars — confirm the opinion of the Nominalists. For the Philosopher there means nothing else than that universals are not things separated from singulars, so as to subsist outside them, but are common natures which exist in singulars, just as the whole exists in all its parts taken together. The Nominalists indeed seem to have deluded themselves by confusing the words signifying universals, which are signs of universals and are used in speech in place of the universal things themselves, and the universal things themselves, which are situated inwardly in the mind. For in the *Topics*, Aristotle says:

“It is impossible for us to discourse about the things themselves, but we use names instead of the things as symbols; and what happens in names, we suppose to happen in the things also — just as those who calculate with pebbles.”

That is: it is impossible that we should treat the things themselves in discourse; we use names for the things. And what happens in the names, we also judge to happen in the things, just as those who use counters in calculation.

§10. Since the opinion of those who contend that universals are either nothing, or nothing but bare names, has been dismissed, let us now approach those who erred in the opposite extreme. For Plato — granting the opinion of Heraclitus and Cratylus (as is rightly noted in *Metaphysics* I, ch. 6) that no science can be had of these corruptible things — in order not to abolish science altogether, established that universals are natures separated from singulars, eternal, immovable, constant, which he called Ideas, because they were as it were images and exemplars, by whose likeness these singular and sensible things are made and constituted, and from which these things participate in something as from their principals. Thus he said that there exists an abstract man, as also a horse, a dog, etc., from which all individual men, horses, dogs receive their nature, and from which the essence of all of them — which is thus universal and individual — flows down. You can grasp why he thought thus by consulting Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VII, text 10 seq.

§11. From this Platonic view, Aristotle differs in many places — especially *Metaphysics* I, ch. 7; VII, text 15; and XIII, ch. 5. On account of this, many philosophers and Fathers, as if to free Plato from a certain mark of disgrace, have anxiously attempted to vindicate him, and in order to do so, each has sought his own way of escape. Some, such as Iamblichus, Apuleius, Eustratius, Seneca, Bessarion, Acciajolius, Camerarius, Marsilius, and others, think that Plato expressed exemplars as existing in the Divine Mind. Some contend that Plato drew the doctrine of Ideas from Hermes Trismegistus (whom they wish to be an ancient Egyptian king, philosopher, and priest). Others, especially more recent writers, insist that Plato’s mind was so subtle and wise that what was not perceived by the Philosopher [Aristotle] escaped him; or, if it was indeed perceived, it was ill proposed by him, so that he might more cleverly refute it after

Plato's death. Augustine thinks that Aristotle was not able to refute Plato himself concerning the Ideas, but only Xenocrates and the rest of the disciples of Plato of Aristotle's own age — disciples by whom their master was not well understood.

§12. But truly, it is scarcely credible that Aristotle attributed to Plato a doctrine foreign to him — especially since from Plato himself it can be gathered not obscurely that he held the same thing which Aristotle attributes to him concerning the Ideas. For in the *Timaeus* the “master of the discourse” approves understanding and opinion concerning such Ideas beyond sensible things. For he says, in effect: If, when I teach, what understanding is — different from opinion — and what the mind always grasps with reason, whereas opinion wanders irregularly and concerns unstable things, it is necessary that beyond these sensible things there exist other eternal and immutable substances, which the mind alone by itself comprehends according to the reasoning of the *Timaeus*. He also teaches in the same place that Ideas are necessary for the constitution of things. For since matter is altogether formless, it is necessary that there be some perpetual and pure form by which a similar form might be impressed upon matter. Hence he said that the Idea is like a father, matter like a mother, and the form generated in matter like the offspring. See Aristotle, *Questions on the Soul*, 11. Thus Plato was saying in the *Theaetetus* that these exemplars are principles: God, matter, and Ideas. And in the *Timaeus* he says that this world is rather an image of that which is true. Moreover, if by Ideas he had understood exemplars in the divine mind, he would undoubtedly have taught that these earthly things correspond to their Ideas according to reason. But in the *Timaeus* he teaches that they agree not according to reason, but according to name only. Hence the Platonists, having separated our intellect from the separate mind, posited no Idea in that mind except immaterial intelligences. And Plotinus says that the natures of bodily things are called essences only equivocally, and are in no way true essences; but imaginary, generated, and the forms inserted into matter. See D. Horn<sup>2</sup>, *Institutiones Logicae* I, q. 7.

§13. As for what they object against Aristotle — that he did not properly perceive the mind of Plato — I can scarcely persuade myself of it. For a man whose subtle and exact intellect is praised even in the smallest matters could hardly have been so dull as not to understand his own master, in whose school he spent about twenty years. Nor could Aristotle have fastened upon Plato so absurd an opinion without great dishonesty and clear ignorance: for in many places he severely attacks the theory of Ideas. Surely, had he done this unjustly, he would easily have been convicted of manifest slander by Xenocrates or the other disciples and friends of Plato, who held great authority at Athens. What? Moreover, this would have seemed entirely foreign to Aristotle's reverence for his teacher — he who, as the inscription on his statue witnesses, *erected an altar to gratitude*. And he himself testifies in plain words (*Ethics* I, ch. 4) that he leaves Plato with difficulty in this matter. Nor does he strike only at Xenocrates and the other disciples of Plato, as though they had failed to grasp their master's mind. For why, I ask, does he seek pardon, when he is about to dispute against the Ideas, and says that the truth is to be preferred even to a friend — unless for this reason, that he must dissent from the master himself? And the

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<sup>2</sup> I believe this is a reference to Conrad Horneius with a work titled the *Institutionum Logicarum*.

contrary is clearly testified by all the passages of Aristotle. Nor do I wonder that this accusation is laid upon Aristotle, since his detractors assert that he committed an even greater crime — namely, that when the books of many philosophers had been burned or buried in the earth (whence all the manuscripts came into his possession), he claimed the writings of others as his own. But to me this is certainly not credible.

§14. But, whatever may be the case in this matter, the opinion of Plato can in no way be tolerated; and Aristotle most sharply rejects it in the passages cited — let his arguments there be consulted. From many we select a few. Plato's opinion must be rejected: 1) Because he multiplies beings beyond necessity, and invents entities whose existence cannot be proved by any argument. For Plato's arguments drawn from the nature of science prove nothing; nor does it follow that one must introduce Ideas, which Plato himself thinks to be nothing, as the Philosopher clearly shows in the places mentioned. 2) Because it introduces many absurdities. For if Ideas are given, then not only the Idea of man must be given, but also Ideas of animal; and if the latter, then also Ideas of those things that belong to animal: terrestrial, biped, many-footed, etc. And contrary properties will belong to one and the same Idea, since animal has contrary differences. Moreover, Ideas of accidents will have to be granted — those that exist per se — and of relatives; yet Plato denies this. Nor can anything be defined through Ideas, nor can Ideas be predicated of other things, because they are separate from the things. 3) It cannot be understood how Ideas are themselves the essences of singular things, and yet are separated from singulars. For whatever pertains to the essence of a thing must necessarily be in the thing. 4) On the Platonic opinion, it would follow that the same thing is both common and not common: common, because according to Plato every sensible singular participates in its Idea (as all men participate in the Idea of man); not common, because the Idea exists separately in nature. Thus the singular will be something both particular and determinate.

§15. 5) If such a common nature were posited, then either it will be in Socrates and in Plato, or it will not be. If you assert the latter, then it will be nowhere. If you say it is in them, then either it is numerically the same, and consequently Socrates and Plato would be one man in number; or it will be diverse, so that part of it is found in this one and part of it in that one, and so each would participate in a part — and thus the proposition "Plato is a man" would not be true, because he would have only a part of man, but it would have to be expressed thus: "Plato is a part of man," if it were to agree with truth. Or at least many Ideas would have to be posited, which Plato does not do. And, I ask, if Ideas exist, where should we place them? In the concavity of the moon, as some think? Or in the supracelestial place, as others gather from Plato himself? But if they are placed in regions so remote, by what means will they impart knowledge from places so very distant to these sublunary things? Other arguments commonly brought here may be seen in Aristotle and his interpreters.

§16. Therefore it is no wonder that most philosophers flourishing in this age depart from that opinion, who again diverge into different positions. For some hold that universals arise solely through the operation of the intellect, with a foundation in the things themselves going beforehand; on account of which they are said, on the part of the thing, to be universals in

potency, and only through the intellect to become universals in act. Thus the Thomists commonly teach. Others think that the nature existing in individuals is indeed not actually universal, yet nevertheless does not receive from the intellect alone its being actually universal, but is of itself, before every operation of the intellect and before every contraction to individuals—and thus before every existence both in the intellect and in the thing itself—actually universal. This opinion Fonseca attempts to defend at length on *Metaphysics* V, chapter 28, question 1 and the following. Still others assert that the common nature, as it exists in singulars even before the mind's conception, is truly one thing in many, and thus constitutes something actually universal. And this view Montlorinus treats extensively and vigorously defends in his *Treatise on Universals*, chapters 5 and 6; and it is commonly attributed to Scotus in *Sentences* II, distinction 3, questions 1 and 7, and in question 18 (although the authors do not agree in expounding Scotus's opinion—some say that he doubted on this point, others try to refer him to the class of the Conceptualists). All who have committed themselves to his discipline follow him (as *Montlorinus* testifies in the preface to his *Treatise on Universals*). The same position is upheld by Paul of Venice in his *Metaphysical Questions*, by Scaliger against Cardan, and by others.

§17. And we consider this view to be true and most in accordance with Aristotle—namely, the view that universals are not produced by the operation of the mind, but already exist beforehand in things, for they sufficiently possess in themselves both community and unity. This position, for the sake of free inquiry, we shall for the present maintain and defend. We prove it: 1) From the nature of a whole. For since the universal is itself a sort of whole, which contains many things as its parts (*Physics* I, chapter 2)—as even the etymology shows—the nature of a whole ought likewise to belong to it. But every whole exists actually in its parts; therefore genera and species will actually exist in individuals. And just as a whole needs no external aid in order to be a whole—nor is it necessary that someone abstract it from its parts and by means of that abstraction give it the nature of a whole; rather, without any abstraction it is one in its parts and the parts are in it—so also a universal requires no foreign help by which, being elevated, it may take on a universal nature, nor does it need any external comparison or abstraction of the intellect that would make it universal. Otherwise, the parts would exist outside the intellect while the whole exists in the intellect, and thus the whole would exist outside its parts—a contradiction.

§18. 2) Since things and beings, *On Interpretation* chapter 7 and *Prior Analytics* I.27 (29), are said to be of two kinds—some singular, others universal—it is thereby inferred that universality does not come from the intellect, but from the things themselves, insofar as they are in individuals; otherwise the things themselves could not be called universal. Certainly the parts of the same division must be of the same nature. But how, I ask, will things and beings be divided into universals and singulars if universals are beings of reason while singulars are real beings? 3) Aristotle defines a universal as that which is one and common, which is naturally apt to be present in many and predicated of them (*On Interpretation* c. 7; *Posterior Analytics* I.5; *Metaphysics* VII.13). A universal, therefore, is one and common in many; therefore according to Aristotle it has its unity and community insofar as it is in many. For just as it is common, so it is

one. But it is common insofar as it exists in singulars prior to any operation of the mind. Therefore it will also be one insofar as it exists in singulars. You will say: Everything that is, i.e. exists, is singular. I reply: Everything that exists simply and absolutely is singular; but the universal does not exist absolutely—it exists in many. And just as it has being, so it also has one being; that is, just as it is an entity, so it is also one. But it does not have simple being, but being in many, and in many it has one being.

§19. 4) A common nature is universal; and by its definition universals are defined, not singulars (*Metaphysics* VII.15). But real things themselves are defined—that is, the essence of the things themselves is explained by the definition, not merely the concept. Therefore that common nature which constitutes the universal actually will be in the things, not in the concept. 5) Of the actual universal there is demonstration and scientific knowledge. But this knowledge is without doubt about the things themselves, not about mere concepts of things. Therefore the universal as such will exist in the things themselves. 6) If universals are not in things but are given only in the intellect, then things themselves will not agree or differ in genus or species except insofar as they are apprehended by the intellect; and that unity or difference, whether generic or specific, will be made and constituted by the abstraction of the mind. But this is absurd—that a human being and a lion, for example, would *per se*, prior to every operation of the mind, not be one in genus; and that Socrates and Plato would not be one in species. For the mind does not impose that generic and specific unity or difference, and therefore universality; rather, the mind only conceives and apprehends what is observed in the things. Nor will the matter be helped by saying that only “uniformity in many” exists in things, for that uniformity in many is itself essential unity, and a real agreement on the part of the thing.

§20. 7) If universals are not in things but are produced only by the intellect, then they are concepts and notions of the intellect. Therefore when genus and species as such are predicated of singulars, it will not be things predicated of things, but notions and concepts predicated of things. But how will concepts be predicated essentially and *in quid* of things existing outside the mind? How will that which is not present in things be affirmed univocally of them? Will that which is essential to things existing outside the intellect be constituted only by the intellect? Will the intellect give to things outside itself their essence? I do not believe so. If you say that genus and species exist outside the intellect only potentially, then genus and species will be predicated potentially of individuals which exist actually. Therefore that which is only potential would express the essence of those things which are actual. Which cannot stand, as anyone understands.

§21. According to Aristotle’s doctrine, the universal ought to be perpetual, always and everywhere (*Posterior Analytics* I.2). But if it were made by the mind, it would lie in our power and depend upon our choice, and thus would be unstable and uncertain—so that, when the operation of the mind ceased, it would cease to exist. Aristotle teaches that the universal is perpetual, not because it exists separately somewhere from eternity, as Plato thought, nor because it has its essence in the human intellect, but because—even though a vast multitude of human beings, for example, has lived, lives now, and will still live—the human nature in all of them has one and the same essence, and thus is perpetual, immutable, and always perseveres in the same

state. Other reasons which Monlorius accumulates here we omit for the sake of brevity. That Aristotle held the position which we are defending no one will deny who has considered (1) the definitions of the universal previously cited. For there Aristotle teaches that the whole nature of the universal consists in this: that it is one in many, and that it has an aptitude for being in many, and thus is common to many. When he says that it is one in many, he thereby determines where universals are to be sought—not in the intellect, to be sure, but in singulars: namely, that species are in individuals, and that, by means of species, genera also inhere in singulars. Nor does he anywhere, when defining the nature of the universal, make mention of the intellect or its operation, nor does he require for the notion of the universal any other unity or community than the unity and community of essence, insofar as it is in many or can be in many. He nowhere demands some abstract unity or community which the intellect would afterwards produce for the notion of universality.

§22. The same is evident from Aristotle's entire treatment and disputation on universals. For the ancient philosophers asked whether there was something in things of which science, and thus firm and most certain knowledge, could be had. Since they saw that all singulars in these sublunary things are in flux and perishable, some abolished all science altogether, as was seen above. Plato, for this reason, invented Ideas, separated from things and eternal, about which there might be definition, science, and demonstration. But if Aristotle, as though intending to arbitrate this dispute, had taught that in these mortal things there is no universal, perpetual, and stable reality of which science can be had, but that it becomes such by our intellect, would he not rather have deserved laughter than assent from those philosophers (as Monlorius says)? For they were seeking such a universal as would be one in many, perpetual and immutable, even when we are asleep and doing nothing; whereas he would have attributed to our intellect the giving of this universality, constancy, and perpetuity to the thing itself.

§23. Aristotle, therefore, in defending science and demonstration against the Heracliteans and rejecting Plato's Ideas, affirms that a stable and perpetual universal is given in the singulars themselves. Hence in *Posterior Analytics* I.5 he replies to Plato as follows:

“Therefore, that species should exist as something one besides the many is not necessary if there is to be demonstration; but it is necessary to say truly that there is one of many. For it will not be universal unless this is so; and unless it is universal, there will be no middle term, and therefore no demonstration. It is necessary, then, that one and the same thing be in many, and not equivocally.”

Here he plainly teaches that the universal of which there is science and demonstration is given in the things themselves—namely, that which has one and the same nature and essence in all, and thus is not equivocal.

§24. Nor do those things which are adduced from Aristotle in support of the contrary position overturn this constant doctrine of his. They cite a passage from *De Anima* II.5, where he says that universals are in the soul in a certain manner. But this is not to be understood as though

the soul makes universals; rather, universals are in the soul in a certain way, because the universals themselves are not in the soul—as Simplicius observes there—but their species are, just as Aristotle himself says in book III, chapter 8, that the stone is not in the soul, but the notion of the stone. They consider most compelling that passage found in *De Anima* I.1: τὸ ζῷον τὸ καθόλου ἢ οὐδέν ἐστιν ἢ ὕστερον—“the animal which is universal either is nothing, or is posterior.” They explain this passage thus: that the universal animal is either nothing, because it does not exist in the nature of things, or is posterior, because it is posterior by an operation of the mind, being gathered from singulars and thus formed by the mind. And indeed this passage of Aristotle is most difficult, and we admit that here you will find almost as many interpreters as interpretations.

§25. But one obscure passage, harassed by so many interpretations, cannot and ought not to detract from the light of other passages in which he explains the nature of the universal. Moreover, even this passage, when rightly explained, does not favor the Conceptualists. For, first, Aristotle is not speaking here of the universal simply, but proposes only a special example: “τὸ ζῷον τὸ καθόλου,” he says—“the animal which is universal.” It is well known that examples are not always proposed with full precision, but are sometimes used merely for purposes of illustration. Second, the explanation of this passage seems to many to be different from that which Alexander of Aphrodisias and the Greek interpreters of Aristotle assert—namely, that the Philosopher here is not speaking of a true universal, but of that which is predicated according to priority and posteriority. For Aristotle there inquires whether there is one definition of soul, as of animal, or whether each soul has its own definition distinct from others, as that of horse, dog, man, or God—all of which cannot be explained by one single univocal definition. He adds: “For the universal animal is either nothing or posterior,” where he takes “animal” in a broad sense, as applying to horse, dog, man, and God alike—just as the Platonists also called God and even the heaven ζῷον, as Porphyry does in the *Isagoge*, and as Aristotle in *Metaphysics* XI (XII), chapter 7, describes God as ζῷον αἰδίων ἄριστον (“an eternal and most excellent living being”), although Simplicius and other interpreters think that in this controversial passage Aristotle understands by “God” the heaven itself. Thus Aristotle rightly pronounces that τὸ ζῷον, which is said to be universal when taken in this way, is either nothing insofar as it signifies one nature common to all simultaneously, but is only a common name; or, if it is anything, it will be such as belongs to many according to priority and posteriority—to one primarily, to another secondarily. But such things are not universals in the strict sense, because either they have nothing in common or very little, as the Philosopher says in *Politics* III.1 and *Metaphysics* III.3. Hence the Platonists posited no Ideas of such things, as Aristotle relates in *Ethics* I.6. See further Monlorius, *Tractatus de Universalibus*, chapter 9; Zabarella, commentary on *De Anima* I; and others.

§26. But what, when this passage is thus explained, does it contain in favor of the constitution of the universal by an operation of the mind? Absolutely nothing. Nor is there here any mention of the intellect, but only of those things which are common either simply or according to priority and posteriority—something which the following words also indicate. Likewise, it follows that something else is predicated in consequence, i.e. that the universal

animal is either nothing or posterior, or that something else common is predicated. For why should he call necessity that they be predicated in a certain way as common, although they are not universals in the strict sense? Nor should anyone be surprised that Aristotle in the same passage used the word “animal” twice, in different senses, by way of example; for this is not uncommon in examples, which are often taken even from the opinion of others, indeed sometimes are assumed to be altogether fictitious or false, as Zabarella rightly observes on this passage. To the other things which are here adduced in opposition, Monlorius has already replied.

§27. But here also certain arguments of the contrary opinion must be dissolved, although most of them have already been answered by Monlorius in *De Universalibus*, chapter 8. Suárez, *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, disputation VI, section V, no. 3, presses especially this point: that the universal is in reality apt to be the same in many, insofar as this is necessarily taken into the notion of the universal, yet that it is not in reality in the nature itself, but through the intellect. He proves this as follows: a nature has universality before the intellect; therefore either in individuals or in itself. But not in individuals, nor in one only, since in that case it would be individuated and determined to one; nor in many simultaneously, for then one nature could be universal even if it were repeated in one individual without another—since the property of such an event, namely to exist in many individuals, does not belong to the nature taken in itself, nor in any of them apart from the mere multitude of individuals; if it were taken in itself, it would be in that in which universality does not consist. Nor can universality belong to the nature as proceeding from individuals except through the intellect; because if such a nature were taken as existing in the thing itself, not proceeding from the nature of the thing from individuals, then the nature would be so received in individuals as has been shown; but if the nature does not thus exist in itself, it cannot be conceived, because this belongs to the nature of a thing—that it is not such unless it has that which is posited in the intellect, since it does not have it really, nor is it distinguished even according to possible or objective being by the nature of the thing from individuals considered in the same state.

§28. Nor is any precision or abstraction from individuals by the intellect required here in order that the universal be constituted in being; unity and community in many suffice for universality. For that which is abstracted as a universal and exists in the intellect is outside the many, and is some singular notion in the mind—for example, existing in the mind of Plato. But Aristotle acknowledges no universal outside the many. It is one thing, for example, animal or man insofar as it is in many individuals—for thus it is common and universal; another insofar as it is in one individual—for thus it is contracted to one thing. And this diversity, which certainly is not merely of reason but is given in the thing itself, is sufficient to distinguish the universal from singulars. The other argument of Suárez which he proposes in the cited place is easily solved if one distinguishes between that which belongs to the nature of the universal insofar as it is universal—i.e. formally, and *in quid*—and that which belongs to it materially, i.e. insofar as it is a thing. In the former sense it is not to be admitted that whatever belongs to the universal *per se* insofar as it is universal also belongs to all singulars, although in the latter sense it must be

conceded that whatever belongs *per se* to the universal also belongs to all singulars. Now that community and aptitude for being in many indeed belong to the universal *per se*, because they pertain to its definition; but insofar as it is universal, and thus formally so considered, these cannot be attributed to individual singulars.

§29. Others argue against Monlorius as follows: Whatever is in some singular is here and now, namely here, where the singular is, and now, when the singular is. But being here and now is a mark of individuality; therefore whatever is here and now is always singular and cannot be universal. Response: Whatever is in one singular is wholly here and now, and thus singular. But the universal, insofar as it is universal, is not wholly in one singular, but is in many—indeed in all singulars of the same nature, which are, have been, and will be. Therefore, insofar as it is universal, it is not here and now, except *per accidens*, insofar as the singulars in which it exists are here and now. Hence universals as such are neither generated nor corrupted, except *per accidens*, insofar as the singulars in which they exist are generated and corrupted. You will say: The universal is wholly in each singular. But what is wholly in one cannot be in another. Reply: A distinction must be made between the universal considered according to its definition and the universal considered according to its universality. If it is considered in the former way, it is wholly in all; otherwise it could not be predicated essentially of them. Thus the entire definition of animal belongs to all animals. But if it is considered in the latter way, the universal is not wholly in one, because it belongs to its nature to be in many.

§30. You will say: universals in singulars do not have sufficient unity and community; therefore universals are not in singulars. They do not have unity, for the unity of the universal is the unity of a whole; therefore it implies its parts, which here are the specific difference or the species. But the universal in a singular does not have its parts, neither actually nor potentially. Not actually, because those differences are opposed and therefore cannot exist simultaneously in act. Nor potentially, because in fact, when the universal is conjoined with one of its differences in a singular—e.g. human nature with the individual difference of Peter—the presence of the act removes the potency to that act. Nor does it have community, because this can be explained only by indifference toward many, or by an aptitude for being in many. But these do not belong to the universal insofar as it is in a thing, because in that case the universal is restricted to the singular, and thus cannot be indifferent. Response: (1) That universals in singulars have sufficient unity and community is shown at length by Monlorius in *De Unione*, chapters 4, 5, and 6; and his arguments (although not all are equally strong) have not yet been adequately answered. (2) From this reasoning it would follow that the universal is not even potentially in things, since it is said that it does not have its parts in singulars even potentially.

§31. (3) The universal, insofar as it is in things, has its parts altogether actually. For the singulars themselves are its parts, which it contains and in which it exists, just as every whole exists in its parts and not outside them (as the universal would be in the mind). A distinction must again be made here between the universal as such, insofar as it is common to many—in this sense it is not repugnant to it to have opposed differences and species, just as one whole can have opposed parts, and in this sense it is indifferent to this or that singular, because it is not restricted

precisely to one—and the nature of the universal as situated in some one singular and contracted to it by individual differences. In this latter sense it is not common and not indifferent. The opposing arguments speak of the latter respect; here, however, the question concerns the former. The same point can be clarified by an example. The form of a table is indifferent to many tables, and yet it is found in some one table. But this does not prevent it from also being applicable to the rest of the tables, since this one is individual; but in its genus the form of table can be found in many. Thus what is compared with the universal—for example man (that is, human nature), insofar as it is in Peter, is not in Paul, for in this way it is contracted to one singular and is itself singular. From this it does not follow that *man*, considered as a universal, cannot exist in many.

§32. You will say: Man of himself, that is, in formal unity, is not indeed determined to be Peter, but is indifferent to several human suppositis; but when man is taken as concurring with some individual difference, then he is no longer something indifferent to being Peter and other men. Response: This is precisely what we maintain: that man, as universal, is indifferent, but not insofar as he is restricted to Peter. Thus in this respect they agree with us, and even unwillingly utter the truth. Other objections raised to the contrary we reserve for later discussion.

§33. The opinion of Fonseca, however, involves itself in contradiction, as Suárez rightly says (*Disputationes Metaphysicae* XVII, sect. 3, n. 3), that he does not sufficiently understand what sort of unity can belong to a nature prior to the intellect and yet never be able to belong to it in the lower instances, that is, in singulars existing in reality. Unless Fonseca means this in such a way that the nature of the universal as such is not considered insofar as it is contracted to this or that singular, but insofar as it is indifferent to all singulars. And in this way the opinion can be tolerated and agrees with the former. But from this it does not follow that the universal is not in many singulars, even though as such it is not restricted to one. But let the Scholastics agree among themselves on these matters; for us it is enough to have explained the Aristotelian truth.

§34. From what has been discussed so far it is easy to see that the question τί ἐστὶ, what a universal is, simply and absolutely so called, is this: namely, that it is something one and common, which exists in many and consequently is also apt to be predicated of many. See *On Interpretation* ch. 7 (5); *Metaphysics* VII, ch. 13; *Prior Analytics* I, ch. 8; *Parts of Animals* I, ch. 1. Therefore, two things are required for a universal: 1) that it be one and common—one, that is, indivisible by reason (that is, undivided according to reason), though not one in number; and common, which can be explained by one definition (for otherwise, by one numerical unity many middle terms of the same account would follow: *Metaphysics* V, ch. 6). By this unity, which they call formal and holistic, it is said to be one, even though it is understood by the intellect as existing among individuals. This one-and-common must be so not merely according to name. For in that way even purely equivocal things are common, and not only those which are so by analogy or according to prior and posterior. For analogates and things said *pros hen* are not universals absolutely so called, but are one only in name, not in reality and essence together; whereas universals are one both in name and in thing, that is, univocally, as is explained more fully elsewhere.

§ 35. 2) It must be apt to exist in many, that is, to inhere in many. For even if only two individuals of a species existed, that would not be repugnant to the universal, since it is that which can exist in many; although that which is actually and simply predicable, and thus actually a universal, is that which actually exists in many. By “many” are understood singulars, in which the universal inheres immediately and not through intervening genera. It inheres, moreover, as a whole in its parts, such that it can be predicated univocally and *in quid* of many, and thus can be said of the many as one thing—according to the Scholastics—and can be named by the same name in a univocal sense. Thus human nature is in Socrates, and is multiplied according to Aristotle, so that from it many men may be said to exist. And so the Divine Essence, although (as theology teaches) it is common to several Persons, is nevertheless not universal, because by the one number of the three persons it is not multiplied so that many gods could be said to exist, but rather it is most singular.

§36. From this it is clear that a universal is not one as one man, and therefore it is not required that it be in one subject—for example, in a single mind—but that it be in many things. If this is observed, it will not be difficult at all to understand how universal unity is found in things themselves outside the intellect. For since the universal exists only in many outside the intellect, it is also one and predicable of many outside the intellect, that is, it is something which can be predicated of many. But if it must actually be predicated, it is necessary that it first be conceived by the intellect and then expressed by speech; therefore, even if it is a universal, it becomes universal in this respect only insofar as it enters into a proposition or enunciation. From these points other related questions arise.

§37. From this the questions are also resolved without difficulty: (1) whether a universal can exist or be preserved in a single singular; (2) whether a universal, actually such insofar as it is a universal, requires several singulars. A universal will exist in potency even in one singular, if it is not repugnant that several such singulars exist, or if that one can produce several others; then a universal can exist really in one singular in potency, as in plants, where many can arise from one. In other animals, however, which are generated only from male and female, such a species will certainly not be preserved in one individual, since it cannot produce others like itself. From what has been said it is also clear that when all singulars perish, the universals themselves cease to exist. For those things which have their being in singulars cannot remain when all their parts have perished, just as a whole cannot remain when all its parts have been destroyed. Hence in the *Categories*, in the chapter on substance, it is said that when primary substances are removed, nothing of the secondary substances remains. Nor does Plato’s statement hinder this (*Posterior Analytics* I, ch. 31 [22]): “What is one and wholly universal is perishable, just as what is spoken of is said to be universal.” Although this passage is explained in various ways, the best interpretation seems to be that of those who say that universals are everlasting and everywhere, insofar as they have one and the same essential notion and essence, immutable and perpetual—namely, not that they are eternal or everywhere as subsisting things, or that they remain when singulars have perished, but that they are always and everywhere in the same way in singulars, insofar as there are singulars in which they inhere. For although singulars exist, the

universals are the same; they do not exist per se, but exist in singulars. In this sense, they too are eternal. Compare Monlorius, *Treatise on Universals*, ch. 10.

§38. From this, too, the questions perpetually raised are easily resolved. (1) If it is asked whether genera and species consist in things themselves or are placed only in bare notions of the mind, we affirm the former—and this runs counter to Porphyry. (2) As to the question whether they are bodies or without bodies: if body itself is a genus or species of certain substances—as, for example, material substance—then some universals will be bodies; but they are not bodies as subsisting things, that is, as singulars. Rather, body here signifies a common nature which is in many corporeal substances, which for that reason are called bodies. As they exist, so they are bodies; they are in many, and thus are bodies in many. But since universals are found in every category, who would say that all universals are bodies? (3) To the question whether universals are separated from sensible and singular things, as Platonic Ideas would be, or whether they consist in the things themselves: the answer is ready at hand—the former must be denied, the latter affirmed. Other questions which the Scholastics are accustomed to heap up here—about the unity, commonness, and aptitude of universals for existing in many, and how they are made by the intellect, by which power and through which operation, whether they are beings of reason, and the like—we willingly pass over, both because for the most part they are more thorny than useful, and because many of them flow from the position of the conceptualists, already refuted above. For the time being, see Suarez, *Metaphysical Disputations* VI, sects. 3, 5, 6; the Conimbricenses on certain questions in the preface to Porphyry; Fonseca on *Metaphysics* V, ch. 28; and Murcius on Porphyry, distinction II.

§39. Concerning the number of universals, and the arguments by which it is proved, people are often greatly concerned—whether there are five universals, or more, or fewer. We, however, find in Aristotle no universals absolutely and strictly so called beyond genus and species. For these alone can be predicated of many univocally, essentially, and *in quid*, which is required for the notion of a universal. And indeed, when universal is opposed to singular, genera and species are meant; for singulars are subordinated to universals, and both are placed in the same straight predicamental line (as they speak), where nothing is found except genera, species, and individuals. Differences, properties, and accidents, however, are predicated of universals and singulars; indeed accidents belong most of all to singulars. How, then, could they be universals? Otherwise, if someone wishes to speak broadly and to call universal whatever can be predicated of many, we do not object if he establishes five or even more universals. But in this way neither Plato with the ancient philosophers, nor Aristotle, spoke of universals absolutely so called. Moreover, Porphyry himself proposes his questions in the proem only concerning genera and species. But here the scope of our inquiry bids us rest.