

## SUÁREZ ON MATERIAL SUBSTANCE. REIFICATION OF INTRINSIC PRINCIPLES AND THE UNITY OF MATERIAL COMPOSITES

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**ABSTRACT:** In this paper I present Suárez's conception on material substance in connection with two main aspects of his theory. The first aspect is "reification" of the intrinsic principles of a composite, which has led some interpreters to the claim that Suárez significantly prepared the way for the accession of Cartesian anthropological dualism. The second one is Suárez's emphasis on the substantial unity of material composites. The analysis of the second aspect is conceived as a counterbalance to some uncharitable interpretations of Suárez's hylemorphism. In the second part of the paper the relevance of Suárez's arguments to contemporary debates on the ontological constitution of individuals is presented.

**KEYWORDS:** material substance, matter, form, reification, substantial unity.

It is often said (usually by Thomists) that Suárez's version of hylemorphism is unable to account for the substantial unity of material composites, and that this inevitably leads to Cartesian anthropological dualism (López 2006, 14 – 16), or at least to a preparation for the rejection of the matter-form structure in inorganic beings (Junk 1938, 21). This highly undesirable consequence is attributed to a certain "substantialization" or "reification" of both intrinsic principles of a composite (Heider 2005a; Kronen 2000b). Suárez's "part-like" view of matter and substantial form is thought to be the main cause of the mutual "alienation" of those intrinsic principles (López 2006, 16). It is his false understanding of being, these Thomists say, that is the metaphysical root of Suárez's failure to realize that those intrinsic causes are not parts (let alone incomplete things), but only principles (themselves requiring no explanation) that are primarily posited to explain how a material being is generated (Ewbank 1987, 106).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This is why Joseph Bobik interprets Aquinas' juvenile *De principiis naturae* not as *De Principiis Rerum Naturalium* but as *De principiis Generationis*. The emphasis on "how" and on the nature understood as "naturing process" is apparent (Bobik 1998, 12 – 14).

Being is not for Suárez an unlimited and dynamical actuality that is – as a metaphysical *principle* – really different from its limiting subject, i.e. essence. Rather, he thinks, being is built into the essences themselves. Thus, Thomists say, Suárez is constrained to abandon the ontological depth of the act-potency scheme, in favor of a view in which all principles are viewed as parts or as incomplete substances (Knight 1962). In this paper I will not dwell on the fundamental question of Suárez’s concept of being and its implications for his specific interpretation of hylemorphism, even though at the end of the paper it will be shown that the concept of being is the important determinant for Suárez’s emphasis on the substantial unity. Rather, I shall show that Suárez’s hylemorphic doctrine in *no* way neglects the regulative idea of the substantial unity of which his doctrine is often accused. Ignoring the manifest methodological importance of the concept of the unity in Suárez’s reasoning about material substances leads to crude misinterpretation of Suárez’s doctrine of a material substance in general.<sup>2</sup>

The paper will be divided into four parts. Firstly, I present Suárez’s idiosyncratic definitions of matter and form. Secondly, some implications of the given definitions will be presented. Thirdly, I give a brief account of Suárez’s definition of *per se* unity. Lastly, I show that in spite of his idiosyncratic understanding of intrinsic causes Suárez is able to safeguard the substantial unity of composite substances. In the course of my argument I shall give some examples of Suárez’s arguments for the uniqueness of substantial form, arguments that in my opinion are relevant to the contemporary discussion of the ontological nature of individuals.

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In his twelfth Metaphysical Disputation called „On causes of being in general“ Suárez quotes Aristotle’s definition of matter as that “that from which, as from something innate, a thing comes to be” (*id ex quo insito fit aliquid*) (DM 12, 3, 3).<sup>3</sup> By the phrase saying “from which” the material cause is distinguished from any other cause; by the phrase “as from

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<sup>2</sup> The present work on Suárez’s theory of substance has been inspired by a series of valuable papers on the topic by John Kronen.

<sup>3</sup> Suárez’s *Metaphysical Disputations* will be quoted as follows: DM x (the disputation number), y (the section number), z (the paragraph number), p (the page number).

something innate" (*insito*) matter is contrasted with privation. The classical definition seems to be rather unproblematic for Suárez, but is merely general and preliminary. After proving the existence of non-sensible and non-corporeal prime matter, he offers a more precise but historically more questionable "definition" of prime matter (DM 13, 4 - 5). Not discriminating essential and existential being, "the Eximious Doctor" advances the thesis that prime matter in and of itself possesses a simple entity - whether in the order of essence, or in the order of existence; it is well-known that Suárez denies any real distinction between those two orders and that this repudiation is the main factor of his idiosyncratic concept of hylemorphism. In any case, in the thirteenth Disputation he advances two main arguments for the thesis that matter possesses some sort of simple entity. One of these may be called the argument "from the numerical identity of matter in substantial change" and the other may be called the argument "from the distinction between subjective and objective potency".<sup>4</sup>

In his more precise definition of prime matter, Suárez says that prime matter is not pure potency in every respect. It is pure potency insofar as it is in itself entirely deprived of the so-called informing (absolute) act, but insofar as it is *not* deprived of the so-called *entitative* (metaphysical) act, it is not pure potency. The entitative act is not an act absolutely but only *secundum quid*, i.e. only in relation to matter's specific function. That act does not provide matter with any sortal mark, but only enables it to perform its receptive function. To avoid an infinite regress Suárez of course has to posit that prime matter is not composed of any other, physically different, matter and form. Its composition is at most metaphysical. However, this metaphysical composition, and in consequence also metaphysical form and metaphysical matter, do not constitute a real composition, but only a conceptual composition. The metaphysical or logical form and the metaphysical or logical matter are form and matter only metaphorically (DM 15, 11, 1).

He initially describes substantial form as "an intrinsic cause giving being to a thing" (DM 12, 3, 3). Due to this definition's Thomistic overtones, he later replaces it with a new one (Kronen 2000a, 10 - 11). Ac-

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<sup>4</sup> In order for generation and corruption not to become creation and annihilation, one has to assume the numerical persistence of the subject through change (the first argument). While prime matter as the receptive potency is created, the objective potency as a *possible* being is only a term of the divine knowledge (cf. the second argument).

According to the new definition the substantial form is “a simple and incomplete substance which, as the act of matter, constitutes with it the essence of a composite substance” (DM 15, 5, 1). Like prime matter, a substantial form is a *simple* substance that differs, as a part, from its composite. Being *the act of matter* it is different from separated substances, or from the “separated intelligences” that move the celestial bodies. As a *substance*, it is dissimilar to accidental forms and substantial modes.<sup>5</sup> It is apparent that the second definition is considerably different from the first one. While according to the first definition it is the form that channels the act of being into matter and thus is “the giver” of being not only to a composite but also to matter as such, the second definition does not support this claim. On that definition form is only the complement of the being of a composite. It does not bestow complete substantial being on a material composite, because it does not give being to matter (DM 15, 8, 7). Prime matter gets its own being directly from the divine efficiency (DM 13, 4, 15).

Although prime matter bears an intrinsic and transcendental relation to its substantial form, it enjoys a certain ontological independence from it. For Suárez the ontological “density” of prime matter justifies the claim that even material substantial forms (e.g. the forms of brutes) can remain in being without any informing by matter. Even though such a state of affairs is not possible naturally, it is possible logically and supernaturally (DM 15, 9, 5). The main reason for this is based on the Catholic faith, and may be stated as follows: if we agree that God in the Eucharist can conserve accidents independently of its substance, *a fortiori* we have to grant that He can conserve a substance’s matter independently of its substantial form. Accidents are much more ontologically dependent on a substance than *substantial* matter on *substantial* form. The thesis that the substance’s prime matter cannot be preserved, even by the divine absolute power, without the inherence, in that matter, of the substantial form must be rejected by Suárez for several reasons. The main reason, already mentioned, is his rejection of the thesis that all existence is channeled by form, and thus that form is the intrinsic and essential cause of existence. Even though the substantial form completes and perfects the substance’s matter insofar as it constitutes that matter as part of a composite, it is not

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<sup>5</sup> Suárez as “a modist” introduces to his metaphysics the concept of a mode. Of primary interest, for our purposes, is the substantial mode of the unification of the substance’s prime matter with its substantial form.

the intrinsic principle of that matter's existence. Even though a substance's prime matter depends on the substantial form, that merely natural dependence is not as intrinsic as to *a priori* exclude any possibility of the substitution of a supernatural action for the substance's formal cause.

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Leaving aside the general features of the philosophy of nature in which Suárez is in agreement not only with Thomists but also with the broad stream of the Aristotelian-Scholastic tradition, one can expect some other "non-trivial" particular agreement between Suárez and the Thomists on the subject of intrinsic causes. Such agreement can be observed on various levels. Suárez and the major stream of Thomists both consider a material composite as the adequate and the proper effect of its matter and form (DM 13, 7, 2; DM 15, 7, 2). Both are adamant that, at least for material and formal causes, not every cause has to be more perfect than its effect (DM 15, 7, 10). The claim that material forms are not created by God but are educed from the potency of the pre-existing matter is another common thesis (DM 15, 2, 13). Both explicitly acknowledge that immaterial forms are directly created by God and inserted into the potency of matter (DM 15 2, 10). Both grant that the form's and the matter's principle of causation is simply their own entity. It is impossible to introduce any distinction between their principal and their proximate "ratio" of causation (*principale et proximum principium causandi*), i.e. between their entity and their power (DM 13, 8, 3; DM 15, 6, 2). No accident or mode is allowed to enter the matter's and form's causal agency, because the substantial unity of a composite would be compromised thereby (DM 13, 8, 5; DM 15, 6, 2).<sup>6</sup> Both major streams of scholasticism seem far from denying that their causality is anything other than their union (DM 15, 6, 7).

Nevertheless, there are important differences between the two camps. These differences are based on Suárez's idiosyncratic definitions of the intrinsic causes of substance, and come to the fore when we consider the quasi-extrinsic nature of these causes. The first difference consists in

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<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless one has to distinguish between the principal and the proximate "ratio" of causality on the one hand, and the so-called first and second act of that causality on the other hand. Even if Suárez denies the first distinction as inherent in matter and form, he agrees, consistently with his "reification" of the intrinsic principles, that the first act, namely the aptitude to cause, and the very physical informing are really distinguished.

Suárez's "modism". Unlike the Thomists, Suárez believes in a substantial mode of unification, which can be seen as the consequence of a certain "dichotomization" of his hylemorphism. The immediate union of those extremes does not mean the *a priori* exclusion of the substantial mode of unification, which is *ex natura rei* different from both extremes. Like the matter and the form, the mode is also individuated intrinsically by itself (DM 5, 6, 14). The essence of Peter's soul is not metaphysically determined by its relationship to his body. Peter's soul can be connected to another body without ceasing to be Peter's soul (DM 5, 6, 6).<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, Suárez's peculiar interpretation of intrinsic causes highlights a disagreement with the Thomists over the conditions that matter and form must satisfy in order to exercise causal agency. The first such necessary condition, for Suárez, is existence: neither matter nor form can be causally active without existing (DM 15, 6, 3). The Thomist objection that the being of matter (not just the informed matter!) intrinsically depends on that of the substantial form must be, as we have already seen, discarded as non-Suarezian. The second condition, which is not peculiar to Suárez, is the spatial proximity of matter and form (DM 15, 6, 4); if they were not spatially proximate, Suárez says, not even God could give them causal agency.<sup>8</sup> As the last condition Suárez mentions the existence of the appropriate dispositions of the matter. But this, as might be easily anticipated from the rather robust ontological density of matter, is necessary not absolutely, but only naturally. Distinguishing natural and metaphysical potency Suárez alleges that if God can conserve matter denuded of its form then no accidents and dispositions can be logically necessary condition for the introduction of the substantial form to the denuded matter (DM 15, 6, 5). A consequence that some would consider mind-boggling is that God can bring it about that the human soul informs e.g. the body of a dog.

Suárez, like many other scholastics, accepts the well-known causal axiom that causes can be mutual causes (*causae esse sibi invicem causae*), which, applied to our case, means that form makes matter, and matter makes form, each in its own order of causality (DM 15, 8). However,

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<sup>7</sup> It is in consonance with Suárez's opinion that the chief principle (not the adaequate one!) of being and individuation is substantial form (DM 5, 6, 16).

<sup>8</sup> At the same time Suárez warns the reader that the second condition need not be taken as the very *ratio* of causality, because spatial proximity does not necessarily imply intimate union.

Suárez has his own interpretation of the axiom, in accordance with his own definition of the intrinsic causes. As a preliminary note to his comparisons of these causes, Suárez presents a twofold distinction of the criterion of each comparison. Causes in a single thing (not causes in general) can be mutual either with respect to a single aspect (*secundum idem*), or with respect to different aspects (*secundum diversa*). If they are mutual in the first sense, i.e. with respect to a single aspect, then each cause causes the other's being; this can be called symmetrical causal reciprocity. If the causes are mutual according to different aspects, then if one is the cause of the other's being, the other is still the cause of the first cause, but only with respect to some added perfection. This second form of causal reciprocity thus can be labeled asymmetrical (DM 27, 2, 3). Even though Suárez is convinced that the matter and the material form (not the immaterial one!) are mutual causes in the symmetrical sense, he adds the important qualification that their symmetry is not absolute. What does he mean by this? This much, at any rate, is clear: material forms (e.g. form of brutes) are caused by matter, because they are produced *from* matter and are carried *in* matter. Thus it may be noted that matter is the cause of the material form absolutely. Although we may admit that form is somehow the cause of matter (it is the cause of the *informed* matter), it is not the cause of matter absolutely: as we have seen, matter depends on a form only *a posteriori*, i.e. "conditionally". That is why we must conclude that their mutual causation is asymmetrical rather than symmetrical (DM 27, 2, 4).

One of the important implications of the "reification" of the intrinsic causes – and it is a thorn in the Thomist's eye – concerns the material causation of accidents. If matter is equipped with an entitative act, we would expect it to be as well capable of serving on its own as the material cause of the accident of quantity. If it were pure potency in every respect, it would not have enough "ontological density" to be the bearer of such accidents. But if, on its own, it can be the bearer of quantity, it comes dangerously near the Cartesian *res extensa* (López 2006, 16). That said, however, one should not skip over the following important Suarezian appendix. He says that the just-mentioned inherence of quantity in matter is *not* something occurring outside the substantial composite. To make his thesis more precise, and at the same time "weaker", he claims that, as a matter of fact, it is the composite that receives quantity, though the reason of that reception is the matter. Analogously it may be

said that whereas it is the whole man who is denominated to be intellectual, the reason of that denomination is a soul (DM 14, 3, 36). In a similar vein, another interesting implication of the “reification” of matter is Suárez’s thesis, which he labels probable, that in the course of substantial transmutation the accidents of a corrupted substance remain numerically identical (DM 14, 3, 38). It is unnecessary to stress how fundamentally this claim differs from the classical Thomistic teaching.

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Leaving aside all the other admittedly important, yet relatively minor, idiosyncratic details of Suárez’s hylemorphism, we will now briefly present his fundamental typology of the various kinds of unity. It is precisely this typology that is one of the main determinants of Suárez’s reasoning concerning the essential unity of a material substance. In his treatment of transcendental unity Suárez distinguishes two main Aristotelian types of unity, sc. unity *per se* and unity *per accidens*. Suárez defines unity *per se* not “existentially”, in terms of a single substantial act of being, but “essentially”. Essential unity is a unity which possesses all that is necessary for having one integral and complete essence (DM 4, 3, 4). The complete essence is not only had by simple beings, e.g. subsistent forms or accidents as well, but also by composite beings. However, those beings must be composed only of incomplete essences that are naturally ordained to the constitution of substantial nature. As we have seen above, those incomplete essences are form and matter, which compose an entity that is one in its own genus (DM 4, 3, 6 – 8). Accidental unity is easily defined by analogy: an accidental unity is simply the aggregate of two or more essences. Such composites are found mainly in things of different categories, e.g. in compounds where a substance is modified by some accidental determination (DM 4, 3, 13).

Moreover, Suárez recognizes a certain essential gradation among accidental unities. I call this gradation of accidental unities “essential” because, although a certain gradation can also be detected among essential unities, their gradation is only accidental, so to speak. Accidental unities come in at least three basic degrees, for Suárez. All will be important for his argument (mentioned below) for the existence of substantial form. The strongest accidental unity that can be designated as a “full-fledged aggregate” is the sort of unity found in a pile of stones. This is the unity



of a plurality of integral beings that have neither real unity among themselves nor any order that would “rule” them to a higher kind of unity. There are also “middle aggregates” such as artificial objects (houses etc.). Since they are in a certain way structured, they have more unity than full-fledged aggregates; though a step closer to essential unity, they are still a long way off from it. The last sort of accidental unity is that of the so-called “elementary aggregates”, the compound of a substance and its accident(s). These are closest to *per se* unity, since their essences, though still different, are physically unified in the common supposit (DM 4, 3, 14).

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Although most of Suárez’s arguments for the existence and non-corporeality of prime matter are rather traditional, based on substantial change in elements, mixtures and animated beings, some of his arguments are based instead on the fact of the essential unity of the material composite (Kronen 1991a; 1991b). Suárez argues that if prime matter were the body or the complete integral substance, the substantial form would only constitute that body or complete integral substance as an accidental unity, not as unity *per se* – and this would contradict the definition of substantial unity mentioned earlier, according to which the substantial form confers essential being *simpliciter*. The accidental form only gives being *secundum quid*, sc. scilicet the being that is joined to an already complete essence. Generation of essential unity requires that a substantial form be received in a primary subject that is a pure potency in the physical sense (DM 13, 3, 11). Any suggestion that prime matter’s own entitative act suffices to constitute substantial unity is contradicted by Suárez’s assertion that matter is not constituted by its entitative act as a perfect essence, but only as a foundation for an integral substantial nature (DM 13, 3, 19).

Suárez’s arguments here are relevant to contemporary discussion of the sortal terms favored by some contemporary essentialists. Unlike so-called attributive terms, sortal terms, which are, for some sortal term theorists, the descendants of Aristotle’s second substances, provide us with the answer to the question of what a thing is (Heider 2005b). Yet, without going into the functions of particular terms, it is clear that sortal terms, as usually understood, cannot simply be taken to denote substan-

tial forms. To my knowledge some prominent sortalists draw no clear distinction between sortal terms of natural things and of artifacts,<sup>9</sup> and thus a simple identification of substantial forms with the referents of sortal terms would conflict with the orthodox Aristotelian-Scholastic tradition. For this reason I would prefer to say that sortal terms denote at most some internal relation or principal property that essentially structures all the other properties of a natural or artificial thing. If the sortalists are unable to distinguish those sortal terms that refer to natural things from those that refer to artifacts, their theories are not fully traditional, but at best exemplify a “structuralist” view in which a substantial form is merely the organization of the integral parts of a substance. But on such a view why are not all natural substances mere modes of their various constituent parts? Why should we deny that a dog, like a house, is only the modification of its substantial parts? Where, on such a view, do we get the substantial unity of a dog? Do organisms not then become Cartesian machines? On sortalist theories, it seems, a material substance would not consist of the matter and the entitative substantial form, but only of its parts – or, if are to stay at the level of language, of its properties, which become “substantial” owing to the principal property that relates them and entails new emergent properties (Kronen 1994, 602). Suárez, to say nothing of other Aristotelian scholastics, is certainly opposed to such a view. For him the substantial forms of natural things cannot be quasi-artificial forms, and the material cause of substantial forms cannot be a thing’s integral parts or properties. None of those two is the entitative, substantial and incomplete essence, which is the only one that can compose an integral essence (DM 13, 2, 3).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> “A sufficient, but not necessary, condition for a general term’s being a sortal is that there should exist some principle for *counting* or *enumerating* individual instances falling under it. Thus there are ways of counting the number of *men* or *tables* or *books* in a given room...” (Lowe 1989, 10). The other example of given non-differentiation seems to be E. Hirsch: “We want to be able say that such terms as ‘tree’, ‘trunk’, and ‘car’ are sortals, but that terms like ‘brown’ and ‘in a garage’ are not...” A definition of “sortal” might then be: “The general term F is a sortal” means: It is a conceptual truth (a rule of language) that any spatiotemporally and qualitatively continuous succession of F-stages corresponds to (what counts as) stages in the career of a single persisting F-thing. Many typical nouns seem to qualify as sortals on this definition; for example, “tree,” “trunk,” “branch,” “car,” “fender,” “dog,” “eye,” “mountain,” “pebble” (Hirsch 1982, 37 – 38).

<sup>10</sup> This point may be seen as complementing rather than contradicting the view of sortalists like E. J. Lowe.

In the first section “Whether there are substantial forms in material things” of the fifteenth Disputation “On the Formal Cause of Substance”, the regulative idea of essential unity – this time founded on the distinction between a substance and its mainly qualitative properties – again becomes the focus of Suárez’s reflections. As his first argument for the existence of a substantial form that is the intrinsic principle of a composite, Suárez argues “from the unity of a human being”. He takes it as evident – not only naturally but also according to Faith – that a human being consists of a substantial form, for the rational soul as a subsistent entity independent of a body is nevertheless the form of a body (*anima forma corporis*). It cannot be a mere accident that vanishes when the material foundation is corrupted. Without trying to provide the sort of justification of that claim that a physicalist of our day would require, Suárez replies to the criticism of those, anachronically such as López, who suggest that the human soul is a substance that accompanies and extrinsically moves the body. “The Eximious Doctor” finds it incomprehensible that the soul vivifies the body from without. If that were the case, it would not be a human being who understands but only some hidden substance (DM 15, 1, 6). But if humans are composed of a purely potential element and its “formal” complementary part, then such a composition is, at least, something that can be found also in other natural things that undergo substantial transmutations (DM 15, 1, 7).

Suárez supports this first argument by an additional one, based on the relationship between a substance and its properties or powers. The argument can be viewed as a comment on the so called “bare particular theory” that seems to occupy an important position in contemporary debates over the ontological nature of the individual. Before discussing this argument and its versions, I have to briefly define “the bare particular theory”. On this theory familiar concrete particulars are constructed out of two more finer-grained entities, namely attributes and bare substrates. The bare substrates are the literal possessors of the attributes.<sup>11</sup> They have to be literal possessors because their identity is constituted independently of any attribute. If they were not naked, they could not possess (literally) an attribute. Such an attribute would be the intrinsic part of the bare substrate’s composition. But in that case the substrate would *not possess* it but the attribute would have to be somehow identified with it. Since

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<sup>11</sup> The attributes can be conceived either realistically as repeatable entities, or as tropes or individual accidents.

we typically speak of things as *having* attributes, so the ultimate subject must be devoid of all such attributes (Loux 2002, 98 – 103).

Suárez's main objection to such a theory is that a complete material substance cannot consist only of a material incomplete substance completed and perfected by properties and powers. The mere aggregation of the plurality of accidental forms and faculties in a simple substantial subject is not sufficient for the satisfactory explanation of the substantial unity of a material substance. A satisfactory explanation must posit a form, which presides over all those faculties and accidents, and is the "root" that grounds all actions and movements of that being. Only thanks to that "root" can accidents and potencies be properly unified (DM 15, 1, 7). But how can substantial form give any kind of *per se* unity to a plurality of accidents? It is manifest that the substantial form cannot cause the plurality of accidents to be a substantial unity. Accidents and a substantial potential element obviously do not together constitute a complete essence. However, what Suárez wants to show us is that in order for a substance to be complete it must be more than an indifferent receptacle of unorganized accidents. Even though the indifferent receptacle could be something existing in itself (at least, as we have seen, in the supernatural case) it would not be a unity *per se*, because the indifferent receptacle – which as such is merely the glue for a bundle of accidents – could not organize accidents and faculties in a deep way. Suárez concludes the argument, whose validity might at first glance seem limited to human accidents (which are more perfect than the accidents of non-rational substances), must *a fortiori* be valid for any other natural beings as well.

Since we cannot observe substantial forms, Suárez presents several arguments that seem to oblige us to posit such forms as the radical causes of all properties and actions of natural things. These arguments are based on the assumption that the powers of natural things are mutually distinct. Suárez warrants this assumption by the classical argument that different accidental operations (e.g. the intellectual and affective operations in humans) must be ontologically preceded by different proximate accidental principles, namely powers (DM 18, 3, 16, 21 – 22). Powers and the accident of quality in general are the absolute and intrinsic accidents. As such they are the most perfect of all accidents; much more than the so-called respective and extrinsic accidents. The substantial form giving the first act, or more precisely the created substance as a rather limited

act, cannot be pure act, so that it cannot by itself include all complements of perfection. The complements of perfection are supplied by the accident of quality or by the so-called second acts (DM 42, 1, 5 – 6).

One of Suárez's most convincing arguments for substantial forms is based on the fact, observable by introspection, that the operations of different faculties impede each other. Suárez argues that, provided the particular operations and their corresponding active potencies are mutually distinct, either really or at least rationally with a real foundation,<sup>12</sup> the mutual impediments of the various operations cannot be explained without the assumption of a substantial form. This is evident in the first place by introspection; it is evident that intensive intellectual work often impedes e.g. digestive power or the nervous system, or conversely that an upset digestion can prevent intellectual activity. Such mutual impediments cannot be explained without positing a substantial form that grounds and organizes these powers (DM 15, 1, 15).

The second argument is based on the old physics, and concludes to substantial forms from the operations of the basic substances, namely elements. Let us take water, for example. If water is heated by an efficient agent, e.g. fire, which is then removed, the water gradually cools, returning to its former temperature. Suárez argues that the reason for that return to thermal equilibrium can be nothing else than the substantial form. It cannot be any extrinsic principle, because then the return to equilibrium would not happen necessarily, but only accidentally or conditionally, i.e. when that extrinsic agent operates. Nor can the return to equilibrium be due to the air, since upon removal of the heating agent air too exhibits a return to its former temperature (DM 15, 1, 8). Nor can the return to equilibrium be due any intrinsic principle other than the substantial form, such as a quality that would virtually contain the first sensible qualities like coldness. Suárez claims that if the intrinsic principle were some deeper quality, one still, if it is a quality, would have to somehow sense it. However, we recognize such intrinsic principle not by direct sensation, but only indicatively. So, Suárez concludes, it cannot be

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<sup>12</sup> Suárez admits (and Kronen agrees) that it is difficult *a priori* to prove that the powers of the soul are distinct from its essence (DM 18, 3, 18). However, he creatively applies the virtual distinction to an analysis of the distinction between common nature and individual difference. In spite of the fact that there is no real distinction between them, the individual adds to the common nature something real. At least the same degree of distinction holds also for the distinction and the addition of the powers to the essence (Kronen 1991b, 149).

a quality. Moreover, since the water's substantial form is not only the principle of its return to thermal equilibrium but also of its density and humidity, the intrinsic principle can be neither some intrinsic thermal quality, nor some plurality of radical singular forms (the second is naturally impossible, because nature abhors redundancy), but only a substantial form (DM 15, 1, 11). This second argument for the existence of substantial forms can be confirmed by the phenomenon of mutual substantial transmutations of the elements. If water is heated to an "unbearable" degree, it will vaporize (i.e., for Aristotelians, it will undergo a transmutation to air) making a restoration of thermal equilibrium impossible; its impossibility in such a case is satisfactorily explained by the recession of the substantial form (DM 15, 1, 12). Finally, the existence of the substantial form is proved by the fact that some of a substance's accidents are inseparable, in the sense that if they are separated, the substance necessarily undergoes a visible substantial change. No entirely indifferent receptacle can adequately explain such a state of affairs (DM 15, 1, 13).

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Suárez's profound interest in maintaining the doctrine of the substantial unity of the material composite has been amply documented here by presenting the reasoning that grounds his doctrine; this twofold reasoning comprises both an argument for the unity of the extended parts of a substance and an argument for the presence of a unifying principle of a thing's accidents and faculties. We have seen that no indifferent receptacle, much less a bundle of qualities, can be a unity *per se* for Suárez. A bundle of attributes is obviously a plurality, not a unity, of essences, while the indefinite receptacle cannot be a perfect essence, since there are several facts about a substance's relations to its properties that the indefinite-receptacle hypothesis does not adequately explain. Not even a "structuralist conception of form" is entirely satisfactory, since it would illicitly import the accident of relation into the essential unity of a substance. We are justified in concluding that all Suárez's arguments against competing theories are fully in accordance with two pillars of his metaphysics, his definition of *per se* unity in the fourth Disputation and his definition of a being as a (real) essence in the second Disputation (DM 2, 4, 6). These pillars are clear tokens that essential unity was

for Suárez, as it would later be for Leibniz, a leading philosophical concern.<sup>13</sup>

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