

Syracuse University

SURFACE

Dissertations - ALL

SURFACE

June 2017

Thomas Aquinas on the Metaphysical Nature of the Soul and its Union with the Body

Kendall Ann Fisher
Syracuse University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://surface.syr.edu/etd>



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Fisher, Kendall Ann, "Thomas Aquinas on the Metaphysical Nature of the Soul and its Union with the Body" (2017). *Dissertations - ALL*. 707.
<https://surface.syr.edu/etd/707>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the SURFACE at SURFACE. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations - ALL by an authorized administrator of SURFACE. For more information, please contact surface@syr.edu.

Abstract

In this dissertation I examine Thomas Aquinas' account of the metaphysical nature of the rational soul and its hylomorphic union with the body. Aquinas simultaneously holds that the rational soul is the substantial form of the human being and that it is an incorporeal subsisting thing that survives death. This particular pairing of views is notoriously difficult. On the one hand, Aquinas argues that because of the soul's role as substantial form, it informs prime matter so as to compose a single unified substance—the human being. Unlike aggregates or accidental unities, the human being is something unqualifiedly one, that is, something *unum simpliciter*. On the other, his commitment to the incorporeity and subsistence of the soul as well as its continued existence after death appear to threaten this unity—if the soul's existence does not depend on the body, and it can exist on its own, then it seems to be a complete substance in its own right. If so, on Aquinas' view, it cannot be united to anything else to form something *unum simpliciter*. So, in spite of Aquinas' insistence that the human being is unqualifiedly one it is not clear that he is philosophically entitled to it.

In the first half of my dissertation I determine the extent to which the incorporeity, subsistence, and incorruptibility of the soul threaten to undermine Aquinas' account of human unity. I argue that when his account of the soul and its relationship to the body is properly understood within his metaphysical framework, the metaphysical nature of the soul is compatible with human unqualified unity. Moreover, I argue that although human beings are metaphysically unique among created substances in his ontology, Aquinas adequately motivates their peculiar hybrid status.

In the second half of my dissertation, I discuss two of Aquinas' arguments for the hylomorphic union of body and soul. Both arguments are found in *Summa Theologiae* I.76.1. The first is based on Aristotle's demonstration in *De Anima* II.2 that the soul is the form of

the body. I argue that while Aquinas' version of the argument is similar to Aristotle's in many ways, it goes beyond Aristotle's in ways that reflect his specific motivations, and in particular, his disagreement with Averroes concerning the relationship between intellectual soul and body.

The second argument for hylomorphism in *Summa Theologiae* I.76.1 involves Aquinas' rejection of three competing accounts of the relationship between intellect and body, namely, the Platonist, Averroist, and Moved-Mover accounts. While Aquinas' argument may initially appear to be a mere argument by elimination, I argue that a common theme emerges in his rejection of the alternatives. According to Aquinas, none of his competitors can satisfactorily account for the rationality, animality, and unity of the human being. At best, each competitor can account for two out of the three. In his view, therefore, Aquinas' rejection of competing accounts provides positive reasons for affirming the hylomorphic account of body and soul, namely, that only his view can succeed where the others fail.

**Thomas Aquinas on the Metaphysical Nature of the Soul and its Union with the
Body**

Kendall Ann Fisher

B.A. Calvin College 2010

DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy

Syracuse University

June 2017

Copyright © Kendall Ann Fisher 2017

All Rights Reserved

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Kara Richardson and Kris McDaniel for their guidance and support throughout my graduate work and the dissertation writing process. I am so thankful. I would also like to thank Rebecca DeYoung, who inspired me to pursue philosophy and first introduced me to the work of Thomas Aquinas. I am grateful to my family for their love and encouragement, and above all, to Anthony Fisher for his love, tireless support, and constant faith in me.

Contents

Abbreviations	viii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Substance and Unity in Aquinas' Metaphysics	10
1.1 Substance-Accident Ontology	11
1.2 Form-Matter Composition.....	13
1.3 Substantial and Accidental Form.....	18
1.4 <i>Esse-Essentia</i> Composition	23
1.5 <i>Esse</i> , Form, and Unity.....	27
1.6 The Human Being as a Hylomorphic Substance.....	31
Conclusion.....	35
Chapter 2: The Incorporeity of the Rational Soul.....	36
2.1 Intellectual Cognition: The Intentional Potency of the Possible Intellect.....	38
2.2 The Proper Object of Intellective Cognition	44
2.3 Agent Intellect and the Bodily Contribution to Intellective Cognition	49
2.4 Incorporeity of the Intellect: Cognition of All Material Natures.....	52
2.5 Two Kinds of Potency.....	59
2.6 Incorporeity of the Intellect: Cognition of Universals.....	67
2.7 The Rational Soul as an Incorporeal Form.....	72
2.8 Incorporeity and Unity.....	76
Conclusion.....	77
Chapter 3: The Subsistence of the Rational Soul	78
3.1 Subsistence and Existence <i>Per Se</i>	80
3.2 Argument for the Subsistence of the Soul: The Soul as a <i>Per Se</i> Operator	85
3.3 The Correspondence of <i>Per Se</i> Existence and Operation and the <i>In-Act</i> Principle.....	93
3.4 The <i>In-Act</i> Principle in the Argument for Subsistence	101
3.5 The Subsistence of the Soul and the Subsistence of the Hand	105
3.6 Independence and Separation.....	112
3.7 Inherence versus Subsistence	115
Conclusion.....	120
Chapter 4: The Incorruptibility and Existential Completeness of the Rational Soul.....	121
4.1 Argument for Incorruptibility	122
4.2 Incorruptibility and Existential Completeness	125
4.3 Incomplete in a Nature: Operational Dependence on the Body	129
4.4 The Disembodied Soul as an Incomplete Actuality.....	135
4.5 A Shared Act of Existence	139
4.6 Human Beings in Aquinas' Hierarchy of Being	141

Conclusion.....	142
Chapter 5: Aristotelian Argument for the Hylomorphic Union of Soul and Body.....	143
5.1 Aristotle’s Argument in <i>De Anima</i> II.2.....	145
5.2 Aquinas’ Argument for the Intellective Soul as Form of the Body	149
5.3 The Soul as the Principle of Vital Operation	153
5.4 Immanent Action and the <i>In-Act</i> Principle.....	155
5.5 Anti-Averroism in Aquinas’ Argument for Hylomorphism.....	158
5.6 The Intellect, Intellective Soul, and Intellective Power	162
5.7 The Intellective Soul as Form of the Body	168
5.8 Intellect or Intellective Soul? A Further Source of Ambiguity	170
Conclusion.....	172
Chapter 6: Hylomorphism and its Competitors.....	173
6.1 Aquinas’ Challenge	176
6.2 A Separate Intellect: The Averroist and Moved-Mover Variant Positions.....	178
6.3 Assumptions from Aquinas’ Rejections	183
6.4 Sensation and the Platonic Position.....	187
6.5 The Moved-Mover Position: Unity, Being, and Operation	191
6.6 Hylomorphism and Aquinas’ <i>Desiderata</i>	194
Conclusion.....	195
Conclusion	197
Bibliography.....	202
Vita	210

Abbreviations

ST: Summa Theologiae
SCG: Summa Contra Gentiles
QDA: Quaestiones Disputatae De Anima
DSC: Quaestiones Disputatae De Spiritualibus Creaturis
DP: Quaestiones Disputatae De Potentia Dei
DV: Quaestiones Disputatae De Veritate
DUI: De Unitate Intellectus
DSS: De Substantiis Separatis
DEE: De Ente et Essentia
DPN: De Principiis Naturae
QQ: Quaestiones Quodlibetales
CT: Compendium Theologiae
InMet: Sententia libri Metaphysicae
InDA: Sententia libri De Anima
InPhys: In Aristotelis libros Physicorum
InSent: Scriptum Super Sententiis
InEthic: Sententia libri Ethicorum
InDT: Super De Trinitate

Introduction

Thomas Aquinas endorses the Aristotelian view that the human being is a hylomorphic composite of form and matter. Form is a principle of actuality, existence, and organization. Matter is the principle of potency and exists in accordance with the form. Together they constitute a substance. Aquinas often uses the example of a bronze statue to illustrate the hylomorphic relationship.¹ Consider a bronze statue of a bird. The bronze is the matter out of which the statue is made and the shape is the arrangement or form that accounts for the bronze existing *as the statue*. The bronze stands to the statue as its matter and the shape stands to it as its form. The bronze, considered in itself, is potentially the statue. When informed with the bird-shape it comes to actually exist as the statue. So, matter and form are related to one another as potency to act. The statue exists only insofar as the bronze possesses the shape and the shape of the statue is imposed on the bronze. The shape and bronze are complementary principles, both of which are needed to constitute the statue.

Aquinas maintains that all material substances are, like the statue, constituted by form and matter. Following Aristotle, he calls the forms of living things ‘souls.’ Souls make living things exist and exist with an arrangement capable of the appropriate vital operations. Humans are capable of nutritive, sensitive, and rational activities. Accordingly, their souls are actualities that equip them with the capacities for such activities. Since reason is the highest of the human operations and humans alone among the animals are rational, the human soul is often called the rational or intellective soul.

Thus, human beings are composed of a rational soul and a material principle, which is potentially ensouled. Together these two principles constitute the human being (and thus, the human body). The rational soul is the principle of organization and existence in the human

¹ See *DPN* ch.1.

body just as the shape is the principle of organization and existence in the statue. Yet unlike the souls of all other living things, Aquinas maintains that the rational soul is not only the form of the human body, it is also a subsistent part of the human being—namely, the part of the human being that carries out intellectual operations. Following Aristotle, Aquinas argues that intellectual operations can only be carried out in something incorporeal and not in a body or bodily organ. He concludes, therefore, that the soul itself must be the part of the human being that understands. This, he argues, reveals that the human soul is a subsistent part of the human being. So for Aquinas there is more to a human being than her body. In addition, she has an incorporeal part constituted by the soul alone. Aquinas argues that this incorporeal part does not cease to exist at the death of the human being and corruption of the human body. Indeed, he maintains that the soul is incorruptible and cannot be destroyed naturally. Once it has been created by God, it can only cease to exist through divine annihilation.

Aquinas affirms the post-mortem existence of the rational soul, but he maintains that the corporeal and incorporeal parts of the human being form a single substance, rather than an aggregate of two substances. In his view, the human being is unqualifiedly one, *unum simpliciter*. Although on the surface such a commitment to human unity may not appear controversial, it does not always seem to square well with Aquinas' account of the metaphysical nature of human soul. The rational soul exists in its own right and is the subject of intellectual operations. It survives the death of the human being and continues to exist and to understand apart from the body in its separated state. The separated soul looks very much like a complete substance in its own right. Within Aquinas' metaphysical framework, however, no complete substance can be joined to anything else to form a further complete substance. In other words, no complete substance has a complete substance as a proper part. These considerations seem to push Aquinas towards a kind of dualism—toward an account

on which the soul is a substance in its own right, accidentally united to the body for a time to compose the human being. The more independence granted to the soul, the harder it becomes to preserve the unqualified unity of the human being. In spite of his insistence that human beings are unqualifiedly one, it is not clear that Aquinas is entitled to such a claim. The first main aim of this dissertation is to determine the extent to which the incorporeity, subsistence, and incorruptibility of the rational soul threaten its unqualified union with the body.

To this end, I begin in Chapter 1 by presenting the basic metaphysical framework in which Aquinas develops his human ontology. I focus, in particular, on his account of the composition of substance and his criteria for unqualified or substantial unity. As we have seen, for Aquinas material substances are composites of form and matter. In addition, all substances, corporeal and incorporeal alike, are composites of their essence and their being, or act of existence. Although these two kinds of composition are distinct, they are related. Because form is the principle of existence, it is the source of a thing's act of existence. A substance is unqualifiedly unified in virtue of its existing by means of a single form that endows it with a single act of existence. With his criterion for unqualified unity in place we will be better positioned to assess whether the human being ought to count as something *unum simpliciter* given the metaphysical nature of its soul.

In Chapters 2-4 I take up each of the three unique characteristics that Aquinas ascribes to the rational soul, namely, incorporeity, subsistence, and incorruptibility. Each contributes to the soul's capacity for post-mortem existence. The incorporeity of the intellect entails the subsistence of the soul, and the subsistence of the soul coupled with its status as a substantial form entails its incorruptibility. Ultimately the soul's incorruptibility ensures its survival after death.

This general arc of Aquinas' thinking is recognized and commonly agreed upon in the secondary literature, but there is considerable imprecision regarding what each of the three characteristics attributed to the rational soul amounts to, and, in particular, the degree to which each makes the soul capable of separate existence from the body. Moreover, Aquinas' use of terms like 'separate' and 'independent' seems to vary with context. For instance when arguing against the unicity of the intellect, Aquinas denies that the intellect is separate. Yet in other contexts, he defends the soul's independence and separability from the body. So he seems to be working with multiple notions of the terms in connection with the human soul. In each chapter, therefore, I isolate the characteristic in question to clarify its meaning and implications for the rational soul and then I evaluate the extent to which it threatens human unity. I also consider the arguments that Aquinas provides in favor of ascribing the relevant characteristic to the soul. His arguments often provide insight into how he conceives of the characteristic in question.

In Chapter 2 I take up the incorporeity of the soul. Aquinas argues that the soul—or rather some part of it—must be incorporeal on the grounds that it must carry out intellectual operations, operations that must be carried out by an incorporeal, that is, non-bodily, principle. He presents two central arguments for the claim that our intellectual operations must be carried out by an incorporeal principle. Both of these depend heavily on his account of intellectual cognition and the nature of our objects of understanding. So I begin Chapter 2 by introducing his account of the powers and mechanisms involved in intellectual cognition. Then I discuss each of his central arguments for the incorporeity of intellectual operations and their implications for the soul. The incorporeity of intellectual cognition reveals that the intellectual part of the human being cannot be some part of her body. Aquinas concludes that intellectual operations must therefore occur in the soul alone. This is the first indication that

the rational soul is significantly different from the souls of all other living things. Ultimately I argue that the incorporeity of the intellectual principle poses no threat to human unity. It reveals, rather, that there is more to the human being than the body. What this something more is and whether it can be unqualifiedly united with the body I investigate further in Chapters 3 and 4.

Aquinas argues that the incorporeity of the intellectual principle entails that the soul itself is the intellectual part of the human being that carries out intellectual operations. From this he argues that the soul exists as a subsistent part of the human being, that is, it exists *per se*. Aquinas recognizes different ontological kinds of being and distinguishes between their modes of existence. He distinguishes between the modes of existence of substances and subsistent things and their accidents and forms. Whereas substances and their integral parts exist *per se*, that is, through themselves or in their own right, accidents and forms exist in another, *in alio*, where their existence is derivative on that of a *per se* existent. As a result of the soul's intellectual operation, Aquinas concludes that it is an incomplete substantial part of the human being with *per se* existence in addition to serving as the form of the human body. The soul's *per se* existence reveals a degree of independence from the body. In particular, it shows that the soul does not depend on matter or a subject for its existence in the way that all other material forms do. Nevertheless I argue that the kind of independence entailed by the subsistence of the soul does not account for its ability to exist apart from the body. Instead, it renders the soul on a par with the other subsistent parts of the body, for instance, the heart or eyes. Since these corporeal subsistent parts do not threaten the unqualified unity of the human being, I argue that the subsistence of the soul does not either.

In Aquinas' argument for the subsistence of the soul he appeals to a principle that is fundamental and pervasive within his metaphysical system and his account of creaturely and

divine operation. This principle states that *nothing acts or operates insofar as it is in act, or actual*. Call this the *in-act* principle. Aquinas uses the *in-act* principle to show that the soul, which operates *per se*, must also exist *per se*. The *in-act* principle and its role in the argument for subsistence have often been overlooked. Moreover, the *in-act* principle plays a central role in Aquinas' arguments in favor of his claim that the soul is the form of the body and in his rejection of competing accounts, most notably, Averroes' position concerning the rational soul and the intellective power's union with the body, which I discuss in Chapters 5 and 6. Therefore, in my examination of Aquinas' argument for subsistence in Chapter 3, I pay particular attention to the meaning and role of the *in-act* principle.

The soul's subsistence together with its role as substantial form entails its incorruptibility. I turn to this final characteristic of the soul in Chapter 4. Aquinas recognizes two mutually exclusive and exhaustive modes of corruption that correspond to a things' mode of being. Things that exist *per se* can only be corrupted *per se*. Things whose existence derives from another, for instance, accidents, material forms, and prime matter, can only be corrupted *per accidens*. He argues that the soul cannot be corrupted in either way and concludes, therefore, that the rational soul cannot cease to exist naturally, that is, that it is incorruptible. The incorruptibility of the soul ensures its continued existence after the corruption of the human body. So the soul, unlike any other subsistent part of the human being, is capable of existing independently, apart from the rest of the human being. Moreover, Aquinas affirms that the soul can continue to carry out its intellective operations.

Despite the fact that the soul can exist and operate apart from the body, Aquinas maintains that it is not a complete substance in its own right and that it can be unqualifiedly united with the human body to form the human being. He provides two main defenses of human unity in light of the incorruptibility of the soul. First Aquinas argues that the soul,

considered in itself, is incomplete in a specific nature. This, he claims, allows it to be unqualifiedly united to the body to complete the specific nature of a human being. Typically when one part of a thing can exist apart from a larger whole, this indicates that the first part is a complete substance in its own right and can only be accidentally united to other things to form a larger whole. But Aquinas insists that although the rational soul can exist apart from the larger whole, the human being, it is not a complete substance and it can be unqualifiedly, rather than accidentally, united to the human body. He attempts to show this by arguing that the soul is specifically incomplete, that is, incomplete in the nature of a species, even though it is existentially complete. He traces the soul's specific incompleteness to its dependence on the body for intellectual understanding and to its natural role as form of the body. I argue that the latter offers a more promising route to establishing the specific incompleteness of the soul and thus securing its unqualified union with the human body. In Aquinas' second defense of human unity he appeals to the soul's role as the source of *esse* or being to both itself and the human body. He argues that the soul communicates the very same act of being in which it subsists to the human body. Thus, soul and body are unified because they exist by means of the same substantial form, which actualizes them according to the same act of being. I argue that this second defense is successful.

Aquinas' account of the ontological status of the rational soul renders the human being metaphysically unique. It is the only substance that is partly corporeal and partly incorporeal. Despite its unique metaphysical composition, I argue that Aquinas consistently applies his criteria for unqualified unity. Although the soul can exist apart from the body, the body only exists insofar as the self same soul is its actuality. The soul, because of the nature of intellectual operations cannot be corrupted. But this does not prevent it from serving as the principle of being and organization of the body so long as the body can exist. Insofar as the

incorporeal and corporeal subsistent parts share a substantial form as their actuality and a common act of being, they are united to form something unqualifiedly one.

Aquinas' claim to human unity depends on the soul's relationship to the body as its form. In the final two chapters of the dissertation I examine two of Aquinas' main arguments in favor of this hylomorphic account. Both arguments are found in his discussion in *Summa Theologiae* I.76.1. The first is based on a passage from Aristotle's *De Anima* II.2 where Aristotle identifies the soul as a formal principle and the body as a material one. Although Aquinas develops the original argument in significant ways and includes additional support for its main premises, his version in *ST* I.76.1 has been regarded as little more than a repetition of Aristotle and subsequently has received little attention in the literature. One aim in Chapter 5, therefore, is to show how Aquinas' argument goes beyond Aristotle's. In particular, I argue that Aquinas' version reflects his disagreement with Averroes concerning the nature of the rational soul and its relationship with the body.

Although Aquinas' Aristotelian argument for the soul as form of the body has lacked a detailed examination, the conclusion he draws, or rather, the explicit articulation of that conclusion has been the source of considerable discussion. In his argument Aquinas concludes that the *intellect* (rather than intellective soul) is the form of the body. Aquinas typically uses the term "intellect" to pick out the intellective powers of the soul, which he distinguishes from the rational soul itself. (Indeed his distinction between the soul and its powers is crucial to his account of human unity and the incorporeity of intellective cognition.) In light of his distinction, Aquinas' conclusion in *ST* I.76.1 is somewhat puzzling and there is debate in the literature as to whether his conclusion concerns the intellective soul or the intellective powers of the soul or both. I take up these questions in the second half of Chapter 5. I argue that

Aquinas' conclusion properly speaking applies to the intellectual soul rather than the intellectual power.

Aquinas' second argument for the hylomorphic union of body and soul appears directly after his Aristotelian argument in *ST* I.76.1. This second argument consists in the elimination of competing accounts of human ontology, namely, the Platonic view, the Averroist view, and a family of dualist views that I call the Moved-Mover views. After objecting to each of his competitors' accounts, Aquinas concludes that his own hylomorphic account is true. Initially he may seem unjustified in this strong conclusion. Problems for other views do not necessarily make one's own correct. However, I argue that Aquinas' rejection of competitors reveals a set of *desiderata* that he takes to constrain any adequate view of human nature. In his view, any viable position must account for the rationality and animality of the human being. To do so, he believes it must also account for the unity of the human being. Aquinas rejects each of his opponents' theories for failing to provide a metaphysical basis that can adequately account either for the animality, rationality, or unity of the human being. With his metaphysical framework of creaturely operation and his criteria for unqualified substantial unity in view from discussions in previous chapters, it becomes clear that only his account of the ontology of the human being can secure the *desiderata* within his system. Thus Aquinas' rejection of competing accounts also provides a positive reason for adopting the hylomorphic account, namely, that in his view, only his position succeeds to secure the *desiderata* where the others fail.

Chapter 1: Substance and Unity in Aquinas' Metaphysics

Aquinas develops his account of the ontology of the human being within his broader metaphysical framework. As we will see, on his view, human beings are partly corporeal, partly incorporeal substances that occupy a unique ontological position on the borderline between the material and intellectual realms. So to understand Aquinas' account of human ontology, it will be useful to begin with a sketch of his accounts of substance and substantial unity more generally. Once such a sketch is in place, we can identify the similarities and differences between human beings and other material substances on the one hand, and human beings and incorporeal intellectual substances on the other. Moreover, by considering Aquinas' notions of unity and his criteria for substantial unities we will be better prepared to assess whether he is philosophically entitled to claim that human beings are *unum simpliciter*, unqualifiedly one, in light of the incorporeity, subsistence, and incorruptibility of the human soul.

This chapter has six sections. In §1.1 I present Aquinas' substance-accident ontology. In §1.2 and §1.3 I present his account of the hylomorphic composition of material substances and his distinction between substantial and accidental form. In §1.4 I introduce his account of the composition of essence and existence in all created substances. In §1.5 I present his account of substantial unity. I discuss its connection to substantial form and existence, and distinguish unqualified substantial unity he attributes to human beings from other qualified kinds of unity. In §1.6 I consider Aquinas' account of human beings, in particular as hylomorphic unities and composites of body and rational soul.

1.1 Substance-Accident Ontology¹

Aquinas adheres to a broadly Aristotelian metaphysical framework in which he develops his ontology. He takes existence, or *esse*, as basic and shared by all things. Nevertheless, he maintains that different ontological kinds are called ‘beings’ in fundamentally different ways.² Following Aristotle, he divides being into ten categories, one category of substance and nine of accident (e.g., quantity, quality, location). His division of being into substance and accidents tracks what he takes to be a difference in mode of being. While both accidents and substances are related in some way to a primary notion of being or existence,³ their modes of being differ because they are related to this primary notion of being in different ways.

Substances are related to the primary notion of being insofar as they themselves are beings in the primary sense. As primary subjects of being, substances exist in the fullest sense. A substance is that which is properly said to exist, the *quod* of existence. Accidents, in contrast, are derivative on substances. They are affections or modifications of substances.⁴ So accidents exist insofar as a substance exists in some way. Whereas a chicken is a substance, her brownness is an accident. Aquinas describes the primary mode of being (that of substances) as follows:

¹ For discussion of Aquinas’ substance-accident ontology, see Wippel (2000a, 197-237).

² ‘Being’ is predicated of the different ontological kinds analogically. Analogical predication occurs when something is predicated of different things “according to meanings which are partly different and partly not” (*InMet* IV.1 [535] (Rowan (trans.), 198; Marietti, 151). The meanings are different inasmuch as they reflect different relationships to some one thing, and the same inasmuch as these relationships are referred to one and the same thing. (See *InMet* IV.1 [534-39]; *DPN* ch.6.) Since substances and accidents stand to primary being in different ways they cannot be univocally called ‘beings’, but the fact that they are all related to primary being in some way prevents the predication from being equivocal. See Wippel (2000a, 65-93) for Aquinas’ division of being.

³ Aquinas also calls processes like generation and corruption and privations ‘beings’ analogically. But since processes and privations are mind-dependent they are not included as ontological categories. See for instance *InMet* IV [539]; *InMet* VII [1252]; *DEE* ch.1.

⁴ Consider, *InMet* IV.1 [539] (Rowan (trans.), 199; Marietti, 152): “And just as the above-mentioned terms have many senses, so also does the term being. Yet every being is called such in relation to one first thing, and this first thing is not an end or an efficient cause, as is the case in the foregoing examples, but a subject. For some things are called beings, or are said to be, because they have being of themselves, as substances, which are called beings in the primary and proper sense. Others are called beings because they are affections or properties of substances, as the proper accidents of any substance. [Et sicut est de praedictis, ita etiam et ens multipliciter dicitur. Sed tamen omne ens dicitur per respectum ad unum primum. Sed hoc primum non est finis vel efficiens sicut in praemissis exemplis, sed subiectum. Alia enim dicuntur entia vel esse, quia per se habent esse sicut substantiae, quae principaliter et prius entia dicuntur. Alia vero quia sunt passiones sive proprietates substantiae, sicut per se accidentia uniuscuiusque substantiae.]”

The fourth mode of being is the one which is most perfect, namely, what has being in reality without any admixture of privation, and has firm and solid being inasmuch as it exists of itself. This is the mode of being which substances have. Now all the others are referred back to this as the primary and principal mode of being...⁵

Substances have a firm and solid existence in themselves. Aquinas notes that this is the most perfect kind of existence and the kind to which the other modes of being are related. He calls the mode of being of substances existence *per se*. He writes,

Now two things are proper to the substance which is a subject.⁶ The first is that it needs no external support but is supported by itself: wherefore it is said to subsist, as existing not in another but in itself. The second is that it is the foundation to accidents by sustaining them, and for this reason it is said to substand.⁷

In this passage Aquinas characterizes substance as something that (a) exists in itself (*per se*) and (b) serves as a foundation or subject for accidents. In this passage, as in many others, Aquinas contrasts existence *per se* with existence in another, *in alio*, which he attributes to accidents and accidental and material forms.⁸ As modifications of substance, accidents, like the chicken's brownness, exist only insofar as they are in a substance. He writes,

Now accidents signified in the abstract seem to be non-beings, because no one of them is fitted by nature to exist of itself. In fact the being of each of them consists in their existing in something else, and no one of them is capable of existing apart from substance. Therefore, when they are signified in the abstract as though they were beings of themselves and separate from substance,

⁵ *InMet* IV.1 [543] (Rowan (trans.), 200; Marietti, 52): “Quartum autem genus est quod est perfectissimum, quod scilicet habet esse in natura absque admixtione privationis, et habet esse firmum et solidum, quasi per se existens, sicut sunt substantiae. Et ad hoc sicut ad primum et principale omnia alia referuntur.”

⁶ Here Aquinas specifies that the substance under question is a substance which is a subject. In the context of this passage, this qualification makes clear that Aquinas is talking about primary substances, i.e., individuals in the category of substance, rather than secondary substances, for instance ‘animal’ or ‘canine’ considered apart from their individual instances.

⁷ *DP* q.9 a.1 co (English Dominican Fathers (trans.), bk.3, 99; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 226): “Substantia vero quae est subiectum, duo habet propria: quorum primum est quod non indiget extrinseco fundamento in quo sustentetur, sed sustentatur in seipso; et ideo dicitur subsistere, quasi per se et non in alio existens. Aliud vero est quod est fundamentum accidentibus sustentans ipsa; et pro tanto dicitur substare.”

⁸ *InMet* XI.12 [2381] (Rowan (trans.), 762; Marietti, 560): “For a substance is a being of itself, whereas an accident is not a being of itself but has being in something else. [Est enim substantia ens per se; accidens vero ens per se non est, sed in alio.]” See also *InMet* IV.1 [539]; *ST* 1.29.2 co. I discuss the mode of existence of material and accidental forms in §1.2.

they seem to be non-beings.⁹

In this passage Aquinas states that when considered in themselves, i.e., apart from the substances in which they exist, accidents do not seem to be beings at all. This is so because their existence is utterly dependent on their substantial subjects. They exist only insofar as a substance exists in accordance with them, that is, in a qualified or quantified way, but apart from this subject they have no being. We do not find *brownness* free floating, only brown things. So although Aquinas calls accidents ‘beings’ in the sense that they qualify or quantify substance, he maintains that they are more properly said to be *of* something than to *be* something in their own right.¹⁰

1.2 Form-Matter Composition

Aquinas’ substance-accident ontology is grounded in his hylomorphic account of material substance. As we saw in the Introduction, in Aquinas’ view, material things are composites of matter and form.¹¹ Form is a principle of actuality. Matter is a principle of potency. Forms are the actuality of matter and account for matter’s existing in a given way just as the shape of a bronze statue accounts for the bronze’s existing as that statue.¹² The statue corresponds

⁹ *InMet* VII.1 [1253] (Rowan (trans.), 427; Marietti, 316): “Pro tanto autem videntur accidentia in abstracto significata esse non entia, quia nihil ipsorum est aptum natum secundum se esse; immo cuiuslibet eorum esse est alteri inesse, et non est possibile aliquid eorum separari a substantia; et ideo quando significantur in abstracto quasi sint secundum se entia et a substantia separata, videtur quod sint non entia.”

¹⁰ Consider, *DP* q.3 a.8 co (English Dominican Fathers, (trans.), bk.1, 142; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 62): “... thus accidents are described as beings, because by them a substance is qualified or quantified, but not as though by them it is simply, as it is by its substantial form. Hence it is more correct to say that an accident is of something rather than that it is something (Metaph. vii, 2). [... sicut et accidentia dicuntur entia, quia substantia eis est vel qualis vel quanta, non quod eis sit simpliciter sicut per formam substantialem: unde accidentia magis proprie dicuntur entis, quam entia, ut patet in Metaphys..]”

¹¹ See Wippel (2000a, 294-377); Brower (2014, 187-194) for discussion of the hylomorphic composition of material substance.

¹² Although we may say that form actualizes matter, form is not an efficient cause of the matter it informs. Form does not move the matter around, as the sculptor might shape the bronze. Rather, the form is the shape into which the matter is arranged. Thus when we say that form actualizes matter, this is not to say that the form exercises efficient causality. Instead form actualizes in the sense that it is the actuality of matter. The exception to this is the human soul, which moves the body through its volitional and intellective operations. The human soul does not, however, move the body because of its role as form of the body (see *ST* I.76.4 ad 2).

to the hylomorphic composite, the substance. The bronze corresponds to the substance's matter, and the shape or arrangement of the statue corresponds to its form.

Although the statue example is a useful heuristic for understanding the relationship between form, matter, and the composite, it is not a perfectly accurate example of the hylomorphic composition of substance. In the case of the statue, the matter out of which the statue exists already exists in its own right: the bronze exists as bronze whether or not it is actually statue-shaped. Indeed, the fact that the shape actualizes an already existing matter, in this case, bronze, reveals for Aquinas that the shape of the statue is not a substance, strictly speaking, but an accidental arrangement of a substance (or perhaps of substances).¹³ In Aquinas' view the forms that make a substance exist are not the actuality of some pre-existing stuff, like the bronze, but of what he calls prime matter, matter conceived with absolutely no form whatsoever.¹⁴

For Aquinas, prime matter, unlike the bronze of the statue, is pure potentiality. Since form is the source of actuality or existence, prime matter cannot exist in reality as *prime*. In *De Principiis Naturae* he writes,

But [prime matter] in itself can never exist, because, since in its own definition it does not have any form, it does not have any actual being, since there is no actual existence except by a form. But it exists only in potency. So for this reason, whatever exists actually cannot be called prime matter ...¹⁵

Aquinas maintains that whatever actually exists does so according to some form. Prime matter, by definition, excludes all form. Accordingly, prime matter cannot exist until it is actualized by substantial form. (Hence it can never exist *as prime*.) Substances are composites

¹³ See Pasnau (2002a, 79-95), and Rota (2004) for discussions regarding the ontological status of artifacts as accidental beings in Aquinas.

¹⁴ For discussions of Aquinas' account of prime matter see, Wippel (2000a, 312-377); Hughes (1998); Lang (1998).

¹⁵ *DPN* ch.2 (translation mine; Leonine XLIII, 41): "Sed per se nunquam potest esse, quia cum in ratione sua non habeat aliquam formam, non habet esse in actu, cum esse in actu non sit nisi a forma, sed est solum in potentia. Et ideo quicquid est actu, non potest dici materia prima." See also *DEE* ch.5.

of form hylomorphically united to prime matter, so that prime matter exists, not as prime, but as actually constituting a material substance. When a form is united to prime matter it accounts for a thing's existing at all and not simply for an arrangement of pre-existing stuff's existing according to that arrangement. The chicken is the result of prime matter's actualization by a chicken-form, not the actualization of chicken parts, or flesh, feathers, and bones, into a chicken. Forms that are united to prime matter account for the composites' existence wholesale.

While substantial form and prime matter are principles of material substance, neither the matter out of which a material substance exists, nor the form by which it exists is a *per se* existent.¹⁶ Aquinas writes,

Accordingly, in things composed of matter and form neither the matter nor the form nor even being itself can be termed that which is. Yet the form can be called that by which it is, inasmuch as it is the principle of being; the whole substance itself, however, is that which is. And being itself is that by which the substance is called a being.¹⁷

In this passage Aquinas notes that neither the matter nor the form of a material substance is a *per se* existent. Form and matter constitute the substance, yet it is the substance that is properly speaking *that which is*. In contrast, Aquinas states that form is *that by which* a substance exists. Rather than the *quod* of existence, it is the *quo*. Form and matter are not two pre-existing puzzle pieces that fit together. Forms do not exist waiting to be inserted into matter. Prime matter does not exist waiting for the advent of a form. Rather forms are educed from the potency of matter. They are two sides to the same coin. Matter cannot exist without

¹⁶ The human soul is an exception. Aquinas maintains that it is both that by which the human being exists (see *ST* I.76.1, 4) and a *per se* existent in its own right (see *ST* I.75.2).

¹⁷ *SCG* II.54 [6] (Anderson (trans.), 157; Leonine XIII, 392): “Unde in compositis ex materia et forma nec materia nec forma potest dici ipsum quod est, nec etiam ipsum esse. Forma tamen potest dici quo est, secundum quod est essendi principium; ipsa autem tota substantia est ipsum quod est; et ipsum esse est quo substantia denominatur ens.”

some arrangement, i.e. form. Form cannot exist without something informed. They are inseparable in their constitution of the substance.

Accordingly, Aquinas maintains that in the creation (and generation¹⁸) of a material substance, neither the form nor matter is said to be made.¹⁹ He writes,

Properly speaking neither matter, nor form, nor accident are said to be made: but that which is made is the thing that subsists. For since to be made terminates in being, it belongs properly to that to which it belongs *per se* to be, namely to a subsistent thing: wherefore neither matter, nor form, nor accident are said properly speaking to be created, but to be concreated: whereas a subsistent thing, whatsoever it may be, is properly said to be created.²⁰

In creation, the substance is created. Form, matter, and accidents are not themselves created, but concreated along with the creation of the substance. That is, the coming to be of the formal and material principles is a derivative, *per accidens* result of the coming to be of the composite. Form and matter are, therefore, not the *per se* subjects of creation, generation, or corruption, just as they are not *per se* subjects of existence.²¹

Because prime matter and material substantial forms are the principles that constitute material substances, they are sometimes called metaphysical parts of substance.²²

Nevertheless, they are not parts of a material substance in the same way that integral parts, like hands or hearts, are. Integral parts are those parts into which we could imagine a substance being chopped.²³ Matter and form, however, cannot be split apart in the way that a

¹⁸ See *DP* q.3 a.8 co.

¹⁹ Again, the sole exception to this is the human soul, which Aquinas maintains is created by God. See *SCG* II.87.

²⁰ *DP* q.3 a.1 ad.12 (English Dominican Fathers (trans.), bk.1, 87; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 40): “Ad duodecimum dicendum, quod neque materia neque forma neque accidens proprie dicuntur fieri; sed id quod fit est res subsistens. Cum enim fieri terminetur ad esse, proprie ei convenit fieri cui convenit per se esse, scilicet rei subsistenti: unde neque materia neque forma neque accidens proprie dicuntur creari, sed concreari. Proprie autem creatur res subsistens, quaecumque sit.”

²¹ See *DPN* ch.2.

²² See, for instance, Stump (2005, 191-216).

²³ Strictly speaking, integral parts that are then severed from the whole undergo a complete change in identity. This is because, for Aquinas, a thing is what it is by means of its substantial form. When a hand is removed from the rest of a body, it ceases to be a hand because its matter ceases to be informed by the human soul. The hand, therefore, goes out of existence and a new substance (or collection of substances, perhaps) comes to exist where previously there

hand or arm can be amputated from the rest of a substance. Integral parts exist as incomplete parts of a whole and are themselves hylomorphically composed.²⁴ They are composites of potency and act, therefore, insofar as they are parts of a whole that is composed of potency and act. Integral parts can support accidents and be the subjects of accidental forms. As we will see in Chapter 3, the existence of integral parts is, in some ways, closer to the existence *per se* of the substantial wholes they compose than to the existence *in alio* of accidental and material form.

Substantial form accounts for a substance's existing because it is the principle by which matter exists as the substance. But substances exist as specific things, that is, as members of some natural kind or other. So substantial form accounts for the existence of a thing as a member of a natural kind. The substantial form of a chicken makes prime matter actual so that it exists as a chicken. Substantial form is, therefore, the means by which substances are specifically distinct. Within a species however, individuals are distinguished from one another by their matter. This horse is different from that horse because the form of 'horseness' informs different portions of matter.²⁵ Both substantial form and matter, then, play determining roles. Form determines a thing to one species rather than another, and matter individuates individuals within the same species.

According to Aquinas all material substances, from the basic elements of earth, air, fire, and water to the more complex living, sentient, and rational beings, are composites of prime matter and substantial form. For all substances, substantial form is a principle of

was a hand. Nevertheless, we can imagine chopping a substance up into its integral parts in a way that we cannot imagine chopping it up into its metaphysical ones.

²⁴ Although in Aquinas' view incomplete integral parts do not have their own unique substantial forms (for instance, a 'hand' form or 'eye' form, they are nevertheless composites of matter and the human substantial form, i.e., the soul. (See *ST I.76.8*.)

²⁵ See *DEE* ch.1. For discussion of matter as a principle of individuation see, Wippel (2000a, 351–375); Owens, (1988; 1994); White (1995); Hughes (1996); Dewan (1999). For discussion of the problem of individuation in the middle ages more generally, see King (2000).

existence and organization.²⁶ In living things existence involves the capacity for essential vital operations.²⁷ Our chicken is a living thing, with the capacity for nutrition, sensation, and locomotion. The chicken's substantial form, therefore, is not simply the actuality of a chicken-shaped body; instead it is the actuality of the living, breathing chicken with both its chicken shape and its various capacities for essential chicken activity. The more complex arrangement of matter into a chicken accounts for its ability to sense, digest, forage, etc. Therefore, substantial form in living things is both the principle of existence in living substances and the source of their operative powers. Aquinas, following Aristotle, calls the substantial forms of living things soul.

1.3 Substantial and Accidental Form

While substantial form is responsible for the existence of substances, accidental form is responsible for a substance or a group of substances' existing in a certain way. Aquinas writes,

To see this clearly, note that a substantial form differs from an accidental form in that an accidental form gives such-*esse* and not *esse* absolutely speaking; for instance heat makes its subject *be hot* and not *be* absolutely speaking.²⁸

Accidental forms do not give unqualified or absolute existence. Instead they give existence in a certain way, for instance, as hot. In this sense, accidental forms are the formal principles of the accidents in a substance (as well as accidental arrangements of substances, like the bronze

²⁶ Eleonore Stump characterizes substantial form as the configuration of matter. She writes, "A macro-level material thing is matter organized or configured in some way, where the organization or configuration is dynamic rather than static. That is, the organization of the matter includes causal relations among the material components of the things as well as such static features as shape and spatial location. This dynamic configuration or organization is what Aquinas calls 'form.' A thing has the properties it has, including its causal powers, in virtue of having the configuration it does; the proper operations and functions of a thing derive from its form" (Stump, 2005, 37).

As Stump notes, substantial form is a dynamic configuration responsible not only for the permanent organizational features of a substance but for its principles of essential operation as well.

²⁷ See *ST I.76.1 co.*

²⁸ *ST I.76.4 co* (Freddoso (trans.), 34; Leonine V, 224): "Ad cuius evidentiam, considerandum est quod forma substantialis in hoc a forma accidentali differt quia forma accidentalis non dat esse simpliciter, sed esse tale, sicut calor facit suum subiectum non simpliciter esse, sed esse calidum." See also *ST I.77.6 co.*

statue). Our chicken exists *simpliciter* by means of its substantial form, but it exists *as brown* by means of the accidental form of brownness. Accidental forms, like the accidents they give rise to, exist in another in the sense that they inhere in a subject.²⁹ Aquinas writes,

Likewise, properly speaking, that which is in potency to accidental being is called a subject, but that which is in potency to substantial being is properly called matter. Because that which is in potency to accidental being is called a subject, accidents are said to be in a subject, but substantial form is not said to be in a subject. And according to this, matter differs from a subject because a subject is that which does not have being from that which comes to it, but through itself has complete being, just as a human being does not have being from whiteness.³⁰

In this passage Aquinas distinguishes between substantial and accidental forms by distinguishing that of which they are the actuality. Substantial forms are the actuality of prime matter. Since prime matter does not exist as prime, there is no pre-existing subject in which the substantial form inheres. Rather, through its formal causality, the substantial form constitutes the subject. In contrast, accidental forms inhere in already existing substances. Their existence is most properly said to be *in a subject*.

The distinction between accidental and substantial form provides Aquinas with the resources to distinguish between substantial and accidental change. He writes,

And so when an accidental form appears, one does not say that something is made or generated absolutely speaking; rather, one says that it comes to be such-and-such or that it comes to be disposed in a certain way. Similarly, when an accidental form disappears, one does not say that something is corrupted absolutely speaking; rather, one says that it is corrupted in a certain respect. By contrast a substantial form gives *esse* absolutely speaking, and so at its appearance something is said to be generated absolutely speaking, and at its disappearance something is said to be corrupted absolutely speaking.³¹

²⁹ *ST I.75.2 ad 1-2; DSC a.3 co.*

³⁰ *DPN ch.1* (translation mine; Leonine XLIII, 39): “Item, proprie loquendo, quod est in potentia ad esse accidentale dicitur subiectum, quod vero est in potentia ad esse substantiale, dicitur proprie materia. Quod autem illud quod est in potentia ad esse accidentale dicatur subiectum, signum est quia; dicuntur esse accidentia in subiecto, non autem quod forma substantialis sit in subiecto. Et secundum hoc differt materia a subiecto: quia subiectum est quod non habet esse ex eo quod advenit, sed per se habet esse completum, sicut homo non habet esse ab albedine.”

³¹ *ST I.76.4 co* (Freddoso (trans.), 34; Leonine V, 224): “Et ideo cum advenit forma accidentalis, non dicitur aliquid fieri vel generari simpliciter, sed fieri tale aut aliquo modo se habens, et similiter cum recedit forma accidentalis,

A substance comes into or goes out of existence as the result of the loss or gain of a substantial form. A substance undergoes a change or modification as the result of the loss or gain of an accidental form. Since substantial form makes a thing to exist unqualifiedly, the gain or loss of substantial form results in the generation or corruption of a substance. Nevertheless a substance endowed with existence in virtue of its substantial form remains intact despite the gain or loss of an accidental form.

Aquinas' account of the distinction between substantial form and accidental form is closely connected to his doctrine of the unity of substantial form. This doctrine dictates that each substance has one and only one substantial form, whatever additional accidental forms it may have. Aquinas characterizes substantial form as that by which a substance exists *simpliciter*. Since this requires union with prime matter rather than a pre-existing subject, the very first form to be united to prime matter will give *esse simpliciter*. Any other forms after that first form will necessarily be accidental, because they do not give *esse simpliciter* but modify an existing subject.³² The implication of this doctrine for Aquinas' account of substance is that a thing exists as a member of a natural kind by means of one form. That is, the very same substantial form renders our chicken a three-dimensional bodily thing, a living nutritive thing, and a sensitive thing specifically of the chicken variety.³³ In contrast, subscribers to the plurality of substantial forms view may posit one form that renders a thing a body, a second that renders it alive, a third that renders it an animal, etc.³⁴ Although Aquinas maintains that although we can conceptually distinguish between the corporeity of

non dicitur aliquid corrumpi simpliciter, sed secundum quid. Forma autem substantialis dat esse simpliciter, et ideo per eius adventum dicitur aliquid simpliciter generari, et per eius recessum simpliciter corrumpi.”

³² See, for instance, *ST I.75.4*; *QDA a.9 co.*

³³ See *ST I.75.4*; *DSC a.3*; *QDA a.9*.

³⁴ Aquinas criticizes the Platonists and Avicenna for holding such a view. The plurality of substantial form was endorsed by Bonaventure, Scotus, and Ockham and was associated with the Franciscan tradition. For further reading on the debate concerning the plurality vs. unity of substantial form see, Wippel (2011); Michael (1992); Callus (1961); Roensch (1964).

our chicken and its animality, the chicken exists *as a corporeal thing* and *as a chicken* by means of the same substantial form.

Given Aquinas' doctrine of the unity of substantial form, the actualization of prime matter by substantial form gives rise to a whole substance, and thus, to each of its integral parts. Unlike the bronze of the statue, there are no pre-existing chicken parts that come to be organized into an actually existing chicken by the chicken form. Rather, the chicken's substantial form gives being to the chicken as a whole and in so doing, gives being to all of the chicken parts. Accidental form, in contrast, inheres in an already existing subject. As such it cannot be the actuality of a substance *tout court*. Accidental forms either modify a substance that already exists or they account for the arrangement of pre-existing substances into some further arrangement, as for instance, the form of a house is the actuality of a collection of bricks and beams arranged to provide shelter. In both cases, the accidental form does not give being to the whole and every part. In some cases, it is the actuality of some part, in others it is the actuality of the whole, but accidental form is never the actuality of the whole and of every part.³⁵

Robert Pasnau identifies the part-whole actualization of substances as the *extended criterion* for substancehood and notes that it is most useful, epistemologically, for

³⁵ Aquinas' commitment to the unicity of substantial form and to substantial form as the actuality of the whole and all of the parts depends on his account of prime matter as pure potentiality. If prime matter had some actuality or existence on its own, then, since all actuality or existence is by means of form, prime matter would have its own form. In this case all additional forms, whether they were the forms of chickeness or brownness, would count as accidental forms. Consider, *InMet* VIII.1 [1689] (Rowan (trans.), 558; Marietti, 404): "For if prime matter by nature had a form of its own, it would be an actual thing by reason of that form. Hence, when an additional form would be given [to prime matter], such matter would not exist in an absolute sense by reason of that form but would become this or that being; and then there would be generation in a qualified sense but not in an absolute sense. [Si enim materia prima de se haberet aliquam formam propriam, per eam esset aliquid actu. Et sic, cum superinduceretur alia forma, non simpliciter materia per eam esset, sed fieret hoc vel illud ens. Et sic esset generatio secundum quid et non simpliciter.]"

If prime matter had a form or nature of its own, all additional forms would, at most, qualify or modify something that already exists. In this case, no other forms would actualize a whole in its entirety. Because there can only be one first form, and this form gives *esse simpliciter*, there can only be one substantial form.

distinguishing between substantial and accidental form. He illustrates the use of the extended criterion by applying it to a house. He writes,

When we cast a statue, or build a house, have we given existence to each of the individual parts? That is to say, does changing the shape of the bronze or making walls out of bricks make something new out of each of the parts? To these questions we can give a more confident negative reply.³⁶

Constructing a house involves imposing a particular kind of arrangement on a variety of building materials so as to construct a shelter. But while the parts arranged take on a new role as a result of their arrangement, perhaps as part of a wall, or part of a roof, still, they do not cease to retain the identity they had before the arrangement. Individual bricks and planks may have simply been repositioned or affixed to another, but the bricks and planks still exist as bricks and planks.

Likewise, a house can be destroyed without the destruction of every part. By disassembling all the building materials, the house would cease to be, but all of the former parts of the house would not cease to be. So the house-arrangement is responsible only for the actualization of the whole and some its parts, for instance the house as a whole, the walls, and the roof. But it is not responsible for the actualization of every part of the house as is the substantial form of the chicken. This reveals that the form of the house is an accidental form, whereas the form of the chicken is not.³⁷

³⁶ Pasnau (2002a, 83).

³⁷ We might be tempted to maintain that some parts of the chicken, like some parts of the house, remain after the death of the chicken. When a chicken dies, a corpse remains and we might consider corpse-parts to be chicken-parts. But, following Aristotle, Aquinas maintains that the corpse-parts are not chicken-parts given that they cannot fulfill the same functional roles. Consider, *ST* I.76.8 co (Freddoso (trans.), 44; Leonine V, 232): “And so just as, when the soul departs, [the body] is only equivocally called an animal and a man, like an animal in a picture or one made out of stone, so it is with the hands and eyes, or bones and flesh—as the Philosopher explains. An indication of this is that when the soul departs, no part of the body retains its proper function (*prorium opus*), whereas anything that retains its species retains the operation of that species.[Et ideo, recedente anima, sicut non dicitur animal et homo nisi aequivoce, quemadmodum et animal pictum vel lapideum; ita est de manu et oculo, aut carne et osse, ut philosophus dicit. Cuius signum est, quod nulla pars corporis habet proprium opus, anima recedente, cum tamen omne quod retinet speciem, retineat operationem speciei.]”

Unable to perform their proper life-functions, severed limbs and corpse parts are not identical with their living counterparts. The parts of a living organism are thus distinct from the materials make up a house. The materials may

Therefore, the extended criterion allows us to distinguish between substantial and accidental forms in the following way: Substantial forms, inhering in prime matter, are the actuality of the substance as well as each integral part of the substance. Accidental forms may perfect a whole, or some parts of a whole, but they do not perfect a whole and all of its parts. If a form is the actuality of the whole and every part, it is a substantial form.

1.4 *Esse-Essentia* Composition

Aquinas' metaphysics of substance involves, in addition to hylomorphic composition, a second more fundamental kind of act-potency composition. Just as matter stands to form as potency to act, Aquinas maintains that a substance's essence or nature stands to its being or existence as potency to act. He describes a thing's essence as the answer to the question "what is it?"³⁸ Since all substances are members of some natural kind or species, there is an answer to the question of what they are. This answer corresponds to the thing's essence.

A material substance's essence includes its substantial form, but it also includes the common matter of the substance in addition to its form. The essence of a human being includes the human soul and in addition, the common matter of *flesh* and *bones*. Nonetheless, essences do not include the determinate matter of an individual. So the human essence does not include *this flesh* and *these bones*, which are unique to individual humans.³⁹

According to Aquinas, no creaturely essence includes its *esse* or being.⁴⁰ This is reflected in the fact that we can understand the nature of the horse, the human, or the phoenix without knowing whether any horses, humans, or phoenixes in fact exist. This is

assume additional functions when arranged into a house, which they lose when the house is dismantled. But amidst changes in their arrangement and position they always retain their natural function. See also *QDA* a.10 co.

³⁸ See *InMet* VII.3 [1309].

³⁹ See *DEE* ch.1.

⁴⁰ Aquinas distinguishes between *esse* as the act of existence of substances and *esse* as the fact that a thing exists. See *ST* I.3.4 ad 2 for this distinction. In this section I am concerned with *esse* as the act of existence. See Geach (1955) for a discussion of the meaning of *esse* as the 'act of being.'

because it is not part of any creature's essential nature that it exists. If it were, the creature in question would necessarily exist. Rather, the essences of created substance are potencies for *esse*. As a result, every existing substance is a composite of essence and its existence or *esse*, the act of being by which it exists.⁴¹

In material substance *esse-essentia* composition offers a second type of potency-act composition. Matter stands as potency to form as act and the essence of the hylomorphic composite stands as potency to *esse* as act. However, Aquinas' ontology is not limited to material substances. In addition to material substances he posits God, whom he characterizes as pure actuality, subsistent *esse*, and incorporeal intellectual substances (i.e., angels), which he characterizes as subsisting forms. These angelic intellects are not forms in the sense that they are the actuality of matter or serve as the principles of existence and operation for a material composite.⁴² Instead they are their own principles of existence and substances in their own right.⁴³ Since they are incorporeal, angelic intellects cannot be composites of potency and act as hylomorphic composites are. Nevertheless, they are composites of essence and existence. Their form constitutes their essence, and this essence is related to existence as potency to act.⁴⁴

Aquinas employs this second potency-act relationship to explain how separate substances fail to count as pure actualities. For Aquinas, God alone is pure actuality and subsistent *esse* with no potency whatsoever. He writes,

Although there is no composition of matter and form in an angel, yet there is act and potentiality. And this can be made evident if we consider the nature of material things, which contain a twofold composition. The first is that of form

⁴¹ See Wippel (2000a, 132), MacDonald (1984), and Owens (1965) for discussions of the *esse-essentia* distinction and Aquinas' related argument concerning incorporeal substances and their potency-act composition.

⁴² Since there is no matter to individuate multiple angels with the same form, they cannot be multiplied like material substances of the same species, and so, each angel is a *species* of angel unto itself. See *ST* I.75.7.

⁴³ Separate substances are, for Aquinas, intellectual substances. As we will see in Chapter 2, intellectual operation requires an incorporeal substantial subject.

⁴⁴ See *ST* I.50.2.

and matter, whereby the nature is constituted. Such a composite nature is not its own existence; but existence is its act. Hence the nature itself is related to its own existence as potentiality to act. Therefore if there be no matter, and supposing that the form itself subsists without matter, there nevertheless still remains the relation of the form to its very existence, as of potentiality to act. And such a kind of composition is understood to be in the angels; and this is what some say, that an angel is composed of, whereby he is, and what is, or existence and what is, as Boethius says. For what is, is the form itself subsisting; and the existence itself is whereby the substance is; as the running is whereby the runner runs. But in God existence and what is are not different, as was explained above (q.3 a.4). Hence God alone is pure act.⁴⁵

In this passage, Aquinas describes the two kinds of composition in material things, namely, hylomorphic composition of form and matter and *esse-essentia* composition of the essence of a thing and its act of being.⁴⁶ He notes that form and matter constitute the nature of a thing, i.e., its essence, and that this nature itself stands in relation to *esse* as potency to act. Although separate intelligences are pure form (and therefore do not comprise the kind of hylomorphic composition that material substances do) their natures nevertheless stand in relation to *esse* as potency to act. In this way, separate intelligences fall short of pure actuality. Therefore, all created substances, regardless of whether they are corporeal or incorporeal, are composed of an essence and *esse*. Only God's *essentia* is identical with *esse*.

Material substances, therefore, are composites of potency and act in two ways and these two ways are related to one another. Matter stands as potency to form, and in turn, matter and form stand as potency to *esse*. In one division, form falls on the side of act. In the second, it falls on the side of potency. Lawrence Dewan offers a helpful illustration of the

⁴⁵ *ST. I.50.2 ad 3* (English Dominican Fathers (trans.), bk.3, 8-9; Leonine V, 6): “Ad tertium dicendum quod, licet in Angelo non sit compositio formae et materiae, est tamen in eo actus et potentia. Quod quidem manifestum potest esse ex consideratione rerum materialium, in quibus invenitur duplex compositio. Prima quidem formae et materiae, ex quibus constituitur natura aliqua. Natura autem sic composita non est suum esse, sed esse est actus eius. Unde ipsa natura comparatur ad suum esse sicut potentia ad actum. Subtracta ergo materia, et posito quod ipsa forma subsistat non in materia, adhuc remanet comparatio formae ad ipsum esse ut potentiae ad actum. Et talis compositio intelligenda est in Angelis. Et hoc est quod a quibusdam dicitur, quod Angelus est compositus ex quo est et quod est, vel ex esse et quod est, ut Boetius dicit, nam quod est est ipsa forma subsistens; ipsum autem esse est quo substantia est, sicut cursus est quo currens currit. Sed in Deo non est aliud esse et quod est, ut supra ostensum est. Unde solus Deus est actus purus.” See also See *DEE* ch.3 [73].

⁴⁶ Aquinas often uses the terms ‘nature’ and ‘quiddity’ interchangeably with ‘essence.’ See for instance, *DEE* ch.1.

relationship between form, matter and *esse*.⁴⁷ Dewan asks us to imagine a person with wooden or metal letters, for instance the letters, T, A, and C. These letters can be held up in various arrangements to form words, for instance, ‘CAT’ and ‘ACT.’ Taking English words as our ontologically significant units, we can analyze these words hylomorphically: The individual letters serve as the matter. The arrangement serves as form. Together, they form a word. The word only exists so long as the letters are held up in the proper arrangement. This holding up is analogous to the *esse*, the act of being, possessed by a substance.

Since form, for Aquinas, falls on the side of essence in the second potency act division, it is clearly distinct from *esse*.⁴⁸ Nevertheless form and *esse* are intimately tied in his metaphysical system. He often describes form as the source or principle of a thing’s *esse*, calling form ‘that by which a thing exists.’ The connection between the form and *esse* is especially apparent in his argument for the incorruptibility of the soul and the incorruptibility of separate substances. Regarding the soul he writes,

It must be stated that it is necessary that a human soul be totally incorruptible. To make this clear one must note carefully that whatever belongs to something essentially cannot be taken away from it; for example, one cannot separate animality from man, nor odd and even from number. Now it is obvious that being essentially follows upon form; for each thing has being in accordance with its proper form; hence being cannot in any way be separated from form.⁴⁹

In this passage Aquinas describes *esse* as something that follows essentially on form. This is so because each thing has its *esse* or being in accordance with its proper form. In fact, here Aquinas claims that they are so intimately connected that *esse* cannot be separated from form. Concerning the incorruptibility of separate intelligences, Aquinas writes,

⁴⁷ See Dewan (2006).

⁴⁸ See Dewan (2006, ch.10) for discussion of the distinction and relationship between form and *esse*.

⁴⁹ *QDA* a.14 co (Robb (trans.), 176; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 333-334): “Dicendum quod necesse est omnino animam humanam incorruptibilem esse. Ad cuius evidentiam considerandum est, quod id quod per se consequitur ad aliquid, non potest removeri ab eo. Sicut ab homine non removetur quod sit animal, neque a numero quod sit par vel impar. Manifestum est autem quod esse per se consequitur formam: unumquodque enim habet esse secundum propriam formam; unde esse a forma nullo modo separari potest.”

Now *esse* belongs to a form considered in itself; for each thing is an actual being (*ense actu*) according to its form; whereas matter is an actual being by the form. Consequently a subject composed of matter and form ceases to be actually when the form is separated from the matter. But if the form subsists in its own being, as happens in the angels, as was said above (A. 2), it cannot lose its *esse*.⁵⁰

In this passage Aquinas notes that *esse* belongs to form *per se* or essentially, with respect to its very self. A thing possesses *esse* insofar as it has form. Although forms do not cause the *esse* of their substantial subjects as an efficient cause, they are nevertheless a means by which *esse* is brought to or communicated to the substance.

1.5 *Esse*, Form, and Unity⁵¹

For Aquinas, each complete substance is a unity, a single unified thing.⁵² Indeed, on his view, being and unity are so closely connected that the terms ‘being’ and ‘one’ are convertible.⁵³

This is reflected in their common source or principle, i.e., substantial form. He writes,

⁵⁰ *ST I.50.5 co* (English Dominican Fathers (trans.), slightly modified, bk.3, 15-16; Leonine V, 12): “*Esse autem secundum se competit formae, unumquodque enim est ens actu secundum quod habet formam. Materia vero est ens actu per formam. Compositum igitur ex materia et forma desinit esse actu per hoc, quod forma separatur a materia. Sed si ipsa forma subsistat in suo esse, sicut est in Angelis, ut dictum est, non potest amittere esse.*”

⁵¹ Aquinas distinguishes two uses of the term ‘unity’, one that is interchangeable with being, the other that refers to the first measure, for instance the tone (in music), the syllable (in speech), the unit one (in number). Consider *InMet* III.12 [501] (Rowan (trans.), 184; Marietti, 138-139): “And insofar as unity is predicated of other things [i.e. of created things] it is used in two ways. In one way it is interchangeable with being, and in this way each thing is one by its very essence, as is proved below in Book IV (n.548); and unity in this sense adds nothing to being except merely the notion of undividedness. Unity is used in another way insofar as it has the character of a first measure, either in an absolute sense or with respect to some genus. And this unity if it is both a minimum in the absolute sense and indivisible, is the one which is the principle and measure of number [Unum autem, secundum quod dicitur de aliis rebus, dicitur dupliciter. Uno modo secundum quod convertitur cum ente: et sic unaquaeque res est una per suam essentiam, ut infra in quarto probabitur, nec aliquid addit unum supra ens nisi solam rationem indivisionis. Alio modo dicitur unum secundum quod significat rationem primae mensurae, vel simpliciter, vel in aliquo genere. Et hoc quidem si sit simpliciter minimum et indivisibile, est unum quod est principium et mensura numeri...]” Here, I set aside Aquinas’ discussion of ‘one’ as a unit of measurement.

⁵² Integral parts, like a hand or heart are not complete substances. See Chapter 3 for further discussion of the distinction between complete substances and their integral parts.

⁵³ Aquinas maintains that ‘a human being’ and ‘one man’ refer to the same thing and takes this to be an indication of the interchangeability of ‘being’ and ‘unity.’ Consider *InMet* IV.2 [550] (Rowan (trans.), 203; Marietti, 155): “Any two things which when added to some third thing cause no difference are wholly the same. But when one and being are added to man or to anything at all, they cause no difference. Therefore they are wholly the same. The truth of the minor premise is evident for it is the same thing to say ‘man’ and ‘one man.’ And similarly it is the same thing to say ‘human being’ and ‘the thing that is man;’ and nothing different is expressed when in speaking we repeat the terms, saying, ‘this is a human being, a man, and one man.’ [Quod autem sint idem re, probat duabus rationibus, quarum primam ponit ibi, idem enim, quae talis est. Quaecumque duo addita uni nullam diversitatem afferunt, sunt penitus idem: sed unum et ens addita homini vel cuicumque alii nullam diversitatem afferunt: ergo sunt penitus idem. Minor patet: idem enim est dictum homo, et unus homo. Et similiter est idem dictum, ens homo, vel quod est homo: et

First, an animal would not have oneness absolutely speaking if it had more than one soul. For nothing has oneness absolutely speaking except because of a single form through which the thing has *esse*, since the fact that an entity is a being and the fact that it is unified derive from the same source. And so things that are denominated from different forms, e.g., white man, do not have oneness absolutely speaking.⁵⁴

In this passage, Aquinas defends his claim that animals (including human beings) have only one soul (an instance of his general commitment to the unity of substantial form). He states that a thing exists and is one because of the single substantial form through which it has *esse*. This form imbues the substance with its act of being, its *esse*, and this act of being accounts for the existence of the substance as *a* substance, that is, as a unified, single thing. A single act of being gives rise to a single being. Form is, therefore, the principle *quo* of a substance's existence and its unity.

We can trace the unification of different parts of a substance, for instance the various organs of an animal, to their actualization by a single substantial form. Aquinas writes,

For the soul is the form of the entire body and of each of its parts: this must be asserted. *For since the body of a human being or of any other animal is a natural whole, it will be called one because it has one form; and by this one form it is completed in a way far different from the mere aggregation or assembling of parts that is found in a house and in other artifacts of this kind.*⁵⁵

non demonstratur aliquid alterum cum secundum dictionem replicamus dicendo, est ens homo, et homo, et unus homo.]” ‘Being’ and ‘unity’ are only conceptually different, for unity carries with it the notion of undividedness which is not explicit in ‘being’ (see *InMet* III.12 [501]).

⁵⁴ *ST* 1.76.3 co (Freddoso (trans.), 30-31; Leonine V, 221): “Primo quidem, quia animal non esset simpliciter unum, cuius essent animae plures. Nihil enim est simpliciter unum nisi per formam unam, per quam habet res esse, ab eodem enim habet res quod sit ens et quod sit una; et ideo ea quae denominantur a diversis formis, non sunt unum simpliciter, sicut homo albus.”

Consider also *DSC* a.3 co (FitzPatrick (trans.), 48; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 381): “In the first place, because no individual instance of substance would be ‘one’ in an unqualified sense. For a thing that is one in an unqualified sense does not come into being from two acts, but from potency and act inasmuch as that which is in potency comes into being actually... [Primo quidem, quia nullum individuum substantiae esset simpliciter unum. Non enim fit simpliciter unum ex duobus actibus, sed ex potentia et actu, in quantum id quod est potentia fit actu...]”

⁵⁵ *QDA* a.10 co (Robb (trans.), emphasis mine, 139; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 318): “Est enim forma et totius corporis, et cuiuslibet partis eius. Et hoc necesse est dicere. Cum enim corpus hominis, aut cuiuslibet alterius animalis, sit quoddam totum naturale, dicitur unum ex eo quod unam formam habeat qua perficitur non solum secundum aggregationem aut compositionem, ut accidit in domo, et in aliis huiusmodi.”

Since substantial forms actualize not only the whole, but also every part of a substance, they unify all the parts into a single whole. Since each part exists by means of the very same substantial form, each part exists by means of a single act of existence. Thus, the parts of a substance are unified in virtue of their perfection as part of the same individual. Substances, as beings in the primary sense, are also paradigm examples of unities.

Aquinas calls the sort of robust unity provided by a single substantial form and a single act of being unqualified unity. Those things that possess unqualified unity are *unum simpliciter*, unqualifiedly or absolutely one. He distinguishes this type of robust unity from things that are *unum secundum quid*, one in some respect. Things that are *unum secundum quid* are accidental unities like subject-accident composites (e.g., pale Socrates), unities by aggregation (e.g., a heap of sand, a platoon of soldiers), and accidental arrangements (e.g., a house, a statue). Such qualified entities are the result of more than one form.

Given the convertibility of ‘being’ and ‘one’, those things that are merely *unum secundum quid* are also *ens secundum quid*. Aquinas writes,

Now one is predicated in the same way as being. And substance is being simply whereas accident or being of reason is a being only in a certain respect. Wherefore those things that are one in substance are one simply, though many in a certain respect. Thus, in the genus substance, the whole composed of its integral or essential parts, is one simply: because the whole is being and substance simply, and the parts are beings and substances in the whole. But those things which are distinct in substance, and one according to an accident, are distinct simply, and one in a certain respect: thus many men are one people, and many stones are one heap; which is unity of composition or order. In like manner also many individuals that are one in genus or species are many simply, and one in a certain respect: since to be one in genus or species is to be one according to the consideration of reason.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ *ST I-II.17.4 co* (English Dominican Fathers (trans.), bk.1, 198-199; Leonine VI, 120-121): “Unum autem hoc modo dicitur sicut et ens. Ens autem simpliciter est substantia, sed ens secundum quid est accidens, vel etiam ens rationis. Et ideo quaecumque sunt unum secundum substantiam, sunt unum simpliciter, et multa secundum quid. Sicut totum in genere substantiae, compositum ex suis partibus vel integralibus vel essentialibus, est unum simpliciter, nam totum est ens et substantia simpliciter, partes vero sunt entia et substantiae in toto. Quae vero sunt diversa secundum substantiam, et unum secundum accidens, sunt diversa simpliciter, et unum secundum quid, sicut multi homines sunt unus populus, et multi lapides sunt unus acervus; quae est unitas compositionis, aut ordinis. Similiter etiam multa

In this passage Aquinas identifies substances as beings and unities in an unqualified sense and accidental beings and beings of reason beings and unities in a qualified sense. As examples of the latter, he offers groups of people and piles of rocks. A platoon of soldiers is a unity *secundum quid* because it is composed of many substances. We can talk about the platoon as something that exists and behaves in certain ways because the soldiers in the platoon work together to bring about military outcomes and pursue common ends. Nevertheless the platoon exists only in an attenuated sense, a sense derivative on the existence of the individual humans who make it up. The platoon is merely the result of accidental relations between the individual humans that make it up. The individual humans are primary. The platoon is thus a unity by aggregation and possesses unity to a significantly lesser degree than do the individual soldiers themselves.

Platoons, piles and groups differ from composite substances because they are actually divided rather than simply potentially divided. Their parts are actual in virtue of possessing substantial forms of their own, which confer existence and unity independent of the larger accidental arrangement. Although we may say that a pile exists so long as its parts are arranged appropriately, it is not a *substance* in its own right, but a collection of substances.

Other instances of accidental unity arise when we consider the composite formed by a substance and one or more of its accidents, for instance ‘white Socrates.’ Although Socrates is something *unum simpliciter*, ‘white Socrates’ is an accidental being—the result of an accidental form in addition to the substantially informed Socrates. Qualified unities are the results of accidental forms rather than substantial forms, just as accidental beings are the result of accidental form. Accidental unity thus follows upon accidental form just as substantial unity follows on substantial form. Socrates exists *per se* but ‘white Socrates’ exists

individua, quae sunt unum genere vel specie, sunt simpliciter multa, et secundum quid unum, nam esse unum genere vel specie, est esse unum secundum rationem.”

only accidentally because Socrates happens to be white, that is, because Socrates is accidentally informed with whiteness. *White Socrates* owes its existence to an accidental form as well as a substantial form. Because unity follows upon form, Socrates *simpliciter* is already unqualifiedly unified. Additional accidents in conjunction with Socrates, as an unqualified unity, can only render a being that is qualified both in its existence and in terms of unity. Accordingly, the criterion for a form's being a substantial form also helps to determine whether that of which the form is the actuality is *unum simpliciter*. If a form is substantial, that of which it is the actuality will be a substance and *unum simpliciter*. If a form is accidental, that of which it is the actuality will be an *ens secundum quid*.

Whatever is actualized by one and the same substantial form is thereby unified into something *unum simpliciter*. Nothing denominated by different forms (substantial or accidental) counts as something *unum simpliciter*. At most it is *unum secundum quid*. Whenever multiple components come together to form something new they will not become an *ens simpliciter* nor *unum simpliciter* unless they cease to exist as themselves, that is, unless they cease to be actualized by their own unique substantial forms. No connection short of this is sufficient to render the composite *unum simpliciter*. Neither a substance and its accidents nor two substances, each with its own substantial form, can count as something *unum simpliciter*, no matter how tightly affixed or causally connected.

1.6 The Human Being as a Hylomorphic Substance

Aquinas maintains that human beings, like all other material substances, are hylomorphic composites of prime matter and substantial form.⁵⁷ Like other living substances, the substantial form of the human being is its soul. Given his doctrine of the unicity of substantial form, the human soul is joined to prime matter to form the human body. He writes,

⁵⁷ See *ST* I.75.4.

Therefore, since a soul is a substantial form because it constitutes a human being in a determinate species of substance, there is no other substantial form intermediate between a soul and prime matter; but it is the soul itself which perfects a human being according to diverse levels of perfection of a lower level of being: for example, that it be a body, a living body, and an animal.⁵⁸

In accordance with the doctrine of the unity of substantial form Aquinas identifies the soul as united to prime matter and explicitly states that no other substantial form intervenes between the soul and prime matter. The soul is the actuality of prime matter and the result is the existence of the human being as a corporeal, living, rational animal. He affirms this again in

De Spiritualibus Creaturis:

Thus, therefore, we say that in “this man” there is no other substantial form than the rational soul, and that by it man is not only man, but animal, and living being, and body, and substance, and being.⁵⁹

These passages make explicit that Aquinas conceives of the human being, and in particular, the human body as a hylomorphic unity of soul and prime matter. The body is not a substance in its own right that is then further perfected by the human soul. The soul is a metaphysical ingredient of the body. Without the soul there is no human body. This is significant. Aquinas often says that the soul is united to the body as its form and that it is united to the body without a medium. This locution, ‘united to’, suggests that there are two things, body and soul, and they are connected in some way. It suggests, perhaps, the sort of Cartesian relationship between soul and body. This is not, however, what he has in mind. The soul is a principle of actuality in the body akin to the shape of a statue in the statue.

⁵⁸ *QDA* a.9 co (Robb (trans.), 129; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 314): “Sic igitur cum anima sit forma substantialis, quia constituit hominem in determinata specie substantiae, non est aliqua alia forma substantialis media inter animam et materiam primam; sed homo ab ipsa anima rationali perficitur secundum diversos gradus perfectionum, ut sit scilicet corpus, et animatum corpus, et animal rationale.”

⁵⁹ *DSC* a.3 co (FitzPatrick (trans.), 49; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol. 2, 381): “Sic ergo dicimus quod in hoc homine non est alia forma substantialis quam anima rationalis; et quod per eam homo non solum est homo, sed animal et vivum et corpus et substantia et ens.”

Aquinas is clear that when he states that the soul is the form of the body the notion of ‘body’ involved already includes the soul (as of course it must, for without soul as the principle *quo*, there is no body). He writes,

Hence, the soul is also clearly included in what the soul is called the actuality of, in the same manner of speaking in which one says that heat is the actuality of what is hot, and that light is the actuality of what is bright—not that it is bright taken separately without the light, but that it is bright because of the light. Likewise, the soul is said to be the actuality of a body, etc., because it is through the soul that it is a body, and that it is organic, and that it “has life in potentiality.”⁶⁰

In this passage Aquinas compares the way we call soul the actuality of body to the way we call heat the actuality of what is hot. When we say heat is the actuality of what is hot, we do not mean that the thing is a hot thing considered apart from heat. Heat, as the actuality of the hot thing, is part of the hot thing. Indeed, heat is the actuality of the hot thing precisely because the form of heat is in the hot thing. Likewise when we say that the soul is the actuality of the body, we do not mean that there is a body separate from the soul. Instead we mean that the human body is a human body inasmuch as the soul is its actuality.

The human soul, like the substantial forms of other living things, is both the principle of existence of the human being and the source of its capacity for essential vital operations. For human beings, as rational animals, these essential operations include nutrition, sensation, and intellectual cognition. In Aquinas’ view, these operations are carried out by means of

⁶⁰ *ST* I.76.4 ad 1 (Freddoso (trans.), 35; Leonine V, 224): “Unde manifestum est quod in eo cuius anima dicitur actus, etiam anima includitur; eo modo loquendi quo dicitur quod calor est actus calidi, et lumen est actus lucidi; non quod seorsum sit lucidum sine luce, sed quia est lucidum per lucem. Et similiter dicitur quod anima est actus corporis etc., quia per animam et est corpus, et est organicum, et est potentia vitam habens. Sed actus primus dicitur in potentia respectu actus secundi, qui est operatio. Talis enim potentia est non abiiciens, idest non excludens, animam.”

Consider also *QDA* a.1 ad 15 (Robb (trans.), 51; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 285): “Sometimes in the definitions of forms a subject is said to be without form, as when one says that motion is the act of that which exists in potency. Sometimes the subject is said to be informed, as when it is said that motion is the act of the movable thing and light is said to be the act of what is luminous. It is in this latter way that a soul is said to be the act of a physical, organic body, because a soul makes the body to be an organic body just as light causes something to be luminous. [Ad decimumquintum dicendum quod in definitionibus formarum aliquando ponitur subiectum ut informe, sicut cum dicitur: motus est actus existentis in potentia. Aliquando autem ponitur subiectum formatum, sicut cum dicitur: motus est actus mobilis, lumen est actus lucidi. Et hoc modo dicitur anima actus corporis organici physici, quia anima facit ipsum esse corpus organicum, sicut lumen facit aliquid esse lucidum.]”

forms which he calls powers. Aquinas distinguishes between the powers of the soul and the soul itself.⁶¹ The powers of the soul are proper accidental forms that flow from the soul and serve as the immediate principles of essential human operations.⁶² The soul is, therefore, the remote and originating principle of essential human operations. The powers are the actualities of the various organs and body parts. The power of sight is the actuality of the eye; the power of hearing is the actuality of the ear, etc. All of the powers of sensation and nutrition are the actualities of body parts and organs. For reasons I examine in Chapter 2, however, Aquinas maintains that the operations of intellectual cognition cannot be carried out in or by the body.⁶³ Thus the intellectual powers are not the actuality of a body part or organ. As we will see in Chapter 3, this means that the soul alone, rather than the matter-soul composite (i.e., the body) serves as the subject of the intellectual power and the *per se* operator with respect to intellectual cognition. This reveals that the human soul must be the sort of thing, ontologically speaking, that can be the subject of a power and a *per se* operator.

For Aquinas, to be an operator and subject, the soul must itself be a subsistent part of the human being (like the hand or eye) with existence *per se* in its own right in addition to serving as the substantial form of the human body. Human beings are thus ontologically distinctive among material substances. No other material substance has a substantial form that exists *per se*. In all other cases, the substantial form of a material substance is merely that by which the substance exists. Thus the human soul, according to Aquinas, is similar to material forms in that it does inform prime matter as the actuality of a nutritive, sensitive body. However, it is also similar to the angelic intelligences because it is a form that is, itself,

⁶¹ For further reading on the powers of the soul and their distinction from the soul itself, see Wippel (2000a, 275-295); Field (1984); Wilder (1987).

⁶² See *ST* I.77.6.

⁶³ See *ST* I.75.2; *QDA* a.1; *QDA* a.14.

the subject of *esse*. Human beings are poised on the threshold between the corporeal realm of material substance and the incorporeal realm of the separate intelligences.

Aquinas maintains that the human beings is *unum simpliciter*. As we have seen, in his view something is unqualifiedly one because it and all of the parts that compose it exist by one and the same substantial form and this substantial form endows it with a single act of existence. Everything that exists by means of the same substantial form composes a single substance. Aquinas posits the soul as the substantial form of the human being. The human being can be divided into its corporeal part, the soul-matter composite (i.e., the body) and its incorporeal part, the soul alone. Aquinas maintains that both the soul alone and the body exist by means of the same substantial form: the soul itself. Thus they are unqualifiedly united to form something unqualifiedly one—the human being.⁶⁴

Conclusion

In this chapter I have provided a sketch of Aquinas' metaphysical framework. The central features of his ontology, his notion of existence *per se*, the hylomorphic and esse-essentia compositions of substance, and his account of substantial unity provide us with a basis from which to inquire more deeply into his account of the metaphysical nature of the human being. In the next three chapters I consider whether Aquinas' claims that the rational soul is incorporeal, subsistent, and incorruptible threaten his account of the human being as something *unum simpliciter*. In the final two chapters I return to the nature of the soul's union with the body and examine Aquinas' arguments for the claim that the soul is the substantial form of the body.

⁶⁴ For further discussion of Aquinas' general account of the nature of the human being and human unity, see Abel (1995); Eberl (2004; 2010); Klima (2009; 2007; 2002), Hoffman (1986); Cross (2002).

Chapter 2: The Incorporeity of the Rational Soul

The first distinctive characteristic that Aquinas attributes to the rational soul, or indeed, the rational part of it, is incorporeity. In some sense, all forms, including the forms of material substances, are immaterial precisely because they are *forms* rather than matter. But by calling the rational soul (or some part of it) incorporeal Aquinas is not simply claiming that the human soul is form, not matter. Instead he means to say that the human soul is a form, which is not, as he describes it, wholly embedded in matter. To understand what this means let us return to the bronze statue. When we consider the bronze statue, there is no part of the shape or form of the statue that is not the actuality of some bit of bronze. Every part of the matter involved is arranged into some part of the shape, every part of the shape is the shape of some part of the matter. The actuality of the form is fully exhausted by the matter it informs. In contrast, a form that is not wholly embedded in matter is one whose actuality is not completely exhausted by the matter it informs. There is more to the form than what is expressed in the matter informed. Aquinas believes that the human soul is the only form that is the actuality of matter, but is not wholly embedded in matter. To the extent that the soul extends beyond and supersedes the potency of matter, it is incorporeal.

The incorporeity of the human soul (or some part of the soul) is a result of the rational nature of the human being. Aquinas, following Aristotle, argues that the intellective part of the human being is not a body and does not use a body as an instrument in its operation. He takes this to show that the intellective part of the human being is form alone, apart from matter. Human beings are composites of matter and form, so if intellective cognition cannot take place in matter, there must be more to the formal aspect of the human being such that it can serve as the human being's incorporeal intellective part, that is, the part of the human being that understands. Thus the soul extends beyond the body.

Aquinas offers several arguments for the incorporeity of intellectual cognition. In two of his most prominent arguments he begins by identifying some aspect of the object or range of objects of our understanding and argues that such an object can only be understood by means of an incorporeal power.¹ In the first of these he argues that because we understand the natures of all material things we must understand by means of an incorporeal power. In the second, he argues that because the objects of understanding are universal in nature we must understand by means of an incorporeal power. By considering Aquinas' arguments for the incorporeity of the intellectual power we can clarify what it means for the intellectual part of the soul to be incorporeal, which in turn allows us to determine whether the incorporeity of the intellectual power threatens his account of the human being as something *unum simpliciter*.

The chapter has eight sections. I devote §§2.1-2.3 to presenting the basic aspects of Aquinas' account of the intellectual cognition. I focus on those features that bear on our understanding of his arguments for incorporeity. I introduce the two intellectual powers, the possible and agent intellects, and his account of the objects of our cognition as well as the role of intelligible forms or *species* in our understanding. In §2.4 I present the first of Aquinas' two most prominent arguments for the incorporeity of the intellect. Aquinas' argument has been criticized by interpreters who claim that he is not entitled to one of the central premises in the argument. In §2.5 I defend Aquinas' argument against this charge. Nevertheless, I raise an additional concern that I take to be detrimental to the success of his argument. In §2.6 I present his argument for the incorporeity of the intellect from our understanding of all material natures and the argument from our understanding of universals. In §2.7 I examine how Aquinas' commitment to the incorporeity of the intellectual part of the soul affects his

¹ I focus on these arguments because they are prominent in Aquinas' work and because each is presented in connection with his arguments for the subsistence and incorruptibility of the rational soul.

account of human ontology more generally. In §2.8 I consider whether the commitment to incorporeity threatens his account of the human being as something *unum simpliciter*. Ultimately I conclude that incorporeity *per se* is not problematic for human unity.

2.1 Intellectual Cognition: The Intentional Potency of the Possible Intellect

Aquinas adopts the Aristotelian notion that powers are individuated by their acts and acts are individuated by their objects.² On this view, the nature of a power is at least partially determined by how it must act, and how it must act is at least partially determined by how it is related to its object. These metaphysical commitments allow Aquinas to argue for claims about the nature of the intellect based on claims about the nature of its object. His two most prominent arguments for the incorporeity of the intellect do just this. Starting with an assumption about the nature or range of the intellect's object, he concludes that the cognition of such objects, or such a range of objects, requires an incorporeal intellectual power. Because of this methodology, his arguments draw heavily on his account of the mechanisms and objects of intellectual cognition.

For Aquinas the intellect comprises the principles by which the human being understands.³ He divides the intellect into an active power, the agent intellect, and a passive power, the possible intellect. The agent intellect produces intelligible forms based on images collected through sense experience. The possible intellect receives these forms, is actualized by them, and through them understands. In the remainder of this section and the next, I discuss the role of the possible intellect. I turn to the role of the agent intellect in §2.3.

² See *QDA* a.13.

³ For discussion of Aquinas' account of the intellectual powers and the mechanisms of cognition, see Kretzmann (1993, 128-159; 1992); Haldane (2008); Dewan (1996), Kenny (1993, 41-58). For discussion of the nature of intellectual cognition, see Owens (2008).

Aquinas endorses the Aristotelian notion that a cognitive power cognizes an object by, in some sense, becoming that object.⁴ This is sometimes called the doctrine of the *identity of knower and known*.⁵ On his view humans are, in principle, capable of understanding all material natures.⁶ So in principle, the possible intellect must be capable of taking on all corporeal natures. For this reason, Aquinas often compares it to prime matter.⁷ Just as prime matter is in potency to all material forms, the possible intellect is in potency to all material forms once they have been rendered intelligible.

Nevertheless the potency of the possible intellect is significantly different from that of prime matter. When prime matter is actualized, it comes to exist as a certain sort of thing. For instance, when actualized by the form of ‘chickenness’ prime matter comes to exist as an actual chicken, with flesh, bones, and feathers. In contrast, when the possible intellect receives the form of ‘chickenness’, it does not come to exist as an actual chicken, instead it comes to understand ‘chickenness.’ So, although both prime matter and the intellect are actualized in some way through their respective forms, the result is very different.

To account for this difference, Aquinas introduces a distinction between natural and spiritual change. He writes,

Now there are two kinds of change, natural change and spiritual change. A change is natural insofar as the form of the thing that effects the change is received according to natural being in the thing changed, e.g., heat in a thing that is heated. The change is spiritual insofar as the form of the thing that effects the change is received according to spiritual being in the thing changed,

⁴ See Aristotle, *De Anima* III.4 430a4. However, as Pasnau (1997, 96) notes, it is not clear to what extent Aristotle endorsed such a view.

⁵ Pasnau (1997, 295-305) argues that the doctrine of the identity of knower and known, which is often cited as a response to sceptical worries concerning the connection between our thoughts and the external world, is in fact ineffectual in responding to such worries.

⁶ See *ST* I.75.2 co.

⁷ See *SCG* II.78 [4]. Averroes posited the material intellect as an intellectual analogue to prime matter (see Averroes, *Long Commentary on the De Anima* (hereafter *LCDA*) III.5 [387-8]) and Aquinas attributes the analogy between the possible intellect and prime matter to him. See, for instance, *DV* q.10 a.8 co.

e.g., the form of a color in the pupil, which does not thereby become colored.⁸

In this passage Aquinas states that natural change occurs when a form is received according to natural being, *esse naturale*, and a spiritual change occurs when a form is received according to spiritual being, *esse spirituale* or, as he calls it elsewhere, *esse intentionale*.⁹ While this, in itself, is not particularly illuminating, the examples of heat and color are helpful. When the air receives the form of heat from the fire, it becomes actually hot just as the fire is actually hot. When the eye sees purple, however, the eye takes on the form of ‘purpleness’ without actually turning purple. The form of purple exists naturally in the purple object, but in the eye, the form of purple exists only intentionally. The reception of form according to natural being, therefore, results in a thing’s actual determination by means of the form. The form makes the subject actually such-and-such. In contrast, the reception of form according to *esse spirituale* results (for cognitive powers) in a cognitive grasp. Although the power takes on the form as its actuality, it does not actually become a corporeal composite determined in accordance with the form.

Aquinas’ example makes clear that the possible intellect is not the only power that receives forms with *esse intentionale*. Indeed, all cognition, including sensory cognition, is carried out by means of forms with *esse intentionale*.¹⁰ Like the intellect, when the power of

⁸ *ST I.78.3 co* (Freddoso (trans.), 71; Leonine V, 254) slightly modified: “Est autem duplex immutatio, una naturalis, et alia spiritualis. Naturalis quidem, secundum quod forma immutantis recipitur in immutato secundum esse naturale, sicut calor in calefacto. Spiritualis autem, secundum quod forma immutantis recipitur in immutato secundum esse spirituale; ut forma coloris in pupilla, quae non fit per hoc colorata.” For further discussion of the distinction between natural and spiritual reception, existence, and change, see *InDA II.14* [418]; *InDA II.24* [551-554].

⁹ Aquinas uses both the terms ‘*spirituale*’ and ‘*intentionale*’ to describe the way that forms exist in cognitive powers and contrasts these modes of existence with the way that forms exist in things with *esse naturale*. Thus he seems to use the terms interchangeably. He draws the distinction using ‘*intentionale*’ in *ST I.56.2 ad 3*; *ST I.67.3 co*; *DV q.22 a.3 ad 4* and uses the phrase ‘*esse intentionale*’ to characterize the mode of being of sensible and intelligible forms in *DSC a.1 ad 11*; *InDA II l.14*. He draws the distinction using ‘*spirituale*’ in *ST I.78.3 co*; *InSent IV d.44 q.2 a.1 qc.3 co*. Aquinas is indebted to Averroes for his account of intentional existence. See Deborah Black (2010) for discussion of intentionality and intentional being in Averroes and the Islamic philosophical tradition.

¹⁰ As this shows, the distinction between *esse naturale* and *esse intentionale* does not simply distinguish between forms that exist in matter and forms that exist in an incorporeal substance (or that *are* an incorporeal substance, as in the case of angels). Forms received according to *esse intentionale* can inhere in and perfect corporeal subjects like the sense organs. Angels (who simply are their substantial forms) subsist by means of themselves (i.e., their

sight or of hearing take on form, they come to exist as perfected by that form, not by actually becoming their object, but by actually seeing or hearing it.¹¹ So like the possible intellect, the sense powers receive forms with *esse intentionale*.¹²

The distinction between natural and intentional reception, change, and being, allows Aquinas to account for the potency of the possible intellect and of other cognitive powers as a potency for forms according to *esse intentionale*.¹³ He most frequently calls these intentional forms *species*. Intelligible *species* perfect the possible intellect. Sensible *species* perfect the sense organs. *Species* are received by the cognitive power, and once informed by a *species*, the cognitive power cognizes.¹⁴

Aquinas makes clear that *species* are not themselves the object of cognition despite their essential role in intellectual cognition. Instead, the possible intellect understands an

substantial forms) according to *esse naturale* whereas they possess the forms by which they understand according to *esse intentionale* (see *ST* I.56.2 ad 3). The *naturale/intentionale* distinction, therefore, cuts across the incorporeal/corporeal divide.

¹¹ The distinction between *esse naturale* and *esse spirituale* is significant for explaining the cognitive nature of certain types of beings (for instance angels, humans, and brute animals) and the non-cognitive nature of others (for instance rocks and plants). By positing intentional existence in addition to natural existence, Aquinas can account for the presence of additional forms in a substance (besides those naturally determining the matter of a properly disposed substance), without admitting the substance's corruption or natural modification. Cognition requires the ability to take on the forms of other things without corruption. If something can only receive forms naturally, then that thing or its accidents will be corrupted when a new form is received. Accordingly the disposition for intentional reception of form is a necessary condition for cognition. It is not, however, sufficient (see n.11 below).

¹² For further discussion of Aquinas' account of sensation, see Cohen (1982); Haldane (1983); Hoffman (1990); Hamlyn (1961, 46-51).

Aquinas also believes that the media involved in sensation (air, for instance, and in some cases water and transparent stones can receive forms according to *esse intentionale*. Although the media do not possess cognitive powers, and therefore do not come to see, hear, smell, etc. when they receive forms intentionally, these forms can nevertheless come to inhere in the media (see *InDA* II.14 [418]; *InDA* II.20 [493]). Pasnau (1997) argues that the media's capacity for spiritual reception of forms is *sufficient* for their having some low level of cognition. Pasnau's interpretation is problematic because Aquinas clearly states that air cannot sense despite its role as a medium of sensation. Consider, *InDA* II.24 [563] (Pasnau (trans.), 287; Leonine XLV.1, 171): "Air, then, is not affected in such a way that it senses, because it does not have a sensory power. Instead, it is affected in such a way that it is sensible—inasmuch, that is, as it is the medium in sensation. [Aer autem non sic patitur ut sentiat, quia non habet potentiam sensitivam; sed sic patitur ut sit sensibilis, in quantum scilicet est medium in sensu.]"

This passage strongly suggests that spiritual reception is not sufficient for cognition. Although a substance may be capable of serving as a subject of forms with *esse spirituale*, if the subject into which these forms are received is not a cognitive power, the subject will not cognize them. See Moser (2011) for a critique of Pasnau's interpretation.

¹³ Aquinas claims that the ancients erred because, they did not recognize the distinction between *esse spirituale* and *esse naturale*. While they held that the intellect had to become assimilated to its object, they believed that it had to become *naturally* like its object. See *InDA* I.4 [43].

¹⁴ For the role of intelligible *species* see, *SCG* I.53. For sensible *species* see, *InSent* II d.17 q.2 a.1 co; *ST* I.14.1 co; *SCG* II.98.

external thing through its coming to be informed by an intelligible *species* and the sense powers sense external sensible objects through their coming to be informed by a sensible *species*.¹⁵ *Species* are the *id quo* rather than the *id quod* of cognition.¹⁶ This is significant. If the object cognized were the *species* itself, we would never have intellectual understanding of anything beyond the confines of our own intellects and wouldn't sense anything beyond what was in our own sense organs.¹⁷ In other words, we wouldn't come to know things out in the world. For Aquinas, then, both intelligible and sensible *species* are intentional in the sense that they are of or about some thing in the world.¹⁸ They are forms through which we understand or sense some other thing.

Scholars disagree over how or what accounts for a *species*' intentional content, that is, what a *species* is of.¹⁹ Aquinas often calls *species* likenesses or similitudes of the objects they represent.²⁰ His characterization of *species* as likenesses of their objects suggests that *species* bring about cognition of a given intelligible object because they are relevantly similar to that object. He also sometimes describes *species* as the intentional counterparts of forms existing

¹⁵ Only in cases of self-knowledge where the intellect reflects back on its own act can the intelligible *species* be called the object of cognition. See *InDA* III.8 [718].

¹⁶ This reflects Aquinas' commitment to a form of realism about the object of cognition—the intellect understands something outside of itself, not the intelligible *species* present within. See *InDA* III.8 [718].

¹⁷ See *ST* I.85.2.

¹⁸ In certain passages Aquinas states that intelligible *species* represent their objects. See for instance *DV* q.8 a.1 co and *QDA* a.3 ad 7. This has led to considerable debate about whether, and to what extent, Aquinas endorses a representationalist account of intellectual cognition. See, for instance, Pannaccio (2001); Pini (2015).

¹⁹ Stump (2005, 249) and Pasnau (1997) defend the view that a *species* is of the nature of a cow because it is formally the same as the cow. Crucially however, the form of the cow exists naturally in individual cows, and intentionally in the intellect. This aligns nicely with how Aquinas describes the difference between the natural and spiritual existence of forms and characterizes cognition as the taking on of forms with spiritual existence. However, some interpreters have objected to this on the grounds that it poses problems for the representational nature of the *species*. See, for instance, Pannaccio (2001) and Brower and Brower-Toland (2008). Brower and Brower-Toland (2008) defend a primitivist account on which a *species* possesses its intentional content primitively. However I believe that the central objections raised against Pasnau and Stump can be satisfactorily answered (see Baltuta (2013) for a response to Pannaccio and Brower/Brower-Toland objections). These debates do not bear directly on Aquinas' discussion of the incorporeity of the intellect. For our purposes it is sufficient to think of *species* as the intentional forms of the objects of cognition that come to inhere in cognitive powers and the media involved in cognition and whose inherence in cognitive powers results in the cognition of the object of which the species is a form.

²⁰ See *ST* I.85.2 co (Freddoso (trans.), 170; Leonine V, 334): “Thus, the likeness of a visible thing is that in virtue of which the power of sight sees, and the likeness of a thing that is understood, i.e., the intelligible species, is the form in virtue of which the intellect has intellectual understanding. [Unde similitudo rei visibilis est secundum quam visus videt; et similitudo rei intellectae, quae est species intelligibilis, est forma secundum quam intellectus intelligit.]” See also *InDA* III.8 [718-719]; *ST* I.85.2 ad 1; *SCG* III.53; *InSent* I.4.3.1 ad 4.

naturally in material objects.²¹ This suggests that a *species* is the likeness of its object because it is formally the same as its object, but exists according to *esse spirituale* while the form in the object exists according to *esse naturale*.

The doctrine of intelligible *species* and the notion of *likeness* play an important role in how Aquinas understands the doctrine of the identity of knower and known. When the intellect understands an object, it does so not because it actually becomes its object according to natural existence, *esse naturale*, but because it takes on an intentional likeness of its object.²² It takes on a *species* of that thing. In this way the intellect becomes formally like the object of cognition. Aquinas writes,

Now, soul is not the things themselves, as they [the ancient naturalists] supposed, because a stone is not in the soul, but a *species* of a stone. And it is in this way that intellect actualized is said to be the actualized object of intellectual cognition itself, insofar as the *species* of the object of intellectual cognition is a *species* of actualized intellect.²³

This alters the identity principle significantly. A knower is said to become the object it knows because it takes on the likeness of that object by receiving a *species* of the object. Aquinas often speaks in terms of the identity of knower and known without explicitly qualifying it in terms of the likeness provided by intelligible *species*. It is important, therefore, to interpret passages where he appeals to the doctrine of the identity of knower and known in accordance with his doctrine of intelligible *species*.

²¹See for instance, *DV* q.19 a.1 co; *InSent* II d.19 q.1 a.3 ad 1; *InDA* II.24 [553].

²²Consider, *InDA* II.12 [377] (Pasnau (trans.), 199; Leonine XLV.1, 115): “And every cognition is produced by the cognized thing’s somehow being in the one cognizing—namely, in virtue of a likeness. For what is actually cognizing is the very thing actually cognized. [Cognitio autem omnis fit per hoc, quod cognitum est aliquo modo in cognoscente, scilicet secundum similitudinem. Nam cognoscens in actu, est ipsum cognitum in actu.]” See also *ST* I.85.2 ad 1.

²³*InDA* III.13 [789] (Pasnau (trans.), 391; Leonine XLV.1, 236): “Non autem anima est ipsa res, sicut illi posuerunt, quia lapis non est in anima, sed species lapidis. Et per hunc modum dicitur intellectus in actu esse ipsum intellectum in actu, in quantum species intellecti est species intellectus in actu.”

2.2 The Proper Object of Intellectual Cognition

We have already seen that for Aquinas the objects of understanding are not the intelligible *species* themselves but rather what the intelligible *species* are of. He identifies the objects of understanding as the natures, or *quiddities* (the *what-it-is-ness*) of material things. He further maintains that our understanding of these *quiddities* is universal in character. He rejects the Platonic notion that the natures of material substances exist apart from those composites as Ideas or Forms. ‘Chickenness’, ‘horseness’, and ‘oak-treeness’ exist only in individual chickens, horses, and oak trees. There are no separate subsisting universals that we come to understand. Nevertheless, he maintains that we can understand the natures of material substances as universals by considering them apart from the individual and particularizing features that necessarily attach to them in their individual instances.²⁴

In Aquinas’ metaphysical system, all material composites have certain aspects or features that are part of their essential nature as the kind of thing that they are. Cows are essentially four-footed animals with cloven hooves and nutritive powers that involve the chewing of cud. But each cow, in virtue of being composed of different determinate matter, has its own particular features that are not part of its shared or common essential nature. Some cows are naturally horned while others are polled. Some are black and white while others are brown. These non-essential features are not part of the common nature or *quiddity* of a cow, but are particular features of individual cows. When the intellect understands the nature of ‘bovinity’, therefore, its understanding includes only the common nature shared by

²⁴ *ST* I.85.2 ad 2 (Freddoso (trans.), 171; Leonine V, 334): “Similarly, the human-ness that is understood intellectually exists only in this or that man; but the fact that human-ness is apprehended without individual conditions—i.e., the fact that human-ness is abstracted, and that an intention of universality results from this—happens to human-ness insofar as it is perceived by the intellect, in which there is a likeness of the nature of the species without a likeness of the individual principles. [Similiter humanitas quae intelligitur, non est nisi in hoc vel in illo homine, sed quod humanitas apprehendatur sine individualibus conditionibus, quod est ipsam ^{abstrahi}, ad quod sequitur intentio universalitatis, accidit humanitatis secundum quod percipitur ab intellectu, in quo est similitudo naturae speciei, et non individualium principiorum.]” See also *SCG* II.75 [8]; *InDA* III.8 [717].

all cows to the exclusion of the particularized non-essential features of individual cows. In this way, universality attaches to a *quiddity* when it is intellectually understood. Our understanding is of something universal in nature, despite the fact that no universals exist *as universals* in Aquinas' ontology.

Aquinas' account of *quiddities* is heavily influenced by Avicenna.²⁵ Avicenna believed that quiddities exist either in a concrete substance or in a mind. So quiddities always exist as individuals subject to individuating conditions in a thing or in a mind. Nevertheless Avicenna admitted a threefold consideration of a *quiddity*: A *quiddity* can be considered a) insofar as it exists in a concrete thing, b) insofar as it exists in the intellect, and c) insofar as it is considered absolutely—that is, in abstraction from either kind of existence.²⁶ The absolute consideration of a *quiddity* differs from the others since there is no corresponding entity, either in a mind or in the world, to which it refers. *Quiddities* never exist universally, but it is according to this absolute consideration that we understand the nature apart from the particularizing features.

By introducing intelligible *species* Aquinas replaces the claim that quiddities exist in a mind with the claim that a *species* of the quiddity exists in the mind while quiddities themselves exist only in concrete particulars. He retains, however, the notion of a nature considered absolutely. He writes,

It should be said that according to Avicenna in his metaphysics, there is a threefold consideration of some nature. In one way the nature is considered according to the being that it has in singular things, just as the nature of a stone is in this stone and in that stone. But another is the consideration of some nature according to its intelligible being; just as the nature of the stone is considered as it is in the intellect. The third is the absolute consideration of the nature, as it is abstracted from either of the two kinds of being. According to this consideration, the nature of the stone, or of whichever other, is considered

²⁵ See Black (1999) for a discussion of Avicenna's influence on Aquinas' views concerning *quiddities* and their role in intellectual cognition.

²⁶ See Avicenna, *Metaphysics of the Healing* 1.5, 5.1-2.

only in regards to that which belongs *per se* to the nature.²⁷

The *quiddity*, under any of the three considerations, contains only those features common to a particular kind and excludes any and all individuating conditions; yet whenever a *quiddity* exists, it is always subject to individuation, either by the determinate matter of a particular substance or as an individuated *species* in an individuated human intellect. But the absolute consideration of the *quiddity* allows us to abstract from all particularizing features. The content grasped in intellectual cognition is that of the *quiddity* considered absolutely. Since it includes no individuating conditions the content is universal in nature.

Aquinas accounts for the universal character of our intellectual cognition by appealing to the nature of the intelligible *species* by which we understand. He writes,

Rather it is the materiality of a cognitive [power] and of the *species* through which it has cognition that impedes the cognition of a universal. For just as every action follows the mode of the form by which its agent acts—in the way that the action of giving warmth follows the mode of heat—so too a cognition follows the mode of the species by which the knower has the cognition. But it is obvious that a common nature is made distinct and is multiplied in accord with the individuating principles, which come from the side of the matter. Therefore, if the form by which a cognition comes to be is a material form that is not abstracted from the conditions of matter, then it will be a likeness of the nature of a species or genus insofar as that nature is made distinct and multiplied by individuating principles, and so the nature will not be able to be known in its commonality. By contrast, if the species is abstracted from the conditions of the material individual, then it will be a likeness of the nature in the absence of the principles that divide and multiply it; and it is in this way that there is cognition of a universal.²⁸

²⁷ *QQ VIII q.1 a.1 co* (translation mine; Leonine XXV.1, 51) “Dicendum, quod, secundum Avicennam in sua metaphysica, triplex est alicuius naturae consideratio. Una, prout consideratur secundum esse quod habet in singularibus; sicut natura lapidis in hoc lapide et in illo lapide. Alia vero est consideratio alicuius naturae secundum esse suum intelligibile; sicut natura lapidis consideratur prout est in intellectu. Tertia vero est consideratio naturae absoluta, prout abstrahit ab utroque esse; secundum quam considerationem consideratur natura lapidis, vel cuiuscumque alterius, quantum ad ea tantum quae per se competunt tali naturae.”

²⁸ *ST I.76.2 ad 3* (Freddoso (trans.), 27-28; Leonine V, 217): “Sed materialitas cognoscentis et speciei per quam cognoscitur, universalis cognitionem impedit. Sicut enim omnis actio est secundum modum formae qua agens agit, ut calefactio secundum modum caloris; ita cognitio est secundum modum speciei qua cognoscens cognoscit. Manifestum est autem quod natura communis distinguitur et multiplicatur secundum principia individuantia, quae sunt ex parte materiae. Si ergo forma per quam fit cognitio, sit materialis, non abstracta a conditionibus materiae, erit similitudo naturae speciei aut generis, secundum quod est distincta et multiplicata per principia individuantia, et ita non

In this passage Aquinas notes that every action occurs by means of a form. This form determines the action in some way. Since the form by which the possible intellect cognizes is a *species*, he concludes that mode of intellectual cognition will correspond to the mode of the *species*. Next he identifies matter as the principle of individuation by which quiddities exist in their concrete instances and applies this to the *species* themselves: If the form by which we cognize is itself subject to material individuating conditions (that is, if it is corporeal), it will be a likeness of a nature that includes material individuating principles. Such a form will not lead to cognition of a common nature insofar as it is common. Instead it will lead to cognition of an individuated common nature—a singular thing. If, however, the form by which we cognize is abstracted from the conditions of matter, it will be the likeness of a nature that is also abstracted from the material conditions that individuate and multiply it in its instances. Such a form will lead to cognition of the nature insofar as it is common. It will lead to cognition of a universal.

Aquinas appeals to the fact that intelligible *species* have been abstracted from matter and material conditions to explain the universality of intellectual cognition. He writes,

The intellect's understanding of the generic or specific nature apart from the individuating principles is due to the condition of the intelligible *species* received in it, for the *species* is immaterialized by the agent intellect through being abstracted from matter and material conditions whereby a particular thing is individuated. Consequently, the sensitive powers are unable to know universals; they cannot receive an immaterial form, since whatever is received by them is always received in a corporeal organ.²⁹

For Aquinas, our understanding is universal because we understand the nature of a thing apart from any individuating principles that attach to it in its instances. This passage tells us

poterit cognosci natura rei in sua communitate. Si vero species sit abstracta a conditionibus materiae individualis, erit similitudo naturae absque iis quae ipsam distinguunt et multiplicant, et ita cognoscetur universale.”

²⁹ SCG II.75 [8] (Anderson (trans.), 235; Leonine XIII, 474): “Quod autem intelligat intellectus naturam generis vel speciei denudatam a principiis individuantiis, contingit ex conditione speciei intelligibilis in ipso receptae, quae est immaterialis effecta per intellectum agentem, utpote abstracta a materia et conditionibus materiae, quibus aliquid individuatur. Et ideo potentiae sensitivae non possunt cognoscere universalia: quia non possunt recipere formam immaterialem, cum recipiant semper in organo corpora.” See also *QDA* a.3 ad 7; *ST* 1.85.2 ad 2.

three additional important things. First, the universality of intellectual cognition is due to the condition of the *species* by which the cognition occurs. That is, something about the nature of the *species* by which we understand results in our understanding a nature apart from individuating principles. Second, whether the object of cognition is singular or universal is a matter of whether the *species* in the intellect includes or excludes material individuating conditions. If the *species* is a likeness of the nature along with individuating conditions, the object of cognition is a singular thing. If the *species* is a likeness of the nature apart from individuating conditions, the object of cognition is a universal. Third, whether or not a *species* is a likeness of a nature with or apart from individuating conditions depends on whether it is subject to material individuating conditions or has been abstracted from material individuating conditions. If a *species* is subject to material individuating conditions (which it necessarily is if it is the actuality of a material subject) then the object cognized by means of it will necessarily include material individuating conditions. If, however, a *species* is free from matter and material individuating conditions because it has been abstracted from them, then the object cognized by means of it will likewise lack material individuating conditions.³⁰

As Aquinas notes in the passage above, these considerations explain why sensation leads only to cognition of singular things. On his view, the powers of sensation are the actualities of bodily organs.³¹ The power of sight is the actuality of the eye; the power of hearing is the actuality of ears, and so on. Sensible *species* exist in these organs as their perfection and actuality in the way that the intelligible *species* exist in the possible intellect as

³⁰ These passages may seem to suggest that any incorporeal *species* must represent a universal just as any corporeal *species* must represent a singular. This is not, however, the case. Although Aquinas does maintain that any corporeal *species* will necessarily represent a singular, not all incorporeal *species* represent universals. He maintains that the intelligible *species* used by angels and the separated soul, which are infused into separate intellects rather than produced through the process of abstraction (described in section §2.4) can bring about cognition of singular things. (See *ST I.57.2 co*) Even in his discussions of such infused *species* and their representation of singulars he insists that incorporeal *species* produced through the process of abstraction cannot represent singulars (see *QDA a.20 co*). Incorporeity is therefore necessary, but not sufficient for the representation of a universal.

³¹ See, for instance, *ST I.76.8*.

its perfection and actuality.³² Accordingly sensible *species* are the actuality of material subjects and are subject to material individuating conditions. Thus, sensible *species* are limited to singular objects, like *that redness* or *this vanilla scent*, and cannot lead to cognition of a universal.³³ Their corporeity ensures that they represent only singular things.

2.3 Agent Intellect and the Bodily Contribution to Intellective Cognition

As a result of the connections between the nature of a *species* and the nature of the object it represents, intelligible *species* must be incorporeal in order to bring about cognition of material natures considered universally. Incorporeal *species*, however, do not exist outside the mind as corporeal sensible *species* do.³⁴ Sensible *species* exist as the actuality of material subjects (i.e., as corporeal forms) in sensible objects, the media of sensation, and the sense organs. In the case of sight the color in a wall moves the eye to see it when a *species* of the color travels from the wall, through the air, and is received into the eye. As a result, the *species* by which sensation occurs are readily accessible to the sense organs. They need only be received from the sensible objects in the world.

But intelligible *species* of material things do not exist, ready to hand, in material things, and Aquinas maintains that corporeal forms are unable to move the possible intellect so as to be received by it.³⁵ As a result, the possible intellect cannot receive its *species* simply

³² See *ST I.77.5*.

³³ See *QDA a.13 ad 19*; *DV q.10 a.5 co*; *DV q.10 a.8 co*.

³⁴ Although sense *species* exist with *esse spirituale* in organs and media, they are nevertheless subject to material individuation conditions.

³⁵ Corporeal forms are necessarily singular whereas the possible intellect receives universals. Since universals are, what Aquinas calls, of a 'higher genus', the lower corporeal forms cannot move the intellect, that is, they cannot be received by it. Consider *QDA a.4 ad 5* (Robb (trans.), 80; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 296): "A sensible, because it is something particular, cannot impress either in a sense power or in the medium, a *species* of a different genus, since *species*, both in the medium and in the sense power, can be nothing other than particular. Now the possible intellect does receive *species* which belong to another genus than those which are in the imagination, since the possible intellect receives universal *species* and the imagination contains only particular *species*. And therefore, for intelligible objects, we have need of an agent intellect, but in the realm of sensible objects we do not need an additional active power, but rather all the sense powers are passive powers. [Ad quantum dicendum quod sensibile, cum sit quoddam particulare, non imprimit nec in sensum nec in medium speciem alterius generis; cum species in medio et in sensu non sit nisi particularis. Intellectus autem possibilis recipit species alterius generis quam sint in imaginatione; cum intellectus possibilis recipiat

through the presence of the common natures in material things in the way that the eye sees in the presence of a colored object. Instead intelligible *species* must be produced before they can be received by the possible intellect.

Aquinas posits the agent intellect as a second intellective power to account for the production of incorporeal (and hence actually intelligible) *species*.³⁶ The agent intellect produces incorporeal *species* by abstracting them from information gathered through sense experience.³⁷ The external senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch) receive sensible *species* from material objects. These are communicated to the inner senses where they are collated and compiled into more complex groupings of sense information and stored. Aquinas calls these bundles of sense information ‘phantasms.’ Like sensible *species*, phantasms exist intentionally in the organs of inner sense. Accordingly, they are necessarily subject to material conditions and cannot represent universal objects.³⁸ The phantasms, however, serve as an object for the agent intellect, providing the raw materials, so to speak, for its process of abstraction. For this reason Aquinas often describes phantasms as *potentially* intelligible.

In abstraction, the agent intellect ‘turns towards’ the phantasms and abstracts an intelligible *species*, which is free from the material individuating conditions to which the phantasm is subject. Thus the process yields an incorporeal *species*, which represents a universal object and is therefore actually intelligible.³⁹ The precise nature of abstraction is

species universales, et imaginatio non contineat nisi particulares. Et ideo in intelligibilibus indigemus intellectu agente, non autem in sensibilibus alia potentia activa; sed omnes potentiae sensitivae sunt potentiae passivae.]”

Since the intellect cognizes universals rather than particulars, intelligible *species* that bring about cognition of a universal must be produced before they can be received by the possible intellect.

³⁶ For discussion of the agent intellect in Aquinas’ work, see Haldane (1992); Nejeschleba (2004).

³⁷ The agent intellect is an active power involved in the understanding process, but not because it already actually possesses all the intelligible *species* that the possible intellect eventually receives. If it were, then humans would already actually understand all natures by virtue of possessing the power of agent intellect. Instead, the agent intellect is productive of, and the possible intellect is receptive of the same thing—namely, an intelligible *species*. See *QDA* a.13 ad 20; *InDA* III.10 [738-9].

³⁸ See *SCG* II.77 [2].

³⁹ In contrast, there is no need for a further active faculty in sense perception. The senses, for Aquinas, apprehend particulars not universals. Particularized *species* do exist in reality in sensible things. *Species* materially

unclear. In *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Aquinas describes it as a sort of immaterialization of a phantasm. He writes,

... for the *species* is immaterialized by the agent intellect through being abstracted from matter and material conditions whereby a particular thing is individuated.⁴⁰

This passage suggests that in abstraction the agent intellect strips away or removes the material individuating conditions to render the *species* incorporeal. Nevertheless, Aquinas is clear that the intelligible *species* abstracted from a phantasm is not numerically the same form as what is in the phantasm. He writes,

Rather, by the power of the active intellect, a certain likeness results in the passive intellect from the active intellect's turning toward the phantasms; and this likeness is representative of those things that the phantasms are about, though only with respect to the nature of their species. This is the sense in which the intelligible *species* is said to be abstracted from the phantasms—and not in the sense that numerically the same form at first existed in the phantasms and later comes to exist in the passive intellect, in the way that a body is taken from one place and transferred to another.⁴¹

In this passage Aquinas specifies that the form in the possible intellect is numerically distinct from that in the phantasm. The agent intellect turns towards the phantasms and the outcome is the presence of a numerically distinct incorporeal *species* in the possible intellect. However the process of abstraction is meant to go, the crucial point is that at the end of it, we are left with an incorporeal *species* in the possible intellect that is not subject to matter or material individuating conditions.

conditioned by the media of sensation can therefore be received by the senses, compiled and stored by the internal senses (like the imagination), without first being rendered sensible.

⁴⁰ SCG II.75 [8] (Anderson (trans.), 235; Leonine XIII, 474): "... quae est immaterialis effecta per intellectum agentem, utpote abstracta a materia et conditionibus materiae, quibus aliquid individuatur."

⁴¹ ST I.85.1 ad 3 (Freddoso (trans.), 167; Leonine V, 332): "Sed virtute intellectus agentis resultat quaedam similitudo in intellectu possibili ex conversione intellectus agentis supra phantasmata, quae quidem est repraesentativa eorum quorum sunt phantasmata, solum quantum ad naturam speciei. Et per hunc modum dicitur abstrahi species intelligibilis a phantasmatis, non quod aliqua eadem numero forma, quae prius fuit in phantasmatis, postmodum fiat in intellectu possibili, ad modum quo corpus accipitur ab uno loco et transfertur ad alterum."

For Aquinas, the information gathered through sense experience is critical for the operation of the embodied human intellect because it is required for the agent intellect's abstraction of intelligible *species*.⁴² Moreover, he maintains that the agent intellect must return to the phantasms every time a human knower wishes to understand by means of an intelligible *species*.⁴³ So every time I consider the nature of a cow, my agent intellect must turn back to the phantasms in my imagination. Thus the operation of the embodied intellect depends on and requires the body, which houses the sense powers and phantasms. The need for phantasms in the production of intelligible *species* forges a link between intellectual activity and the activity of the human body.

This provides us with the basic framework of Aquinas' account of the mechanics of intellectual cognition. The agent intellect abstracts intelligible *species* for the possible intellect. These perfect the possible intellect and serve as the principles *quo* by which the possible intellect understands the nature of material substances in their commonality. We are now in a position to consider Aquinas' arguments for the incorporeity of the intellectual operations and intellectual principle.

2.4 Incorporeity of the Intellect: Cognition of All Material Natures

The first of Aquinas' arguments for the incorporeity of the intellect⁴⁴ begins with the claim that the proper object, that is, the proper range of objects of intellectual cognition is the natures of *all* material substances. Aquinas' version is based on the argument that Aristotle

⁴² In its disembodied state, the intellect understands through infused *species* rather than *species* abstracted from phantasms. In this way it can continue to operate despite its separation from the body, and hence its inability to produce intelligible *species* for itself. For this reason it is still operative. Nevertheless, while embodied, the phantasms are the intellect's only source for intelligible *species*. See *ST* I.89.1 co.

⁴³ See *ST* I.84.7 co; *DV* q.10 a.2 co.

⁴⁴ The arguments for incorporeity that Aquinas relies on to establish the subsistence and incorruptibility of the soul that I focus on attempt to establish the incorporeity of the possible intellect. He also believes that the agent intellect is an incorporeal power (see *ST* I.79.4 ad 4). However, in most of his treatments of the topics (including *ST*, *QDA*, *SCG*) he gives his arguments for incorporeity, subsistence, and incorruptibility, before he posits the agent intellect.

provides in *De Anima* III.4. Although he sometimes attributes his own version of the argument to Aristotle, it involves significant interpretation on Aquinas' part. Aristotle writes,

It must, then, since it thinks all things, be unmixed, as Anaxagoras says, in order that it may rule, that is in order that it may know; for the intrusion of anything foreign to it hinders and obstructs it; hence too, it must have no other nature than this, that it is potential. That part of the soul, then, called intellect (and I speak of as intellect that by which the soul thinks and supposes) is actually none of existing things before it thinks. Hence too, it is reasonable that it should not be mixed with the body; for in that case it would come to be of a certain kind, either cold or hot, or it would come to be of a certain kind, either cold or hot, or it would even have an organ like the faculty of perception; but as things are it has none.⁴⁵

In this passage Aristotle tells us that the intellect must be 'pure from all admixture' and 'unblended with body' on account of the fact that it is capable of knowing all things. Aristotle believes that if the intellect were mixed or blended with body, this would impede its understanding in some way. Aristotle concludes, therefore, that the human intellect ("that whereby the soul thinks and judges") is not actually any real thing before it thinks.

Aquinas, interpreting Aristotle's argument, writes,

For everything that is in potentiality to something and is receptive of it is lacking in that to which it is in potentiality and of which it is receptive. For instance, the pupil of the eye, which is in potentiality to colors and received in such a way that it is in potentiality to them and capable of taking them on in just the way that a sense is, relative to its sense objects. Therefore, intellect lacks all those things that it is naturally suited to cognize. Therefore, since our intellect is naturally suited to have intellectual cognition of all sensible and corporeal things, it must lack every corporeal nature, just as the sense of sight lacks color because it is capable of cognizing color. (If it had any color, that color would prevent other colors from being seen.) Just as a feverish patient's tongue that has a bitter humor cannot perceive a sweet taste, so if intellect had any determinate nature, the nature that was natural to it would prevent it from having cognition of other natures. That is why he says for something appearing within it will prevent and block the cognition of what is outside it—i.e., will hamper intellect, veil it in a certain way, and close it off from anything intrinsic that is naturally connected to intellect... Now Aristotle concludes from this that it is not possible for intellect to have any nature at all—i.e., no determinate nature. Instead, it has this nature only, that it is potential with respect to all

⁴⁵Aristotle, *De Anima* III.4 429a18-429a28.

things.⁴⁶

In Aquinas' reconstruction he limits the range of possible objects of thought from 'everything', as found in Aristotle's argument, to 'all sensible and corporeal things.' For Aquinas, this is because the stipulated operation of the embodied human intellect is to know the natures of all *material* things. Aristotle's conclusion, according to Aquinas then, is that the intellect cannot have the nature of any *corporeal* thing. Aquinas also employs the principle that a thing in potency to, or receptive of, another must lack that to which it is in potency or that of which it is receptive. He defends the principle with the examples of the eye lacking color of its own and the tongue lacking a flavor of its own. He takes these examples to illustrate Aristotle's claim that the presence of something alien in the intellect would hinder or impede its understanding. For this reason Aquinas concludes that the intellect cannot, according to Aristotle, have a determinate nature.

Aquinas offers a similar argument in the *Summa Theologiae*, where it appears as his own and not explicitly as an interpretation of Aristotle. Aquinas writes,

One must claim that the principle of intellectual operations, which we call a man's soul, is an incorporeal and subsistent principle. For it is clear that by means of his intellect a man is able to have cognition of the natures of all bodies. But that which is able to have cognition of given things must be such that it has nothing of those things in its own nature, since what exists in it naturally would in that case impede the cognition of those other things. For instance, we see that a sick tongue infected with bilious and bitter humors is unable to perceive anything sweet; instead, everything seems bitter to it. Therefore, if an intellectual principle had within itself the nature of any sort of body, it would be unable to have cognition of all bodies. But each body has

⁴⁶ *InDA* III.7 [680-681] (Pasnau (trans.), 345; Leonine XLV.1, 203-204): "Omne enim, quod est in potentia ad aliquid et receptivum eius, caret eo ad quod est in potentia, et cuius est receptivum; sicut pupilla, quae est in potentia ad colores, et est receptiva ipsorum, est carens omni colore: sed intellectus noster sic intelligit intelligibilia, quod est in potentia ad ea et susceptivus eorum, sicut sensus sensibilibus: ergo caret omnibus illis rebus quas natus est intelligere. Cum igitur intellectus noster natus sit intelligere omnes res sensibiles et corporales, necesse est quod careat omni natura corporali, sicut sensus visus caret omni colore, propter hoc quod est cognoscitivus coloris. Si enim haberet aliquem colorem, ille color prohiberet videre alios colores. Sicut lingua febricitantis, quae habet aliquem humorem amarum, non potest recipere dulcem saporem. Sic etiam intellectus si haberet aliquam naturam determinatam, illa natura connaturalis sibi prohiberet eum a cognitione aliarum naturarum. Et hoc est quod dicit: intus apparens enim prohibebit cognoscere extraneum et obstruet, idest impedit intellectum, et quodammodo velabit et concludet ab inspectione aliorum.... Concludit autem ex hoc quod non contingit naturam intellectus esse neque unam, idest nullam determinatam, sed hanc solam naturam habet, quod est possibilis respectu omnium."

some determinate nature. Therefore, it is impossible that this intellectual principle should be a body. And, similarly, it is impossible that it should have intellectual understanding through a bodily organ, since the determinate nature of that bodily organ would likewise prevent its having cognition of all bodies—in just the same way that if some determinate color exists not only in the pupil but also in the glass vase, then a liquid poured into that vase seems to be of that same color.⁴⁷

Aquinas claims that human beings are capable of cognizing the natures of all material bodies. He stipulates this and treats it as uncontroversial. As we have seen, the intellect cognizes by taking on an intelligible *species* of its object. In order to cognize every material nature, then, the intellect must be able to receive the intelligible *species* of every material thing.

Secondly, Aquinas notes that whatever has cognition of a thing must have nothing of that thing in its own nature. Call this the cognitive-potency principle. The cognitive-potency principle seems to be a specific instance of the more general claim from the *Commentary on the De Anima*, namely, that a thing in potency to, or receptive of, another must lack that to which it is in potency or receptive. The cognitive-potency principle is clearly central in Aquinas' argument. Given that the intellect is a cognitive power in potency to the natures of all material things, according to the cognitive-potency principle, it must be devoid of the natures of all material things. In another version of the argument he writes,

The possible intellect must therefore be in potency to and able to receive all those things which are intelligible to a human being, and must therefore be devoid of them. This follows from the principle that whatever is capable of receiving things and is in potency to them is of itself without any of them, just as the pupil of the eye, which is capable of receiving all colors, has no color.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ *ST I.75.2 co* (Freddoso (trans.), 4-5; Leonine V, 196): “Respondeo dicendum quod necesse est dicere id quod est principium intellectualis operationis, quod dicimus animam hominis, esse quoddam principium incorporeum et subsistens. Manifestum est enim quod homo per intellectum cognoscere potest naturas omnium corporum. Quod autem potest cognoscere aliqua, oportet ut nihil eorum habeat in sua natura, quia illud quod inesset ei naturaliter impediret cognitionem aliorum; sicut videmus quod lingua infirmi quae infecta est cholericis et amaro humore, non potest percipere aliquid dulce, sed omnia videntur ei amara. Si igitur principium intellectuale haberet in se naturam alicuius corporis, non posset omnia corpora cognoscere. Omne autem corpus habet aliquam naturam determinatam. Impossibile est igitur quod principium intellectuale sit corpus. Et similiter impossibile est quod intelligat per organum corporeum, quia etiam natura determinata illius organi corporei prohiberet cognitionem omnium corporum; sicut si aliquis determinatus color sit non solum in pupilla, sed etiam in vase vitreo, liquor infusus eiusdem coloris videtur.”

⁴⁸ *QDA a. 2 co* (Robb (trans.), 57; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 287): “Hunc igitur intellectum possibilem necesse est esse in potentia ad omnia quae sunt intelligibilia per hominem, et receptivum eorum, et per consequens

By showing that the intellect lacks a corporeal nature of any kind, Aquinas takes himself to have shown that the intellective power is not a corporeal power or a principle that acts through a bodily organ. Since any bodily organ would, by definition, possess some corporeal nature or other, this corporeal nature would impede the intellect's ability to cognize the natures of all corporeal things.

Some interpreters, for instance David Foster, have taken the cognitive-potency principle as something of an analytic truth based on what it means to be in potency or to receive⁴⁹: Since possession is in opposition to reception, a receiver must lack what it receives.⁵⁰ I contend, however, that Aquinas' argument calls for a more substantive interpretation of the cognitive-potency principle. Aquinas' examples of the eye and tongue involve the notion of impediment. He uses these examples to show that a cognitive power cannot possess any of the natures to which it is in potency because the presence of such a nature would *impede* the reception of other natures. In the *Summa Theologiae* he writes,

But that which is able to have cognition of given things must be such that it has nothing of those things in its own nature, since what exists in it naturally would in that case impede the cognition of those other things. For instance, we see that a sick tongue infected with bilious and bitter humors is unable to perceive anything sweet; instead, everything seems bitter to it.⁵¹

And in the Commentary on the De Anima he writes,

Therefore, since our intellect is naturally suited to have intellective cognition of all sensible and corporeal things, it must lack every corporeal nature, just as the sense of sight lacks color because it is capable of cognizing color, (if it had any color, that color would prevent other colors from being seen.) Just as a feverish

denudatum ab his: quia omne quod est receptivum aliquorum, et in potentia ad ea, quantum de se est, est denudatum ab eis; sicut pupilla, quae est receptiva omnium colorum, caret omni colore.”

⁴⁹ See Foster (1991).

⁵⁰ Such an interpretation is supported by passages like *DUI* ch.4; *SCG* II.73 [30]. Averroes explains that a thing must be devoid of what it receives because nothing receives itself (if it did, the moved would also be the mover). See Averroes, *LCDA* III.4 [385].

⁵¹ *ST*. I.75.2 co (Freddoso (trans.), 4-5; Leonine V, 196): “Quod autem potest cognoscere aliqua, oportet ut nihil eorum habeat in sua natura, quia illud quod inesset ei naturaliter impediret cognitionem aliorum; sicut videmus quod lingua infirmi quae infecta est cholericis et amaro humore, non potest percipere aliquid dulce, sed omnia videntur ei amara.”

patient's tongue that has a bitter humor cannot perceive a sweet taste, so if intellect had any determinate nature, the nature that was natural to it would prevent it from having cognition of other natures.⁵²

The pupil of the eye cannot have a determinate color because it would impede its ability to see other colors. The tongue cannot have a determinate flavor because it would impede its ability to taste other flavors. Aquinas' illustrations seem to work much like the familiar metaphor of the rose-colored glasses. When one is said to wear rose-colored glasses, the wearer sees everything as rosy. As a result, the wearer is unable to see the world except as rosy.⁵³ Aquinas appeals to something like literal rose-colored glasses. If the pupil were pink, everything it perceived would be tinted pink. Since the eye would not be able to perceive all the colors, it could not carry out its proper operation of perceiving color.

Similarly, a tongue infected with bitter humors (i.e., with the determinate nature of bitterness) tastes everything as bitter. Its determinate bitterness prevents it from being in potency to other flavors and from accurately carrying out its proper operation of tasting. In the case of the infected tongue it is not as though the tongue cannot receive bitterness because it already has bitterness. On the contrary, all it can do is receive bitterness. These cases of sensation, therefore, do not support the claim that a receiver must lack what it receives on the analytic grounds that nothing receives what it already has. To support Foster's interpretation we would expect Aquinas to claim that the tongue cannot actually be bitter because if it were

⁵² *InDA* III.7 [680] (Pasnau (trans.), 345; Leonine XLV.1, 203): "Cum igitur intellectus noster natus sit intelligere omnes res sensibiles et corporales, necesse est quod careat omni natura corporali, sicut sensus visus caret omni colore, propter hoc quod est cognoscitivus coloris. Si enim haberet aliquem colorem, ille color prohiberet videre alios colores. Sicut lingua febricitantis, quae habet aliquem humorem amarum, non potest recipere dulcem saporem. Sic etiam intellectus si haberet aliquam naturam determinatam, illa natura connaturalis sibi prohiberet eum a cognitione aliarum naturarum."

⁵³ Not only does Aquinas think that the intellective power cannot possess a corporeal nature itself, he further argues in *ST* I.75.2 co that the intellective power cannot use a corporeal organ as an instrument to carry out its operation. Again he appeals to an example from our sense experience: If we see something through a colored object, as when we see water through a colored vase, our perception of the color of the water is impeded by the determinate color of the vase—in his example, the water in a purple vase likewise appears purple. Not only does a colored eye impede our ability to see other colors properly, so too does a colored medium or instrument. Thus a corporeal organ with a determinate corporeal nature would impede the operation of the intellect in a similar way to its own corporeal determination.

it could not receive *bitterness*, but he claims the very opposite. The tongue must lack bitterness so it can receive *other* flavors, the eye must lack a specific color so that it can see *other* colors. Rather than being unable to receive what is already possessed, the receiver cannot properly receive anything else. So it is not the analytic notion of what it means to receive, but the notion of impediment at work in Aquinas' cognitive-potency principle.

Moreover, Aquinas' examples show us that the potency principle ought to be understood at the level of *proper* objects rather than at the level of *individual* objects. For Aquinas, the proper object of a cognitive power specifies the range of objects that that cognitive power cognizes. We can think of the proper object as a determinable and the objects actually cognized as determinates of that determinable. Thus we say that the proper object of sight is color, the proper object of hearing is sound, the proper object of taste is flavor, and so on. But the eye sees individual colors, the ear hears individual sounds, and the tongue tastes individual flavors. In Aquinas' examples of the tongue and eye he relies on the notion that a cognitive power with a given proper object (i.e. range of objects) must be devoid of any and all individual objects within that range. Therefore, we ought to read the potency principle as claiming that a cognitive power responsible for cognizing a certain range of objects must be devoid of any of those individual objects.⁵⁴

Aquinas uses the potency principle to secure his conclusion. Since the intellect is in potency to all material natures, it must accordingly lack all material natures. As a result, it

⁵⁴ Pasnau (2002a, 55) argues we ought to understand Aquinas' principle as: "If F cognizes x by having x in its nature, F will be constantly cognizing x." However, I find the antecedent of Pasnau's formalization problematic as an instance of the principle Aquinas employs in the argument as it appears in *ST I.75.5*. What is most salient for Aquinas in *ST I.75.2* is not just how F cognizes x, either by having x in its nature or otherwise. By formulating the antecedent as Pasnau does, we restrict Aquinas' target to views on which 'like is known by like' (i.e., Empedoclean views that hold that the intellect is a corporeal principle that knows external objects because it is made up of the elements that compose the objects themselves). Although this is one of Aristotle's main targets in *De Anima III.4* and Aquinas is also eager to reject such views on these grounds, I take Aquinas' target in *ST I.75.2* to include any view that attributes a corporeal nature to the intellect. Moreover, Pasnau's formulation, while it may be something that Aquinas in fact endorses and may also be related to the principle in *ST I.75.2 co*, does not seem to be the principle that Aquinas employs in the argument from *ST I.75.2 co*.

cannot be a corporeal organ, since any corporeal organ would possess some material nature. From this Aquinas concludes that the intellect is not a power that is in a body. So unlike the power of sight, which is in the eye, the intellect has no corporeal organ by which intellectual operations are exercised.

2.5 Two Kinds of Potency

Aquinas' argument for the incorporeity of the intellect largely depends on his cognitive-potency principle as applied to the intellectual power. However, when Aquinas speaks of the intellect as being devoid of a corporeal nature, he must mean *naturally* devoid (rather than intentionally devoid). Only the *natural* lack of all corporeal natures will render the possible intellect incorporeal in the relevant sense. So when Aquinas claims that the possible intellect must be free from all material natures, he must mean this with respect to *esse naturale*, not *esse intentionale*.

As a number of interpreters have pointed out, however, the potency of the possible intellect is, strictly speaking, a potency for intentional forms rather than natural ones.⁵⁵ So, their worry goes, if a power must lack that to which it is in potency, and the possible intellect is, strictly speaking, in potency to receiving intentional forms, then the possible intellect must lack all intentional forms.⁵⁶ This application of the cognitive-potency principle in the case of the intellect, however, is not strong enough to secure its incorporeity.⁵⁷ At most, Aquinas' principle allows him to secure the claim that the intellect does not, by its very nature, possess any forms intentionally. But for his argument to succeed he must connect the potency to intentionally receive forms with a natural lack of those forms. He needs a stronger version of

⁵⁵ See Foster (1991); Pasnau (2002a); Lang (2003).

⁵⁶ This worry arises, I believe, precisely because interpreters take the cognitive-potency principle to be based on the analytic notion of what it is to receive.

⁵⁷ We can also articulate the problem in terms of a potency for *species* rather than the actual objects of cognition. Since the possible intellect is, strictly speaking, in potency to *species* rather than the natures of material things, then the possible intellect must lack the *species* themselves rather than the natures of material things.

the principle that states that whatever is in potency to *intentional* forms of a particular kind must be *naturally* devoid of forms of that kind.⁵⁸

Pasnau speculates that Aquinas may hold this stronger version of the principle on the grounds that (a) the natural presence of the nature of a cognitive object in a power entails its intentional presence in that power, and (b) a cognitive power can only understand through one *species* (i.e., intentional form) at a time.⁵⁹ According to Pasnau, (a) ensures that any cognitive power that naturally possesses the nature of one of its cognitive objects also possesses that nature intentionally, and so cognizes that nature for as long as it naturally possesses it, and (b) prohibits the cognition of any object other than that perpetually cognized. These claims, taken together, support the view that the natural possession of a determinate cognitive object as part of the nature of the cognitive power prohibits that power from knowing all other determinate objects. So they support the view that a power in potency to a class of forms intentionally must be devoid of each of those forms naturally (i.e., the strong principle). However, Pasnau maintains that Aquinas has no basis for holding either (a) or (b), and is, therefore, not entitled to hold the strong principle required for his demonstration of the incorporeity of the intellect.

There is, I believe, textual evidence that supports Pasnau's speculation that Aquinas holds (a), at least with respect to sensation. For instance, in *De Spiritualibus Creaturis*, he writes,

Now as regards the senses, since we find ourselves sometimes sensing in potency and sometimes in act, it is necessary to posit in us some sense power whereby we may be sensing in potency, and this power must be in potency to the species of sensible things, and not have any of these species actually in its own essence; otherwise, if the senses were to possess sensible things in act, as the ancient philosophers asserted, it would follow that we would always be

⁵⁸ Where 'naturally' is understood in terms of the intentional/natural distinction.

⁵⁹ Pasnau (2002a, 57).

sensing in act.⁶⁰

Here Aquinas tells us that if the senses actually had the determinate nature of one of their cognitive objects as a part of their own nature, they would continually sense that nature. Furthermore, his examples of the infected tongue and colored eye are problematic precisely because of the perpetual cognition of the power's own determinate nature. That is, the cognitive power cannot help but cognize that which is naturally occurring in it. This suggests that Aquinas does believe that the natural presence of a cognitive object entails its intentional presence in the power and hence its perpetual cognition by that power.

There is also textual evidence for the claim that Aquinas is committed to the view that intellect can only understand by means of one *species* at a time. He writes,

However, if certain things are such that the intellect understands them through diverse intelligible species, then it does not understand them all at once. The reason for this is that it is impossible for a subject to be perfected all at once by several forms that belong to the same genus but different species; for instance, it is impossible for the same body to be simultaneously colored in the same respect by diverse colors, or for it to have diverse shapes. But all intelligible species belong to one genus, since they are perfections of a single intellective power, even though the things that they are the species of belong to diverse genera. Therefore, it is impossible for a single intellect to be perfected all at once by diverse intelligible species in such a way as to have an actual intellective understanding of diverse things.⁶¹

Although the intellect can understand multiple objects through one *species*, it cannot understand through multiple *species* simultaneously. In this passage Aquinas notes that the intellect cannot be perfected by multiple *species* of diverse kinds, just as a body cannot have

⁶⁰ *DSC* a.9 co (FitzPatrick (trans.), 102; Mareitti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 402): “Ex parte autem sensus, cum inveniamur quandoque sentientes in potentia, quandoque in actu, oportet ponere in nobis aliquam virtutem sensitivam per quam simus sentientes in potentia; quam oportet esse in potentia ad species sensibilium, et nullam earum habere actu in sua essentia; alioquin si sensus haberet in actu sensibilia, sicut antiqui philosophi posuerunt, sequeretur quod semper essemus sentientes in actu.”

⁶¹ *ST* I.85.4 co (Freddoso (trans.), 177; Leonine V, 339): “Quaecumque vero intellectus per diversas species intelligit, non simul intelligit. Et huius ratio est, quia impossibile est idem subiectum perfici simul pluribus formis unius generis et diversarum specierum, sicut impossibile est quod idem corpus secundum idem simul coloretur diversis coloribus, vel figuretur diversis figuris. Omnes autem species intelligibiles sunt unius generis, quia sunt perfectiones unius intellectivae potentiae; licet res quarum sunt species, sint diversorum generum. Impossibile est ergo quod idem intellectus simul perficiatur diversis speciebus intelligibilibus, ad intelligendum diversa in actu.”

two different colors at the same time (presumably in the same part of its surface). His position concerning the intellect's perfection by at most one *species* seems to depend on the indivisibility of the intellect, however. If the intellect were corporeally extended, like the organs of sensation, then multiple *species* could be received in distinct parts of the organ, and so multiple *species* could be cognized at once, as occurs in the case of sensation. Since the intellect is indivisible, however, this is not possible, and so it is limited to perfection by one *species* at most. The indivisibility of the intellect, however, is due to its incorporeity, so Aquinas cannot avail himself of this fact to justify the cognitive-potency principle in his argument for incorporeity without begging the question.⁶²

Pasnau is pessimistic about Aquinas' prospects for justifying either (a) or (b) and, accordingly, pessimistic about the prospects of the argument as a whole. While Aquinas does not offer a principled or philosophical defense of the claim that a potency for a class of objects intentionally must be devoid of those natures naturally, I believe that there may be more that can be said on his behalf.

First, although Aquinas does not specify whether the cognitive-potency principle concerns intentional or natural existence and reception, as perhaps he ought to, his examples of the sick tongue, colored eye, and colored vase support the stronger principle regarding natural *esse*, rather than the weaker one regarding intentional *esse*. The natural color of the vase impedes the seeing of other colors, the natural flavor on the tongue impedes the tasting of other flavors. These examples support the claim that a cognitive power must *naturally* lack

⁶² See *ST* I.85.4 co. Pasnau (2002a, 55) objects to (b) by arguing that we can hear more than one sound at once. Pasnau takes this to be good reason to reject the claim that we cannot cognize through more than one *species* at a time. Here Pasnau fails to recognize the connection between divisibility and the capacity to receive multiple *species* in the same organ. Because the ear is physically extended, it can receive a different *species* in its different physical regions. Because the intellect is indivisible, it cannot receive multiple *species* in different parts, so it cannot understand through multiple *species* at once. Aquinas may still hold that even intentional sense *species* cannot be co-located in precisely the same physical region of a sense power. If we grant him this, he could modify his argument for perpetual sensation to clarify that the natural presence of an object would fill up the organ with *species* of its own nature and thereby prevent the reception of others.

that to which it is *intentionally* in potency. They are all examples of a naturally existing nature interfering with the intentional reception of other natures to which a power is supposed to be in potency. Given that his examples support the principle he actually needs, the equivocation or ambiguity in the argument is not so pernicious.⁶³ Aquinas has not entirely failed to support the claim that he relies upon in the argument. His examples offer some support for the principle, at least with respect to sensation.

Pasnau argues that the examples of the tongue, eye, and vase do not generalize. However there seem to be numerous examples from sensation that further support the stronger cognitive-potency principle regarding *esse naturale*. For instance, we really cannot see colors through solid bodies or in the dark, a very cold hand is unable to accurately perceive the temperature of lukewarm water, and ringing in the ears impairs the ability to hear properly.⁶⁴ The question becomes whether the examples from sensation that support the stronger cognitive-potency principle license Aquinas to extend the principle to intellectual cognition.

Initially, we may think there is good reason to think that Aquinas is justified in extending the cognitive potency principle to the intellectual power. He draws numerous analogies between the sensitive and intellectual powers and from his methodology, it is clear that the differences that arise between them are the result of differences in the objects that they cognize. Since the intellectual and sensitive powers are faculties of the soul that cognize

⁶³ Moreover, Aquinas holds this principle not only in the case of intellectual cognition, but also to the cases of sense cognition and the media of sensation. For instance, he considers both air and water a medium for the sensible *species* of color. As mediums, however, air and water must themselves be transparent in order to receive the sensible *species*. When, for instance, air is not made transparent by light it can no longer serve as a medium for sight and is incapable of receiving *species* of color. Sensible *species* exist intentionally in the sense organs and nevertheless every sense organ must lack the determinate nature of its proper object—with the notable exception of touch. In the case of touch there is no way for a corporeal body to be free of the proper objects of touch, nevertheless, the organ of touch is in potency to its object in virtue of being in a mean between the extremes. The closer the sense organs are to a mean state, the more accurate the sense cognition. See *InDA* II.23 [548]. Thus the idea that a receiver must be in natural potency to its object to receive that object's form intentionally is not unique to the case of intellection.

⁶⁴ See Aquinas' discussion of the ear's own movement as an impediment to perceiving other movements of air in *InDA* II.17 [458].

external objects through the reception of *species*, we should expect there to be considerable similarities in their acts and hence in their nature. It may seem natural, then, that Aquinas should extend a principle regarding the potency of a cognitive power that is confirmed repeatedly in sense cognition to intellectual cognition. While this does not provide a principled reason for the gap in Aquinas' argument, at least it offers *prima facie* support for extending the cognitive-potency principle.

Unfortunately however, I believe that there is a significant disanalogy between the mechanisms of sensation and those of intellective cognition that should give us pause. As we have seen, Aquinas' endorsement of the cognitive-potency principle in the realm of sensation seems to depend on claim (a), namely, that the natural presence of the nature of a cognitive object in a power entails its intentional presence in that power or the cognitive-potency principle to intellectual cognition. It is not clear, however, that Aquinas is justified in affirming (a) in regards to intellective cognition. In fact, it is clear from his account of intellective cognition that the presence of a corporeal nature either intentional or natural cannot move the possible intellect whatsoever. To understand this, we can compare the process of sensation with that of intellective cognition.

For Aquinas the senses are passive powers moved by sensible objects. Since sense objects exist in the world as actually sensible, sensible objects will impress their *species* on the relevant sense powers so long as the conditions allow the *species* to travel from the objects of sensation, through the media of sensation, and into the sense organ.⁶⁵ With open eyes and the

⁶⁵ There seems to be a tension between Aquinas' examples and his agreement with Aristotle that sensation requires a medium. Following Aristotle, Aquinas holds that a medium is always required for sensation and that accordingly, if a sensible were placed directly on the sense power responsible for cognizing that sensible, then the power would be incapable of cognizing it. Consider, *InDA* II.15 [437] (Pasnau (trans.), 226; Leonine XLV.1, 134): "Next, when Aristotle says The account is the same, etc., he shows that things hold for the other senses much as they do for sight. He says that the account is the same for sound and smell as for color. For none of these is sensed if it touches the sense organ; but media are moved by smell and sound, whereas each of the organs—viz., of hearing and of smell—[is moved] by the medium. But when someone places a body that has a smell or sound on the sense organ, it is not sensed. And it is much the same in the case of touch and taste, although this is not evident, for the reason that will be discussed

lights on, I cannot help but see those objects I find before me for as long as they are there. Like the external senses, the possible intellect is also a passive power. But Aquinas is clear that corporeal natures, which exist in the world as actually sensible, do not exist in the world as actually intelligible. This means that corporeal things do not have the power to move the intellect directly the way that they can move the senses.⁶⁶ Instead the agent intellect is required to produce *species* capable of moving the possible intellect. So when I am presented with a cow, I do not automatically understand ‘bovinity’ in the way that I see, say, black and white spots. I only understand ‘bovinity’ after I have produced phantasms from my sense experience and my agent intellect has abstracted from them a *species* of the cow. Given that corporeal natures cannot move the intellect to understand it is not clear why an intellect that possessed a determinate corporeal nature would perpetually cognize its own nature in the way that a corporeal sense power might. While the sense power is, in principle, capable of being moved by itself, a corporeal intellect is not.

Admittedly for Aquinas, the intellect cannot be moved by corporeal natures as they exist outside the intellect precisely because it is incorporeal and its object is universal in nature. So we might worry that this criticism is misplaced. Indeed, if Aquinas were offering a *reductio* for the incorporeity of the intellect on the grounds that a corporeal intellect could, in virtue of its corporeity, be moved by its own determinate nature, and so would perpetually cognize itself, his argument would not be susceptible to the criticism I raise. But this is not Aquinas’ argument. Instead, he presents the cognitive-potency principle as a general principle

below. [Deinde cum dicit eadem autem ostendit quod similiter se habet in aliis sensibus sicut in visu: et dicit quod eadem ratio est de sono et odore, sicut et de colore. Nullum enim eorum sentitur, si tangit organum sensus; sed ab odore et sono moventur media, a medio autem utrumque organorum, auditus scilicet et olfactus. Sed cum aliquis ponit corpus odorans aut sonans, super organum sensus, non sentitur. Et similiter est in tactu et gustu, licet non videatur, propter causam quae inferius dicitur.]”

Presumably then, if a cognitive power actually were its own sensible, there would be no medium between it and itself, and therefore, as in the case of a sensible placed directly on a cognitive power, there would no cognition of its own nature.

⁶⁶ See *ST I.84.6*; *QDA a.4 co*; *QDA a.4 ad.5*.

that applies to all passive cognitive powers and his justification for this principle comes from his examples from sensation. These examples support the principle because they illustrate the perpetual perception problem. But if this problem only arises for *corporeal* powers, then once he has reached his ultimate conclusion, he will have undercut the justification for extending the principle from corporeal to incorporeal powers and therefore, have undercut his justification for extending the principle to the intellect.

So unlike Pasnau and Foster, I take Aquinas to have offered some support for the strong cognitive-potency principle. His examples from sensation conform to it and this gives us some reason to endorse it. Nevertheless, Aquinas' argument ultimately fails because the strong cognitive-potency principle that he needs holds true in cases of sensation due to facts about the mechanisms involved in sensation that do not apply to intellectual cognition.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ David Lang (2003) also attempts to salvage Aquinas' argument by offering support for the claim that the natural presence of one of a power's cognitive objects impedes the reception of the intentional forms of other objects. This claim, which Lang calls the impediment principle, supports the more general principle that a cognitive power must be naturally devoid of that to which it is in potency intentionally. Lang offers two arguments to support the impediment principle. The first defense relies on the notion that the natural presence would result in a filtering of all other cognitive objects through that natural presence. By this Lang seems to mean that the natural presence would alter or taint cognition of any other object cognized, so that a cognitive object could never be cognized in itself without somehow being affected by the power's own nature. Lang, however, offers no textual evidence other than the examples of tongue and eye to support the view that Aquinas endorsed this filtering account. Moreover, it isn't clear why an intentional form, which does not determine matter in accordance with itself, should be altered on account of its reception into a power with a given material nature.

Second, Lang argues that the impediment principle holds more and more perfectly as we move up the hierarchy of cognitive powers (from touch and taste at the lowest end to intellectual cognition at the highest). Lang argues that the impediment principle applies, albeit imperfectly, in the case of touch and taste because although the senses must possess some determinate nature of the kind they themselves cognize (for instance, flesh must have some determinate temperature, even though it is in potency to sense temperature), they must nevertheless be in a mean state between extremes in order to sense properly. He argues that in the cases of smelling and hearing the principle applies even more perfectly, and in the case of sight, the most noble of the senses, any determinate color in the pupil would eliminate the possibility of seeing other colors as they are. Lang argues that all the cognitive powers including both sense powers and the intellect are part of this hierarchy, and so the intellect, which is the highest of all the cognitive powers, therefore, most perfectly conforms to the impediment principle.

This second defense is very similar to the view that Aquinas' strong analogies between sensation and intellect, and the presumed truth of the principle in the realm of sensation offer *prima facie* support to the extension of the principle to intellection. Although Lang's argument is subtler, it too relies on a continuity between sense powers and intellect. This continuity allows for the legitimate application of the impediment principle and what I've called the potency principle to the intellect, given that the principles hold in the case of sensation. However, I think Lang's second defense is susceptible to a similar concern as the sense-intellect analogy defense. The reason that the impediment principle may apply more or less perfectly in the realm of sensation is, plausibly, precisely because in sensation, the powers are passive and determinate corporeal natures are actually sensible. But because this is not true in the case of intellectual cognition, any application of the impediment principle to intellect on the grounds that the principle holds in sensation is illegitimate.

2.6 Incorporeity of the Intellect: Cognition of Universals

Aquinas' second argument for the incorporeity of the intellect begins with the universal nature of the objects of our intellectual cognition. He argues that only an incorporeal principle can receive *species* capable of bringing about cognition of a universal object, and so the intellect must be incorporeal. Aquinas' fullest versions of this argument are found in the *Summa Theologiae*, *Quaestiones De Anima*, and the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, though the central line of reasoning is prevalent throughout his works.⁶⁸

Aquinas' argument in the *Summa Theologiae* appears as part of a larger argument for the claim that the soul is not composed of matter and form. He first establishes that the intellect is not a composite of matter and form, which in turn, he uses to argue that the soul itself is not a composite of matter and form. This broader claim targets not only those who held that the intellect was a corporeal power, but also those like Avicbron, who posited a sort of spiritual matter in the soul.⁶⁹ Aquinas presents the argument as follows,

The second way stems from the *specific nature of a human soul insofar as it is intellectual*. For it is clear that whatever is received in a thing is received in it according to the mode of the receiver. So each thing is such that there is cognition of it insofar as its form exists in the one who has cognition of it. But an intellectual soul has cognition of an entity in that entity's nature taken absolutely; for instance, it has cognition of a rock insofar as the rock is a rock taken absolutely. Therefore, the form of a rock taken absolutely, i.e., according to its proper formal notion, exists in the intellectual soul. Thus, an intellectual soul is an absolute form and not something composed of matter and form. For if an intellectual soul were composed of matter and form, then the forms of the things would be received in it as individuals, and so the soul would know them only as singulars, just as happens in the case of the sentient powers, which receive the forms of things in a corporeal organ. For matter is a principle of individuation for forms.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ See, for instance, *DEE* ch.4; *InSent* II d.19 q.1 a.1; *QQ* X q.3 a.2; *SCG* II.49.

⁶⁹ See also *DSS* ch.7.

⁷⁰ *ST* I.75.5 co (Freddoso (trans.), 10-11; Leonine V, 202): "Secundo, specialiter ex ratione humanae animae, in quantum est intellectiva. Manifestum est enim quod omne quod recipitur in aliquo, recipitur in eo per modum recipientis. Sic autem cognoscitur unumquodque, sicut forma eius est in cognoscente anima autem intellectiva cognoscit rem aliquam in sua natura absolute, puta lapidem in quantum est lapis absolute. Est igitur forma lapidis absolute,

In this passage Aquinas makes three key claims from which he infers the incorporeity of the intellect. First, he appeals to the principle ‘*whatever is received is received in the manner of the receiver.*’ Second, he offers a brief account of intellectual cognition. Third, he identifies the object of cognition as a nature *taken absolutely*. I consider each of these claims in turn, beginning with the second and third, then returning to the first.

Aquinas’ second claim states that cognition of a thing occurs when the form of that thing exists in the cognizer—a claim that echoes the Aristotelian notion of the identity of knower and known. However, for Aquinas it is not by strict identity, but in virtue of a likeness or *species* that the cognized is said to exist in the cognizer. Thus for his argument here to be compelling in his own framework, we must understand it in light of the doctrine of intelligible *species*. A thing is cognized insofar as its intelligible *species* exists in the cognizer.

Aquinas’ third claim states that the object of cognition is the nature of a thing *taken absolutely*. This wording plausibly reflects the Avicennian account of *quiddities* or common natures. Recall that the absolute consideration of the *quiddity* involves the abstraction from all individuation (either in a mind or in a concrete thing). So the absolute consideration of a nature includes only what belongs to a particular kind of thing insofar as it is of that kind. This interpretation is supported by other passages where Aquinas uses the same locution. In his *Commentary on De Trinitate* he writes,

... which is the abstraction of a whole, in which some nature is considered absolutely according to its essential character apart from all of the parts which are not parts of the species but are accidental parts.⁷¹

secundum propriam rationem formalem, in anima intellectiva. Anima igitur intellectiva est forma absoluta, non autem aliquid compositum ex materia et forma. Si enim anima intellectiva esset composita ex materia et forma, formae rerum reciperentur in ea ut individuales, et sic non cognosceret nisi singulare, sicut accidit in potentiis sensitivis, quae recipiunt formas rerum in organo corporali, materia enim est principium individuationis formarum.”

⁷¹ *InDT* III q.5 a.3 co. 4 (translation mine; Decker ed. (Brill, 1955), 185.): “. . . quae est abstractio totius, in quo consideratur absolute natura aliqua secundum suam rationem essentialem, ab omnibus partibus, quae non sunt partes speciei, sed sunt partes accidentales.”

Here Aquinas explains the absolute consideration of a nature as an abstraction from the accidental features of an individual that are not essential to the nature. These accidental features are precisely the things from which we abstract when we consider the universal nature of some sensible thing. Thus his claim about the absolute nature of the object of cognition, for his purposes here, amounts to an assertion of its universality.⁷²

Based on the second and third claims in his argument in *ST* I.75.5 Aquinas concludes: “Therefore, the form of a rock taken absolutely, i.e., according to its proper formal notion (*secundum propriam rationem formalem*), exists in the intellective soul.” Since cognition involves the existence of the object of cognition in the cognizer, and the intellect cognizes natures considered absolutely or universally (i.e., apart from the individuating conditions of matter), the nature *considered absolutely*, must exist in the intellect. Given the doctrine of intelligible *species*, we should understand Aquinas’ claim to be that a *species* that represents the object in a universal or absolute way must be present in the intellect.

Aquinas then concludes that the intellect must be a pure form rather than a corporeal power because if it were corporeal, it would receive forms as individuals and would therefore understand only singulars. In this version of the argument, Aquinas doesn’t explicitly justify this move. As we saw in §2.3 however, he maintains that corporeal *species* are only capable of representing singular things as a result of their own material individuation, and that incorporeal *species* alone are capable of representing universals as a result of their abstraction from matter and material individuating conditions. If we supplement his argument in *ST*

⁷² We may worry that Aquinas’ use of the term ‘absolute’ cannot mean ‘universal’ because in the following sentence he concludes that the intellect is an *absolute* form and yet the soul itself is not *universal*. Aquinas follows Avicenna, however, in conceiving of the absolute consideration of a nature as one in which the nature is considered apart from any and all individuating conditions that attach to it either in a thing or in a mind. Moreover, in other versions of the argument Aquinas uses the term ‘universal.’ See, for instance, *QDA* a.14 co. Aquinas also frequently uses the term ‘absolute form’ to refer to a pure form, separate from matter, (see *ST* I.75.5 co, *InSent* I d.8 q.5 a.2 ad 1, and *InSent* I d.25 q.1 a. 4 co). Given his different uses of ‘nature taken absolutely’ and ‘absolute form’ in different texts, I think it is plausible to interpret the two uses of ‘absolute’ as corresponding to the two distinct uses.

I.75.5 with these connections between corporeity and singularity and incorporeity and universality, we can make sense of his move from the need for a *species* that represents an object universally or absolutely to the need for an incorporeal *species*.

At the outset of his argument Aquinas appeals to the principle: *whatever is received is received in the mode of the receiver*.⁷³ Aquinas extends this to all faculties of cognition. The receiver principle maintains that certain features of a receiver will determine how it receives other things or what kinds of things it can receive. He uses the receiver principle to begin a *reductio*. If the intellectual soul was a composite of form and matter, and hence a corporeal principle of cognition, the forms received in it would be received in the mode of the receiver—as corporeally individuated individuals. He concludes that if the *species* were individuals in this way, the soul would understand only singular things. This completes the *reductio* because of course he takes the stipulated object of intellectual cognition to be universal in nature.

Aquinas offers a more concise version of the argument from universals in his *Quaestiones De Anima*. He writes,

It is also evident that an intellectual principle of this kind is not composed of matter and form, because the *species* are received in it in a wholly immaterial way. This is made clear from the fact that the intellect is concerned with universals, which are considered in abstraction from matter and from material conditions.⁷⁴

In this passage Aquinas leads with his conclusion and cites the intellect’s wholly immaterial reception of the *species* as a justification for that conclusion. Since the intellect receives the *species* in a wholly immaterial way, it cannot be composed of both matter and form.

⁷³ Aquinas finds this principle in *Liber De Causis* prop. X, where it is offered there in connection with how the intellect understand things below and above itself in the order of nobility. For more information regarding Aquinas use of this principle, see Wippel (2007, 113-122).

⁷⁴ *QDA* a.14 co (Robb (trans.), 177; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 334): “Manifestum est etiam quod huiusmodi intellectivum principium non est aliquid ex materia et forma compositum, quia species omnino recipiuntur in ipso immaterialiter. Quod declaratur ex hoc quod intellectus est universalium, quae considerantur in abstractione a materia et a materialibus conditionibus.”

Presumably this is because if it were, it could not receive anything in a wholly incorporeal way. Here we might supply something like the receiver principle from *ST. I.75.5*.

Next, Aquinas tells us that the fact that the intellect is concerned with universals explains the need for the wholly incorporeal reception of intelligible *species*. As we saw in §2.3, the corporeal reception of a *species* ensures the material individuation of the *species*, and that the material individuation of a *species* ensures its representation of a singular object. If these are operating in the background, it is clear why the intellect's cognition of universals requires an incorporeal intellect. Only an incorporeal intellect is capable of receiving an incorporeal *species* without subjecting it to material individuation. Only a *species* that is not subject to material individuation can represent a universal object. So, if the intellect is to have cognition of universals, the intellect must be an incorporeal power.

In both versions of the argument Aquinas moves from facts concerning the nature of the object of cognition to facts concerning the nature of the *species* required to represent that object. To ensure that the object of intellectual cognition is a universal, the *species* that represents it must be free from material individuation. He makes a similar inference from facts concerning the nature of the required *species* to facts about the nature of the required cognitive power.⁷⁵ To ensure that a *species* is free from material conditions, it must be received wholly incorporeally. This requires an incorporeal receiver.⁷⁶ Thus the intellectual part of the human being cannot be part of the body.

⁷⁵ Because the argument in *ST. I.75.5* does not appeal directly to intelligible *species* to explain cognition, but instead involves the object of cognition itself existing in the intellect, the two shifts in the argument collapse into one. Aquinas' argument seems to rest on the identity of knower and known: If what is known is a nature considered absolutely, then the nature absolutely must exist in the knower. Since natures considered absolutely lack material individuation, the intellect must be incorporeal. However, for the argument to adequately serve his purposes, it must be in keeping with his account of intelligible *species*. Once we reinstate the doctrine of intelligible *species* where appropriate, the two distinct inferences become apparent.

⁷⁶ Joseph Novak (1987) identifies what he takes to be a case of equivocation in Aquinas' argument from the immaterial nature of the *species* (i.e., their *intentional* nature) to the incorporeal nature of the intellect. However, Novak mistakes Aquinas' claim that the forms received by the intellect are intelligible only if they are immaterial for the claim that the forms received by the intellect are intelligible only if they are *intentional*. As we have seen, *species* can exist

2.7 The Rational Soul as an Incorporeal Form

At this point we have considered two of Aquinas' most prominent arguments for the incorporeity of the intellect. Based on these arguments Aquinas concludes that the part of the human being that understands is not and does not use a bodily organ. Instead it is something incorporeal. As we saw in Chapter 1, intellectual operations are carried out by means of the intellectual powers. The powers of the soul are accidental forms that flow from the soul and serve as the actuality of the part of the human being responsible for their respective operation. They are the immediate formal principles of operation. So the incorporeity of intellectual cognition means that the powers of the soul cannot be forms that inhere in some part of the body.

Human beings are, for Aquinas,hylomorphic unions of soul and matter. If the intellectual powers cannot inhere in something corporeal, they must inhere in some part of the soul that is not itself constitutive of the body. This means that they must inhere in the soul alone, apart from matter. Indeed, we find that Aquinas locates the intellectual (and volitional) powers in the soul alone. He writes,

Now it is clear from what was said above that certain operations that are exercised without a corporeal organ, e.g., intellectual understanding and willing, belong to the soul. Hence, the powers that are the principles of these operations are in the soul as in a subject. However, there are certain operations of the soul that are exercised through corporeal organs, e.g., the act of seeing with the eyes and the act of hearing with the ears. And the same holds for all the other operations of the nutritive and sentient parts of the soul. And so the

intentionally and nevertheless fail to be intelligible. This is the case with *species* existing in the organs of sense and in the media of sensation. Novak then characterizes Aquinas' argument as claiming that the immaterial (i.e., *intentional*) existence of the forms received by intellect entails the incorporeity of the intellect and he notes, rightly, that this argument depends on an equivocation between two types of immateriality. This, however, is not Aquinas' argument since he maintains that *intentionality* alone is insufficient for intelligibility. *Species* must be entirely free from corporeal conditions in addition to existing *intentionally* in order to be intelligible. As I understand the argument, Aquinas argues that the *species* must be incorporeal, not just *intentional*, and on these grounds, the intellect must also be incorporeal. Novak considers an interpretation of the argument like the one I suggest, but he fails to understand it in light of the doctrine of the intelligible *species*. He then rejects it on the grounds that it leads to Platonism. This, I contend, is a result of a failure to consider claims about the reception of the object of cognition into the intellect as claims about intentional *species*, and a misunderstanding of what universality amounts to for Aquinas in regards to the objects of intellectual cognition.

powers that are the principles of such operations are in the conjoined being as in a subject, and not in the soul alone.⁷⁷

In this passage Aquinas explains that the powers of intellect and will are in the soul alone (i.e., form alone) as a subject.⁷⁸ In contrast, the powers of sense and nutrition are in the conjoined being, that is, in the form-matter composite, the body.

For the intellectual powers to inhere in the soul apart from the body, there must be more to the soul than its being the actuality of matter. There must be some part of the soul that is not exhausted by the potency of matter to serve as the intellectual part of the human being.

So although the soul remains the substantial form of the human being, and is therefore the actuality of prime matter, Aquinas maintains that it is not fully immersed in matter. He writes,

For although the human soul is a form united to a body, still it is united in such a way that it is not entirely contained by the body as if immersed in it, as are other material forms, but rather it surpasses the capability of all corporeal matter and because of the fact that its power exceeds corporeal matter, there is grounded in it the potential for intelligible objects, and this potency belongs to the possible intellect; however, insofar as the soul is united to its body, it possesses operations and powers in which the body shares, such as the power of the nutritive and sensitive parts of the soul.⁷⁹

Here Aquinas describes the soul as something that is not entirely contained or immersed in body. This allows the soul to possess an intellectual power, the possible intellect, which is a

⁷⁷ *ST I.77.5* co (Freddoso (trans.), 57; Leonine V, 245): “Manifestum est autem ex supra dictis quod quaedam operationes sunt animae, quae exercentur sine organo corporali, ut intelligere et velle. Unde potentiae quae sunt harum operationum principia, sunt in anima sicut in subiecto. Quaedam vero operationes sunt animae, quae exercentur per organa corporalia; sicut visio per oculum, et auditus per aurem. Et simile est de omnibus aliis operationibus nutritivae et sensitivae partis. Et ideo potentiae quae sunt talium operationum principia, sunt in coniuncto sicut in subiecto, et non in anima sola.”

⁷⁸ Although Aquinas states that he has previously shown that volitional operations cannot be carried out in or by a corporeal organ, he has not argued for this in the *Summa*. So far he has only argued that intellectual operations cannot.

⁷⁹ *QDA a.2* co (Robb (trans.), 59; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 288): “Cum enim anima humana sit quaedam forma unita corpori, ita tamen quod non sit a corpore totaliter comprehensa quasi ei immersa, sicut aliae formae materiales, sed excedat capacitatem totius materiae corporalis, quantum ad hoc in quo excedit materiam corporalem, inest ei potentia ad intelligibilia, quod pertinet ad intellectum possibilem; secundum vero quod unitur corpori, habet operationes et vires in quibus communicat ei corpus; sicut sunt vires partis nutritivae et sensitivae.”

potency for intelligible forms. The part of the human substantial form that extends beyond matter is the intellectual part of the human being. Aquinas writes,

The soul, although it is united to the body according to the body's mode, nevertheless possesses an intellectual nature by virtue of that part of the soul which transcends the body; and thus the forms received in the soul are intelligible and not material.⁸⁰

The possible intellect belongs to the human soul to the degree that the soul is elevated above corporeal matter.⁸¹

The part of the soul that transcends the body serves as the subject for the intellectual principle and by means of it, is able to receive forms, that is *species*, that are intelligible and not material.

There are, therefore, a number of things that can be called 'incorporeal' in connection with Aquinas' account of the human being. First, intellectual cognition is incorporeal in the sense that understanding does not (and cannot) take place in a corporeal organ. Second, the intellectual powers are incorporeal in the sense that they do not inhere in a material subject. Third, some part of the soul, the part that serves as the subject of the intellectual powers, is incorporeal in the sense that it extends beyond matter.

Nevertheless, the soul is not fully incorporeal. It is still related to the body as its substantial form and is therefore united to prime matter to constitute the body. Aside from the intellectual powers, there are nutritive and sensitive powers that flow from the essence of the soul and serve as the actualities of various bodily organs. For Aquinas the fact that the soul is not fully immersed in matter does not negate its role as substantial form or render the soul a separate substance. He writes,

⁸⁰ *QDA* a.2 ad 19 (Robb (trans.), 63; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 290): "Ad decimumnonum dicendum quod anima, licet uniatu corpori secundum modum corporis, tamen ex ea parte qua excedit corporis capacitatem, naturam intellectualem habet; et sic formae receptae in ea sunt intelligibiles et non materiales."

⁸¹ *QDA* a.2 ad 4 (Robb (trans.), slightly modified, 60; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 288-289): "Ad quartum dicendum quod intellectus possibilis consequitur animam humanam in quantum supra materiam corporealem elevatur;"

Nor do not say that the soul, in which the intellect is, so exceeds corporeal matter that it does not have its being in the body; but that the intellect, which Aristotle calls a power of the soul, is not the act of body. Neither indeed is the soul the act of body through the mediation of its powers, but the soul through its very self is the act of the body giving specific being to the body. Some other of its powers are the acts of certain parts of the body, perfecting them for their operations, yet, the power which is the intellect is not the act of a body, since its operation is not carried out by means of a corporeal organ.⁸²

Aquinas maintains that since the intellect is a power that is not the act of body and so not in a bodily organ, it is called separate. He denies, however, that the intellective power is separate in the sense that it is a substance that exists apart from the rest of the human being. The intellective power is still a power of the human soul, which is the form of body.

In this regard, Aquinas differs significantly from Averroes. Averroes, like Aquinas, affirms Aristotle's claim that the intellective power must be unmixed with body in order to understand.⁸³ But Averroes takes this to mean that the intellective principle, which he calls the material intellect, must be separate in existence from individual human beings. In his view the material intellect is a separate substance that is unindividuated by matter so that it can serve as a subject for universal (i.e., unindividuated) intelligibles. All human beings understand by means of it. Aquinas rejects this view for reasons we will see in Chapter 6. He takes himself to have satisfied Aristotle's requirement of incorporeity by maintaining that the intellective powers are not the actuality of any body part and are instead in the soul alone. Concerning the separateness of the intellect (both agent and possible intellect) he writes,

It is separate in as much as it is not the act of any organ, but not separate in as much

⁸² *DUI* ch.1 (translation, mine; Leonine XLIII, 296-297): "Nec dicimus quod anima, in qua est intellectus, sic excedat materiam corporalem quod non habeat esse in corpore; sed quod intellectus, quem Aristoteles dicit potentiam animae, non est actus corporis. Neque enim anima est actus corporis mediantibus suis potentiis, sed anima per se ipsam est actus corporis dans corpori esse specificum. Aliquae autem potentiae eius sunt actus partium quarumdam corporis, perficientes ipsas ad aliquas operationes; sic autem potentia quae est intellectus, nullius corporis actus est, quia eius operatio non fit per organum corporale."

⁸³ This contrasts with the position of Averroes. Averroes held that only something unindividuated and incorporeal could properly serve as a subject of unindividuated intelligible forms—in his view, the objects of intellective cognition. Therefore, Averroes maintained that the intellective soul must be a separate incorporeal substance shared by all human knowers. See Averroes, *LDCA* III.5. I discuss Averroes' position in more detail in §5.5 and §6.2-3.

as it is a part or a power of the soul which is the act of the body, just as is said above.⁸⁴

So while he maintains that since the intellective powers are separate in the sense that they are not the actuality of a bodily organ, they are nevertheless principles in the human being insofar as they are powers of the human soul that is the actuality of the body.

2.8 Incorporeity and Unity

For Aquinas, substantial unity is provided by a single substantial form which is the actuality of each part of the substance and the source of being that renders it a unified whole. The rational soul is the single substantial form of the human being. Although the soul has certain powers that are not actualities in the body and is therefore not fully exhausted by the matter of which it is the actuality, it is nevertheless inseparable from matter insofar as it is the actuality of the body. The fact that the soul is the single substantial form of all the corporeal parts of the human being means that these are all parts of a single substantial whole. The incorporeity of the intellective powers of the soul simply tells us that the corporeal parts of the human being, taken together, do not add up to a complete substance. This does not threaten the unqualified unity of the human being, but it does show that there is more to the human being than its body.⁸⁵

Because the intellective powers flow from the soul, they share in the same act of existence brought to the body through the soul. Nevertheless we might worry that the intellective principles are fundamentally different from all other powers of the soul since they operate apart from the body, and that such a fundamental division in the nature of the

⁸⁴ *DUI* ch.1 (translation mine; Leonine XLIII, 299): “In quibus etiam verbis valde notandum est, quod cum superius utrumque intellectum (scil. possibilem et agentem), dixerit separatum, hic tamen dicit eum non separatum. Est enim separatus, in quantum non est actus organi; non separatus vero, in quantum est pars sive potentia animae quae est actus corporis, sicut supra dictum est.”

⁸⁵ The incorporeity of the intellect may nevertheless be problematic insofar as it entails the subsistence of the intellect. I take up these questions in Ch. 3 and 4.

powers of the soul is problematic. But Aquinas maintains an important continuity in his treatment of the various powers of the soul that can account for the diversity between the natures of these powers. As we have seen, to determine the nature of the power, Aquinas considers the nature of its operation, and to determine the nature of its operation, he considers its object. He applies this method consistently to the sensitive and intellectual powers alike. Accordingly differences between the cognitive powers arise from the nature of their object. Although the intellect is significantly different from other cognitive powers because of the range and nature of its object, it is nevertheless in potency to its object in the way each sense power is in potency to its object. So while the powers of intellectual cognition are importantly different from the other powers of the soul, they are for a principled reason: such powers are demanded by the objects of our intellectual cognition.

Conclusion

Aquinas' commitment to the incorporeity of the intellectual powers and accordingly the incorporeity of the rational part of the human soul mark the first significant ontological difference between the human substantial form and the substantial forms of all other material substances. The human substantial form is not fully immersed in matter but extends beyond matter. Insofar as the soul extends beyond matter it serves as the subject of the intellectual powers so that the powers may be exercised without being exercised by corporeal organs. Nevertheless, the soul remains the form of the body, that which makes it to be, to be nutritive, and to be sensitive. As such, the soul is the principle of existence of the body as well as the source of all the powers of essential human operation.

Chapter 3: The Subsistence of the Rational Soul¹

Aquinas maintains that the human soul is a subsistent part of the human being in addition to serving as its substantial form. Material substantial forms are typically the principles by which a thing exists and not existents in their own right. He argues that while the rational soul is the principle of existence of the human being and the actuality of the human body, it is also a primary subject of being or *esse*, that is, it is a *per se* existent, a '*hoc aliquid*' (literally a 'this something') in its own right. Thus, the human soul enjoys the kind of existence had by the integral parts of a substance, like a hand, or heart. It does not exist merely derivatively as the principle by which the human being exists.

The soul owes its subsistence to its rational nature and, in particular, to the incorporeity of intellectual operations. As we saw in Chapter 2, Aquinas argues that intellectual understanding cannot occur in or through a bodily organ, so he maintains that it must take place in the soul alone, apart from matter and the body. In his argument for the subsistence of the soul, Aquinas argues that the incorporeity of intellectual operations and the incorporeity of the intellectual part of the human being entail that the soul possesses a *per se* operation. This means that the rational part of the soul is the part of the human being that understands. Aquinas then appeals to a correspondence principle between a thing's mode of operation and its mode of existence: Things operate in the way that they exist. So things that operate *per se* must exist *per se*. The *per se* operation of the soul reveals its status as a *per se* existent, a subsistent thing.

In some versions of his argument, Aquinas justifies his claims regarding the correspondence between a thing's mode of existence and its mode of operation with recourse to a further principle, namely, that *nothing operates except insofar as it is in act*. Call this the

¹ Portions of this chapter appear in Fisher (2017), "Aquinas on Hylomorphism and the *In-Act* Principle," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, DOI: 10.1080/09608788.2017.1300571 .

in-act principle. This principle plays a central role in Aquinas' argument for subsistence, in his argument for the soul as form of the body (which I discuss in Chapter 5), and in his rejection of Averroes' account of the intellective power (which I discuss in Chapter 6). So in my examination of Aquinas' argument for subsistence, I focus in particular on its role in his argument for subsistence and its place more generally within Aquinas' metaphysical system and account of creaturely operation.

As we saw in Chapter 1, Aquinas' account of human unity depends on there being a single substantial form that gives *esse* to the human being. It seems that if the rational soul were a subsistent thing, a *hoc aliquid*, it would possess complete *per se* existence in its own right, apart from the body. But, then, any additional substances or forms united to it, including the human body, could only be so accidentally to form something *unum secundum quid* rather than *unum simpliciter*.

Aquinas attempts to address this worry by maintaining that the soul subsists, but denying that it is complete in a specific nature. He likens the soul to other integral parts of the body. An integral part is a *hoc aliquid* in the weaker sense. Hands, hearts, and eyes are subsistent in the same way that the soul is subsistent. Since the former can be united to the rest of the human being's subsistent parts to form something unqualifiedly one, the soul too can be united to the rest of the subsistent parts of the human being to form something unqualifiedly one. In this chapter I consider whether Aquinas is entitled to liken the subsistence of the soul to that of the other integral parts of the human being. I argue that he is despite the fact that the soul, unlike the hand, heart, or eye, is capable of existing and operating apart from the rest of the human being.

This chapter has seven sections. In §3.1 I introduce Aquinas' notions of subsistence, *per se* existence, and '*hoc aliquid*.' In §3.2 I present his argument for the subsistence of the

soul in which he argues that the incorporeity of intellective operation reveals that the soul itself is a *per se* operator with respect to intellective operations. In §3.3 I examine the *in-act* principle's meaning and its role within his broader metaphysical framework. In §3.4 I examine how the *in-act* principle and Aquinas' ontology of created substance entail that only something that exists *per se* can operate *per se*. Aquinas equates the soul's subsistence to that of all the other integral parts of the human being. In §3.5 I consider this comparison between the subsistence of the soul and that of other body parts. I conclude that he is entitled to maintain that the soul subsistence does not, by itself, threaten his account of human unity, based on his comparison of the soul with other body parts. In §3.6 I argue that that subsistence of the soul does not, on its own, entail the capacity for separate existence apart from the rest of the human being. Lastly in §3.7 I consider whether Aquinas' contrast between the mode of existence of subsistent things and the mode of existence of inherent things threatens his account of the soul as the form of the body. I conclude that it does not, and that on a charitable reading we can reconcile the way he speaks of the human soul both as a principle in and of the body, and as a subsistent thing.

3.1 Subsistence and Existence *Per Se*

For Aquinas the notion of subsistence is closely related to that of *per se* existence. He describes subsistence as a way of possessing being or *esse*, namely, as existing *per se*.² In *De Potentia* he writes,

Now two things are proper to the substance which is a subject.³ The first is that

² Consider *ST I.29.2 co* (English Dominican Fathers (trans.), slightly modified, bk.1, 29; Leonine IV, 330): “For, as it exists in itself and not in another, it is said to be a subsistent thing; as we say that those things subsist which exist in themselves, and not in another. [Secundum enim quod per se existit et non in alio, vocatur subsistentia, illa enim subsistere dicimus, quae non in alio, sed in se existent.]”

³ Aquinas qualifies ‘substance’ as ‘substance which is a subject’ in this passage to identify it as a primary rather than a secondary substance. For Aristotle and Aquinas, primary substances are individual members in the category of substance whereas secondary substance picks out specific and generic natures, for instance ‘animal’ or ‘canine’ considered apart from individual instances. Here Aquinas specifies the two things that characterize primary substance not secondary substance.

it needs no external support but is supported by itself: wherefore it is said to subsist, as existing not in another but in itself. The second is that it is the foundation to accidents by sustaining them, and for this reason it is said to substand.⁴

Here Aquinas describes two features proper to a substance that is a subject. First, substances do not need any external support for their existence, that is, they exist *per se* rather than *in alio*. Second they serve as the subject of accidents. Insofar as a substance exists *per se* it is said to subsist. Insofar as it serves as the subject of accidents it is said to substand. When we say, therefore, that a thing subsists, we are drawing attention to its *per se* mode of existence.

As we saw in Chapter 1, Aquinas distinguishes the *per se* mode of existence from the mode of existence of other ontological items. Accidents and accidental forms exist in another as in a subject rather than exist *per se*.⁵ In this sense, they require an external support for their existence and exist *in alio*. Matter and form, as metaphysical parts of substance are that out of which and that by which a substance exists respectively, rather than *per se* existents in their own right.⁶ Form is a principle of—not the subject of—being for the substance. Aquinas describes the existence of material forms (and thus all souls but the rational soul) as inherent.⁷

Although they do not exist in a subject as accidents and accidental forms since there is no

⁴ *DP* q.9 a.1 co (English Dominican Fathers (trans.), bk.3, 142; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol. 2, 226): “Substantia vero quae est subiectum, duo habet propria: quorum primum est quod non indiget extrinseco fundamento in quo sustentetur, sed sustentatur in seipso; et ideo dicitur subsistere, quasi per se et non in alio existens. Aliud vero est quod est fundamentum accidentibus sustentans ipsa; et pro tanto dicitur substande.”

⁵ See, for instance, *DP* q.3 a.9 co; *QDA* a.1 co. See §1.1 for details of the inherent existence of accidents and accidental forms.

⁶ Subsistent forms are *per se* existents, but material forms are not. Consider, *DP* q.3 a.8 co (English Dominican Fathers (trans.), bk.1, 142; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol. 2, 61-62): “For being is not predicated univocally of the form and the thing generated. A generated natural thing is said to be *per se* and properly, as having being and subsisting in that being: whereas the form is not thus said to be, for it does not subsist, nor has its being *per se*; and it is said to exist or be, because something is by it. [Forma enim naturalis non dicitur univoce esse cum re generata. Res enim naturalis generata dicitur esse per se et proprie, quasi habens esse, et in suo esse subsistens; forma autem non sic esse dicitur, cum non subsistat, nec per se esse habeat; sed dicitur esse vel ens, quia ea aliquid est.]”

Consider also, *SCG* II.54 [6-7] (Anderson (trans.), 157; Leonine XII, 392): “Accordingly, in things composed of matter and form neither the matter nor the form nor even being itself can be termed that which is. Yet the form can be called that by which it is, inasmuch as it is the principle of the being; the whole substance itself, however, is that which is. And being itself is that by which the substance is called a being. [Unde in compositis ex materia et forma nec materia nec forma potest dici ipsum quod est, nec etiam ipsum esse. Forma tamen potest dici quo est, secundum quod est essendi principium; ipsa autem tota substantia est ipsum quod est; et ipsum esse est quo substantia denominatur ens.]”

⁷ See *ST* I.75.2 ad 1; *ST* I.75.2 ad 2.

substantial subject prior to them, he describes them as dependent on matter.⁸ Material forms do not exist through their own *esse*, but through the *esse* of the composite.⁹ So although form is a source of *esse* in material composites, it exists only derivatively insofar as the substance exists. Material forms, accidental forms, and the accidents they give rise to, all exist by inhering, either in prime matter, or in a substantial subject.

Aquinas also occasionally uses the phrase ‘exists *per se*’ to distinguish between the existence of complete substances and that of their incomplete integral parts. For instance, he writes,

Yet we must bear in mind that not every individual in the genus of substance, even in rational nature, is a person, but that alone which exists by itself, and not that which exists in some more perfect thing. Hence the hand of Socrates, although it is a kind of individual, is not a person, because it does not exist by itself, but in something more perfect, viz. in the whole. And hence, too, this is signified by a person being defined as an individual substance, for the hand is not a complete substance, but part of a substance. Therefore, although this human nature is a kind of individual in the genus of substance, it has not its own personality, because it does not exist separately, but in something more perfect, viz. in the Person of the Word.¹⁰

Here Aquinas argues that the human nature of Christ is not itself a person, (i.e., a rational substance). He claims that the human hand does not exist *per se* because it is merely a part of a more perfect whole—the human being. Considered in itself, the hand is incomplete.

Towards the end of the passage Aquinas cites the fact that the human nature of Christ does not exist separately to show that it fails to exist *per se*. Complete substances enjoy the kind of independence that their integral parts do not, since the parts depend on the whole. Unlike a

⁸ See *QDA* a.1 co.

⁹ See *DUI* ch. 3.

¹⁰ *ST* III.2.2 ad 3 (English Dominican Fathers (trans.), bk.15, 29-30; Leonine XI, 25): “Sciendum est tamen quod non quodlibet individuum in genere substantiae, etiam in rationali natura, habet rationem personae, sed solum illud quod per se existit, non autem illud quod existit in alio perfectiori. Unde manus Socratis, quamvis sit quoddam individuum, non est tamen persona, quia non per se existit, sed in quodam perfectiori, scilicet in suo toto. Et hoc etiam potest significari in hoc quod persona dicitur substantia individua, non enim manus est substantia completa, sed pars substantiae. Licet igitur humana natura sit individuum quoddam in genere substantiae, quia tamen non per se separatim existit, sed in quodam perfectiori, scilicet in persona Dei verbi, consequens est quod non habeat personalitatem propriam.” See also *QQ* IX q.2 a.1-2.

hand or eye, which cannot survive its separation from the whole to which it belongs, the human being exists independently. In the context of this passage, only complete substances are *per se* existents. This passage suggests that *per se* existents are capable of separate or independent existence. Since integral parts cannot exist apart from their wholes, they are not *per se* existents.

Nevertheless, Aquinas recognizes that the existence had by integral parts differs significantly from existence in another as subject. He writes,

Whence the Philosopher, still speaking in the Categories, says that a hand, a foot and things of that kind are parts of substances rather than first or second substances. For although they are not in another as a subject, and this is essentially what we mean by substance, still they do not share fully in the nature of a species...¹¹

Here Aquinas explains that integral parts of substances are not complete in a species and so they do not count as substances, strictly speaking. Yet he admits that they do not exist only in the sense that they inhere in a subject or in matter like accidents and material forms. As we saw in Chapter 1, the integral parts of a substance are hylomorphic composites of the form of the whole and prime matter. They can serve as the subjects of accidental forms, and thus accidents. In these respects, then, the mode of existence of an integral part is closer to that of a complete substance than to something essentially inherent or a mere principle *quo*.

Given these similarities between complete substances and their incomplete integral parts, Aquinas recognizes integral parts as *per se* existents in a weaker sense. He writes,

But the phrase ‘exists *per se*’ can sometimes be predicated of a thing as long as it is not inherent like an accident or a material form, even if it is a part. On the other hand, what is said to subsist properly and *per se* is such that it is neither

¹¹ QDA a.1 co (Robb (trans.), 46; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol. 2, 283): “Unde philosophus etiam in praedicamentis, manum et pedem et huiusmodi nominat partes substantiarum magis quam substantias primas vel secundas: quia, licet non sint in alio sicut in subiecto (quod proprie substantiae est), non tamen participant complete naturam alicuius speciei.”

inherent in the aforementioned ways nor a part.¹²

So Aquinas recognizes incomplete parts of substances as *per se* existents in a weaker sense. Yet they fail to count as *per se* existents, strictly speaking, since they are incomplete in a specific nature. Accordingly, he also recognizes two senses of the term '*hoc aliquid*.' He writes,

The term *hoc aliquid* can be taken in two senses. In the first sense it is taken for any subsistent thing, whereas in the second sense it is taken for a subsistent thing that is complete in the nature of some species. The first sense excludes inherence of the sort that belongs to an accident or material form; the second sense excludes in addition the incompleteness that belongs to a part. Hence, a hand could be called a *hoc aliquid* in the first sense, but not in the second sense.¹³

In this passage Aquinas recognizes a weaker and a stronger sense of the phrase '*hoc aliquid*.'

In the weaker sense a thing can be called a *hoc aliquid* provided it is not inherent like an accident or material form. The stronger sense includes, in addition, that the thing be complete in the nature of some species.

When Aquinas claims that Christ's human nature, or the hand, is not a *per se* existent because it is a part of a whole, he clearly has in mind the stronger notion of existence *per se* and *hoc aliquid*. A hand fails to count as a *hoc aliquid* or *per se* existent in the strong sense, but as Aquinas notes, it does count in the weaker sense. The capacity for separate or independent existence, where that means existing by oneself apart from the rest of a larger whole can only follow on the strict notions of existence *per se* and *hoc aliquid*.

¹² ST I.75.2 ad 2 (Freddoso (trans.), slightly modified, 5; Leonine V, 197): "Sed per se existens quandoque potest dici aliquid si non sit inhaerens ut accidens vel ut forma materialis, etiam si sit pars. Sed proprie et per se subsistens dicitur quod neque est praedicto modo inhaerens, neque est pars."

¹³ ST I.75.2 ad 1 (Freddoso (trans.), slightly modified, 5; Leonine V, 196): "Ad primum ergo dicendum quod hoc aliquid potest accipi dupliciter, uno modo, pro quocumque subsistente, alio modo, pro subsistente completo in natura alicuius speciei. Primo modo, excludit inhaerentiam accidentis et formae materialis, secundo modo, excludit etiam imperfectionem partis. Unde manus posset dici hoc aliquid primo modo, sed non secundo modo."

3.2 Argument for the Subsistence of the Soul: The Soul as a *Per Se* Operator¹⁴

Aquinas' most prominent argument for the subsistence of the soul contains three central steps. First he affirms that the intellectual powers are not in the body and do not operate by means of corporeal organs. Second, he uses this fact to establish that the soul has its own operation, that is, the soul operates *per se*. Third, he appeals to the notion that a thing exists in the way that it operates. If something operates *per se*, then it exists *per se*. He concludes that the soul exists *per se* and is, therefore, a *hoc aliquid*, a subsistent thing.

One of Aquinas' more detailed versions of this argument appears in the *Summa Theologiae* where it directly follows his argument for the incorporeity of the intellect based on its cognition of all material natures. There he writes,

One must claim that the principle of intellectual operations, which we call a man's soul, is an incorporeal and subsistent principle... Therefore, it is impossible that this intellectual principle should be a body. And, similarly, it is impossible that it should have intellectual understanding through a bodily organ, since the determinate nature of that bodily organ would likewise prevent its having cognition of all bodies... Therefore, the intellectual principle itself, which is called the mind or the intellect, has an operation on its own in which the body does not share. But nothing can operate *per se* unless it subsists *per se*. For a thing does not operate unless it is a being in act, and so a thing operates in the way in which it exists. It is for this reason that we say that it is the hot thing, rather than the heat, that gives warmth. It follows, then, that the human soul, which is called the intellect or mind, is something incorporeal and subsistent.¹⁵

Having established that the intellectual principle is not a body, Aquinas moves into his argument for the subsistence of the soul. He begins with the claim that the intellectual

¹⁴ See Kretzmann (1992), Etzweiler (1980), and Pasnau (2001) for detailed discussions of Aquinas' argument for subsistence.

¹⁵ *ST* I.75.2 co (Freddoso (trans.), slightly modified, 4-5; Leonine V, 196): "Respondeo dicendum quod necesse est dicere id quod est principium intellectualis operationis, quod dicimus animam hominis, esse quoddam principium incorporeum et subsistens ... Impossibile est igitur quod principium intellectuale sit corpus. Et similiter impossibile est quod intelligat per organum corporeum ... Ipsum igitur intellectuale principium, quod dicitur mens vel intellectus, habet operationem per se, cui non communicat corpus. Nihil autem potest per se operari, nisi quod per se subsistit. Non enim est operari nisi entis in actu, unde eo modo aliquid operatur, quo est. Propter quod non dicimus quod calor calefacit, sed calidum. Relinquitur igitur animam humanam, quae dicitur intellectus vel mens, esse aliquid incorporeum et subsistens."

principle has an operation in which the body does not share. The incorporeity of the intellectual principle, as we saw in Chapter 2, requires that the intellectual powers inhere in the soul alone rather than in the body, i.e., the soul-matter composite. Since intellectual operations cannot be carried out in the body because of its materiality, they must be carried out in the soul alone, apart from matter.

It is important to clarify what Aquinas means when he claims that the body does not share in intellectual cognition. For, as we saw in Chapter 2, the intellect does rely in some way on the body for its operation. In particular, the agent intellect requires phantasms in the imagination to abstract intelligible *species*. Without intelligible *species*, the possible intellect cannot understand.

In the *Commentary on the De Anima* Aquinas distinguishes two ways we might conceive of an operation or operative principle requiring or involving a body. He writes,

It is important to know, therefore, that there is one kind of operation or state of soul that needs a body as instrument and as object. In this way seeing needs a body (i) as an object, since color (the object of sight) is a body, and also (ii) as an instrument, (through the pupil, that is, which serves as an instrument). And in this way seeing belongs not only to soul but also to the organ. There is another kind of operation, however, that needs a body not as its instrument but only as its object. For intellectual cognition does not occur through a corporeal organ but needs a corporeal object. For as the Philosopher says in Book III [12.431a14–15], phantasms are related to intellect in the same way that colors are related to sight. But colors are related to sight as objects; therefore phantasms are related to intellect as objects. Therefore, since phantasms do not occur without a body, it follows that intellectual cognition does not occur without a body—but in such a way that the body serves as the object, not as the instrument.¹⁶

¹⁶ *InDA* I.2 [19] (Pasnau (trans.), slightly modified, 15; Leonine XLV.1, 9): “Sciendum est igitur, quod aliqua operatio animae aut passio est, quae indiget corpore sicut instrumento et sicut obiecto. Sicut videre indiget corpore, sicut obiecto, quia color, qui est obiectum visus, est in corpore. Item sicut instrumento; quia visio, etsi sit ab anima, non est tamen nisi per organum visus, scilicet pupillam, quae est ut instrumentum; et sic videre non est animae tantum, sed est organi. Aliqua autem operatio est, quae indiget corpore, non tamen sicut instrumento, sed sicut obiecto tantum. Intelligere enim non est per organum corporale, sed indiget obiecto corporali. Sicut enim philosophus dicit in tertio huius, hoc modo phantasmata se habent ad intellectum, sicut colores ad visum. Colores autem se habent ad visum, sicut obiecta: phantasmata ergo se habent ad intellectum sicut obiecta. Cum autem phantasmata non sint sine corpore, videtur quod intelligere non est sine corpore: ita tamen quod sit sicut obiectum et non sicut instrumentum.”

In this passage Aquinas distinguishes between requiring a thing as an *instrument* of cognition and requiring a thing as an *object* of cognition. For instance, the power of sight requires something visible for its exercise, namely, a colored body to serve as the object of sight. Therefore the power of sight depends in its operation on a corporeal object. But the power of sight also requires a corporeal *instrument* to carry out its operation. A physical organ, namely the eye, is required to receive sensible *species* of color. Without the eye, the power of sight cannot be exercised.

This distinction is significant for Aquinas. While the eye must be presented with visible objects to be seen, there is an intuitive sense in which the operation of the eye is carried out independently of these objects. An object is a precondition for the exercise of sight or intellectual cognition, but it is not part of the operator itself. In contrast, if a cognitive power requires a body as an instrument in the way that the power of sight requires the eye, then the exercise of the power is not independent from that body. The body participates in the operation.

In the replies to *ST* I.75.2, Aquinas claims that a body is involved in intellectual cognition as an object, but not as an instrument. He writes,

The body is not required for the intellect's action as an organ by means of which that action is exercised; rather, the body is required for the sake of the action's object. For a phantasm is related to intellectual understanding in the way that a color is related to sight.¹⁷

Here Aquinas compares a phantasm to color. Just as color is the object of the power of sight and not its instrument, the phantasm is merely the object of abstraction and not the

¹⁷ *ST* I.75.2 ad 3 (Freddoso (trans.), slightly modified, 6; Leonine V, 197): "Ad tertium dicendum quod corpus requiritur ad actionem intellectus, non sicut organum quo talis actio exerceatur, sed ratione obiecti, phantasma enim comparatur ad intellectum sicut color ad visum." See also *InDA* I.2 [19].

instrument of the agent or possible intellect.¹⁸ So intellectual cognition depends on a body, the human body, to provide the phantasms for the agent intellect. It does not, however, depend on a body, human or otherwise, as an instrument through which intellectual cognition takes place.

In *ST I.75.2*, Aquinas argues that the intellectual dependence on the body and its phantasms does not rule out the soul's subsistence. He writes,

But needing the body in this sense [i.e., as an object] does not rule out the intellect's being subsistent; otherwise, it would be the case that because it needs external sensible things in order to have sensation, an animal is not something subsistent.¹⁹

Although animals require sense-objects in order to carry out their essential sensitive operations, animals are not on that account non-subsistent. Likewise the intellect's subsistence is not threatened just because the intellectual cognition requires the human body to provide the phantasms from which the agent intellect abstracts intelligible *species*.

As we saw in Chapter 2, Aquinas takes the incorporeity of intellectual operation to show that the intellectual principle is incorporeal. This, for Aquinas, means that the subject of the intellectual powers must be the soul alone apart from matter. Here Aquinas uses the claim

¹⁸ Aquinas often uses the term 'object' with respect to intellectual cognition to refer to that which is understood. He is clear that the things we understand are universal natures existing in things, not the phantasms in the imagination. So in this sense, the phantasms are not the objects of our understanding. In contrast, the colors in things are, like the universals we understand, the things that we see. So when we consider the objects of sensation or understanding as the items sensed or understood, color is analogous not to the phantasms in the imagination, but to the universal natures that we understand.

Nevertheless, color and the phantasms are analogous when we consider them as the sources for the *species* by which we cognize. I take it that this is the analogy that Aquinas intends to draw. For Aquinas, the colors in things emit sensible *species* that move through the air and are received into the eye. Through these *species* the perceiver perceives the colors in the things themselves. With respect to intellectual cognition, the phantasms in the imagination contain intelligible *species* in potency. The agent intellect turns to the phantasms and abstracts from them actually intelligible *species*. These *species* are received into the possible intellect and through them the possible intellect understands a universal nature. Both the colors existing in things and the phantasms in the imagination serve as an object in the sense that they serve as that from which a cognitive *species* is taken. Phantasms are the objects on which the agent intellect acts to produce intelligible *species*, so they are the source of the *species* received into the possible intellect. Likewise, the color in a wall is the source of *species* received by the eye. This analogy stands, despite the fact that there is no analogue to the agent intellect in the sensitive operations.

¹⁹ *ST I.75.2 ad 3* (Freddoso (trans.), 6; Leonine V, 197): "Sic autem indigere corpore non remouet intellectum esse subsistentem, alioquin animal non esset aliquid subsistens, cum indigeat exterioribus sensibilibus ad sentiendum."

that intellective operations are carried out apart from the body to show that the soul itself is the *per se* operator with respect to intellective cognition.

Since intellective operations are carried out in the soul alone, apart from the body, these operations belong to the soul alone, and not some part of the soul-matter composite. So unlike sight, which is carried out by the eye insofar as it is actualized by the formal power of sight, there is no part of the body that understands. Instead, the soul alone understands. This is simply to say that the soul has a *per se* operation. Aquinas writes,

Therefore, the intellectual principle itself, which is called the mind or the intellect, has an operation *per se* in which the body does not share.²⁰

Thus it is necessary that an intellective soul operate *per se*, inasmuch as it possesses an essential operation in which the body does not share.²¹

The *per se* operation of the soul sets it apart from all other material and accidental forms. Typically such forms are principles by which a composite acts, just as they are principles by which a composite exists. As Aquinas states in both *Summa Theologiae* and *Quaestiones de Anima*, heat does not heat, the hot *thing* heats. Heat accounts for the hot thing's being hot, and so it is that by which the hot thing heats another. But the accident of heat in the hot thing is not the *per se* operator of heating.

Like the form of heat, the human soul is only a formal principle *quo* with respect to the nutritive and sensitive operations of the human being. The soul makes the human being exist as a human being, and the nutritive and sensitive powers flow from the soul and inhere in the various body parts responsible for their exercise. All of the sensitive and nutritive operations are carried out by bodily organs, the ensouled matter. The soul participates only as a formal principle as that by which the human being, and thus each of the bodily organs,

²⁰ *ST I.75.2 co* (Freddoso (trans.), 6; Leonine V, 196): “Ipsum igitur intellectuale principium, quod dicitur mens vel intellectus, habet operationem per se, cui non communicat corpus.”

²¹ *QDA a.1 co* (Robb (trans.), 47; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol. 2, 283): “Et sic oportet quod anima intellectiva per se agat, utpote propriam operationem habens absque corporis communione.”

exists.²² However, in the case of intellectual cognition there is no bodily organ of intellect. Instead, the soul is that which operates.

Aquinas identifies the soul as the *per se* operator of intellectual cognition in much the same way that he attributes other operations to the various bodily organs in which they are carried out. Various human subsistent parts perform the various vital operations of life—indeed the diversity of the human vital operations require that the human being contain a diversity of organs, each suited to perform its respective operations.²³ Yet, all these subsistent parts (including the soul) are parts of the human being. In the strict sense they are not *per se* existents. The human being is the ontologically basic unit, the primary being. The human can be conceptually divided into its various subsistent parts and these subsistent parts have distinct operations, but because the parts are human parts, the operations carried out in the various parts belong to the human being. Aquinas writes,

An alternative reply is that to act *per se* befits something that exists *per se*. But the phrase ‘exists *per se*’ can sometimes be predicated of a thing as long as it is not inherent like an accident or a material form, even if it is a part. On the other hand, what is said to subsist properly and *per se* is such that it is neither inherent in the aforementioned ways nor a part. In this sense, neither an eye nor a hand could be said to subsist *per se*, and so neither could it be said to operate *per se*. Hence, the operations of the parts are attributed to the whole through the parts. For we say that the human being sees through his eye, and that he touches through his hand. This is different from saying that a hot thing gives warmth through its heat, since there is no sense in which the heat gives warmth, properly speaking. Therefore, one can claim that a soul understands in the same sense in which an eye sees, but that it is more proper to say that the man understands through his soul.²⁴

²² See for instance, *QDA* a.19 ad 15 (Robb (trans.), slightly modified, 230; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol. 2, 354): “The soul is a principle of sensing, not as a thing that senses, but as that by which a sensing thing senses. Consequently the sentient powers do not exist in the soul as a subject, but come from the soul as a principle. [Ad decimumquintum dicendum quod anima est principium sentiendi, non sicut sentiens, sed sicut id quo sentiens sentit. Unde potentiae sensitivae non sunt in anima sicut in subiecto, sed sunt ab anima sicut a principio.]”

²³ See *QDA* a.8 ad 14; *QDA* a.9 co.

²⁴ *ST* I.75.2 ad 2 (Freddoso (trans), slightly modified, 5; Leonine V, 197): “Vel dicendum quod per se agere convenit per se existenti. Sed per se existens quandoque potest dici aliquid si non sit inhaerens ut accidens vel ut forma materialis, etiam si sit pars. Sed proprie et per se subsistens dicitur quod neque est praedicto modo inhaerens, neque est pars. Secundum quem modum oculus aut manus non posset dici per se subsistens; et per consequens nec per se operans. Unde et operationes partium attribuuntur toti per partes. Dicimus enim quod homo videt per oculum, et palpat per

In this passage Aquinas presents both the stronger and weaker characterizations of *per se* existence. The weak sense includes parts of things provided that they are not inherent like accidents and material forms. But in the stronger sense only things that are not inherent and not a part of a whole, that is, complete in their own right, count as *per se* existents. As a result, the operations of these incomplete parts are most properly ascribed to the whole.²⁵ The incomplete parts are not appropriate subjects of ascription for the operations because they are not, in their own right, primary subjects of being. They do not exist by means of their own unique substantial forms; rather they exist by means of the human soul so that their existence is a part of the existence of the human being. Operations carried out in the complete substance belong to the complete substance.

For this reason, in his reply Aquinas says that we “see through the eye and feel through the hand [*homo videt per oculum, et palpat per manum*]”²⁶. Yet he distinguishes the way that we see through the eye or feel through the hand from the way that we say that the hot thing gives heat through its heat. He says that these differ because the accident of heat does not do anything. By this Aquinas seems to be pointing to the fact that the heat is in no way a *per se* operator. When speaking either strictly or loosely, it is merely a formal principle *quo*.²⁷ In contrast, when we speak loosely, recognizing the incomplete parts of substances as *per se* existents in the weaker sense, the hand and eye do operate. They are the parts of the

manum, aliter quam calidum calefacit per calorem, quia calor nullo modo calefacit, proprie loquendo. Potest igitur dici quod anima intelligit, sicut oculus videt, sed magis proprie dicitur quod homo intelligat per animam.”

²⁵ Aquinas is clear that the attribution of the operations of a part to a whole is only legitimate when the whole in question is a substantial unity, something *unum simpliciter*. Consider, for instance, *DUI* ch. 3 (McInerny (trans.), slightly modified, 87; Leonine XLIII, 304): “The action of a part is the action of the whole only in a whole that is one being. And if someone says otherwise, they speak improperly. [In solo enim toto quod est aliquid unum et ens, actio partis est actio totius; et si quis aliter loquatur, improprie loquitur.]”

So for Aquinas the operations of parts are attributed to the whole that comprises them, but only when that whole is a substantial unity, something that exists by means of a single substantial form, which bestows existence and unity (rather than, say, a whole by aggregation, or an whole that is unified *secundum quid*). This suggests that the fact that operations of incomplete subsistent parts are legitimately (and indeed most properly) attributed to the whole has something to do with their incompleteness in existence and nature.

²⁶ *ST* I.75.2 ad 2 (Freddoso (trans), slightly modified, 5; Leonine V, 197): “

²⁷ I discuss the role of such principles *quo* in more detail in §3.3 and §5.2

body that feel and see respectively. So while we may say that the human being feels or sees through her hands or eyes, this does not reduce the hands and eyes to formal principles. We simply draw attention to the fact that the hand and eye are human parts which serve as the principles of operation.

Like the hand and eye, Aquinas identifies the subsistent soul as an incomplete part of the human being that operates. While understanding is carried out by the soul, because the soul is a human part, its operation belongs to the human being. He writes,

As to the second, it must be said that understanding is an activity of the human soul, inasmuch as the soul goes beyond its relation to corporeal matter and consequently understanding does not come about through any corporeal organ. Yet we may say that the composite itself (that is, man) understands, inasmuch as the soul, which is its formal part, has this proper activity, just as the activity of any part is attributed to the whole; for a man sees with his eye, walks with his foot, and in like fashion understands through his soul.²⁸

Here Aquinas affirms that we can attribute the operation of the soul to the human being just as the operation of any part can be attributed to the whole.²⁹ Because the soul is a part of the human being, the intellectual operations carried out by the soul are most properly attributed to the human being. Here Aquinas specifies that the soul is a formal part of the human being. But in attributing to it a proper activity he identifies it as a *per se* operator. The human being understands through his soul, not simply in the sense that a hot thing heats through its heat, but in the way that the human being sees through her eyes, namely, because the soul carries out acts of understanding just as she has parts that carry out the acts of seeing and feeling. The intellect is the part of the human being that carries out the acts of understanding. But its

²⁸ *DSC* a.2 ad 2, (FitzPatrick (trans.), 37; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 376): “Ad secundum dicendum quod intelligere est operatio animae humanae secundum quod superexcedit proportionem materiae corporalis, et ideo non fit per aliquod organum corporale. Potest tamen dici, quod ipsum coniunctum, id est homo, intelligit, in quantum anima, quae est pars eius formalis, habet hanc operationem propriam, sicut operatio cuiuslibet partis attribuitur toti; homo enim videt oculo, ambulat pede, et similiter intelligit per animam.”

²⁹ This is true for Aquinas only of substantial wholes. See *DUI* ch. 3 quoted in n.25 above.

operations, like the operations of any part of a substantial whole, are attributed to the whole, namely, the whole human being.

3.3 The Correspondence of *Per Se* Existence and Operation and the *In-Act* Principle

Having established the *per se* operation of the soul, Aquinas forges a connection between a thing's mode of existence and its mode of operation. In the passage from *ST* I.75.2 he writes, "But nothing can operate *per se* unless it subsists *per se*. For a thing does not operate unless it is a being in act, and so a thing operates in the way in which it exists."³⁰ In this passage Aquinas argues that subsistence *per se* is a condition required for operation *per se*. Since nothing operates *per se* unless it subsists *per se*, if a thing operates *per se* it must also subsist *per se*. He then makes the more general claim that a thing operates in the way that it exists. This is a more general claim that appears frequently in Aquinas' work as well as in other versions of his argument for the subsistence of the soul. For instance:

Now each thing operates in accordance with what it is. For things which exist through themselves operate through themselves, whereas things which do not have existence through themselves do not have an operation through themselves.³¹

For each thing has its *esse* in the same way that it has its operation.³²

For since everything acts according as it is in act, the operation of a thing indicates its mode of being.³³

These passages all reflect Aquinas' commitment to a principle of correspondence between the way a thing operates and the way that it exists. This commitment allows him to move from a

³⁰ *ST* I.75.2 co (Freddoso (trans.), slightly modified, 5; Leonine V, 196): "Nihil autem potest per se operari, nisi quod per se subsistit. Non enim est operari nisi entis in actu, unde eo modo aliquid operatur, quo est."

³¹ *QDA* a.14 co (Robb (trans.), 177; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol. 2, 334): "Unumquodque autem operatur secundum quod est: quae enim per se habent esse, per se operantur. Quae vero per se non habent esse, non habent per se operationem."

³² *ST* I.75.3 co (Freddoso (trans.), 7; Leonine V, 200): "... similiter enim unumquodque habet esse et operationem."

³³ *ST* I.50 a.5 co (English Dominican Fathers (trans.), slightly modified, bk.2, 16; Leonine V, 12): "quia enim unumquodque operatur secundum quod est actu, operatio rei indicat modum esse ipsius."

claim about the way that the soul can operate, namely *per se*, to a claim about the way that the soul must exist and vice versa.

In many instances of his argument Aquinas appeals to the correspondence between mode of existence and mode of operation without offering any justification of it or explaining why it is true within his metaphysical system. However, in both *ST I.75.2* and *QDA a.1 co* he appeals to the *in-act* principle in support of the move from the *per se* operation of the soul to its *per se* existence. In the *ST*, he writes, “But nothing can operate *per se* unless it subsists *per se*, for a thing does not operate unless it is a being in act: and so a thing operates in the way in which it exists. It is for this reason that we say that it is the hot thing, rather than the heat, that gives warmth.”³⁴ Here Aquinas claims that agents must be beings in act, *entis in actu*, in order to operate. He uses the *in-act* principle to explain why a thing operates in the way that it exists. Here it supports his general correspondence claim from which we get the more specific premise that nothing can operate *per se* unless it exists *per se*. In his argument from *QDA a.1* he writes,

Thus it is necessary that an intellectual soul operate *per se*, inasmuch as it possesses an essential operation in which the body does not share. And because each thing acts insofar as it is in act it is necessary that an intellectual soul possess an independent *per se* act of existing which is not dependent on its body. For forms which have an act of existing which depends on matter or on a subject do not possess *per se* operations: heat, for instance, does not act, but a hot thing.³⁵

Again Aquinas appeals to the same core notion to justify the move from a thing’s mode *per se* mode of operation to its *per se* mode of existence, namely, *each thing acts insofar as it is in*

³⁴ *ST I.75.2 co* (Freddoso (trans.), slightly modified, 5; Leonine V, 196): “Nihil autem potest per se operari, nisi quod per se subsistit. Non enim est operari nisi entis in actu, unde eo modo aliquid operatur, quo est. Propter quod non dicimus quod calor calefacit, sed calidum.”

³⁵ *QDA a.1 co* (Robb (trans.), slightly modified, 47; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol. 2, 283): “Et sic oportet quod anima intellectiva per se agat, utpote propriam operationem habens absque corporis communione. Et quia unumquodque agit secundum quod est actu, oportet quod anima intellectiva habeat esse per se absolutum non dependens a corpore. Formae enim quae habent esse dependens a materia vel subiecto, non habent per se operationem: non enim calor agit, sed calidum.”

act. Here it does not appear in support of a more general correspondence principle but Aquinas uses it to justify his move from the *per se* mode of operation to *per se* existence. The *in-act* principle appears throughout Aquinas' works. He appeals to it in a variety of discussions on diverse topics, for instance, that God alone creates (*DP* q.3 a.4 co; *SCG* II.21 [9]), that creatures act for an end (*ST* I.5.5 co), that all things produce their like (*QDA* a. 12 co; *ST* I.115.1 co; *DP* q.3 a.8)³⁶, that the soul is the form of the body (*ST* I.76.1), and that there is no *per se* cause of evil (*SCG* II.41 [7]), among others. The principle is fundamental to his account of operation, both creaturely and divine.

Aquinas expresses the *in-act* principle negatively as nothing acts except insofar as it is in act, or as in *ST* I.76.1 a thing does not act unless it is a being in act, but he also expresses the principle positively, as each agent acts insofar as it is in act, as in *QDA* a.1 co.³⁷ He also formulates the principle using both the term 'acts' and the term 'operates.' So he seems to have in mind all kinds of activities.³⁸ Although his various versions of the *in-act* principle express the same core notion, namely that things act according as or insofar as they are in act, the negative expression he employs in *ST* I.75.2, stating that only beings in act operate, brings to the fore the restriction this places on agents. A thing cannot operate unless it is in act, so agents *qua* agents must be in act. Our task here is to explore how this principle explains why a thing must exist *per se* in order to operate *per se*. It will be helpful to discuss briefly what Aquinas takes the *in-act* principle to mean.

³⁶ For discussion of the principle that each agent produces its like, see Wipfel (2007, 152-172; 2000b).

³⁷ See, for instance *SCG* II.6 [4]; *ST* I.75.2 co; *DV* q.22 a.6 ad 3.

³⁸ See *ST* I.50.5 co; *ST* I.75.2 co; *ST* I-II.71.1 ad 2; *DSC* a.2 co. Aquinas divides operations or actions into two kinds: a) those that remain in the agent and are perfections of the agent (for example, seeing, understanding, willing), and b) those that pass from the agent into a patient and are actions or perfections in the patient (for example, heating and building). In *SCG* II.23, *ST* I.18 a.3 ad 1 he divides 'actions' into operations, which remain in the agent, and makings, which pass into another. In *SCG* II.1 and *InEthic* I.1 n. 13, however, he divides 'operations' into 'actions', which remain in the agent and 'makings', which pass into another. Thus he applies different terminology to describe what seems to be the same distinction. For present purposes, I use 'act' and 'operate' interchangeably. For further reading on Aquinas' use of the terms 'action', 'operation', and 'making' as they relate to active and passive powers, see Miller (1946); Wilder, (1987, 437-8).

For Aquinas, generally speaking, ‘act’ connotes perfection or completion and stands in contrast to ‘potency’, which connotes imperfection or incompleteness.³⁹ But he also recognizes more specific notions of act and potency. At the outset of *De Potentia* he writes,

I answer that to make the point at issue clear we must observe that we speak of power in relation to act. Now act is twofold; the first act which is a form, and the second act which is operation. Seemingly the word ‘act’ was first universally employed in the sense of operation, and then, secondly, transferred to indicate the form, inasmuch as the form is the principle and end of operation. Wherefore in like manner potency is twofold: active potency corresponding to that act which is operation—and seemingly it was in this sense that the word ‘potency’ was first employed:— and passive potency, corresponding to the first act or the form,—to which seemingly the name of power was subsequently given.

Now, just as nothing suffers save by reason of a passive potency, so nothing acts except by reason of the first act, namely the form. For it has been stated that this first act is so called from action.⁴⁰

Aquinas divides act into first act, form, and second act, operation. Then he divides potency into passive potency, which is ordered toward first act and is accordingly a potency for form, and active potency, which is ordered toward second act and is accordingly a potency for operation.⁴¹ Aquinas sometimes characterizes passive potency as ordered toward existence, rather than to form.⁴² This is likely because form is that by which a thing exists—either *simpliciter* or in some way.⁴³ Aquinas writes, “Since form makes a thing exist in act, it is said

³⁹ See *InMet* IX. See Aertsen (1988) and Elders (1993) for further reading on the various notions of act and potency within Aquinas’ metaphysics.

⁴⁰ *DP* q.1 a.1 co (English Dominican Fathers (trans.), bk.1, 4; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol. 2, 8-9): “Respondeo. Ad huius quaestionis evidentiam sciendum, quod potentia dicitur ab actu: actus autem est duplex: scilicet primus, qui est forma; et secundus, qui est operatio: et sicut videtur ex communi hominum intellectu, nomen actus primo fuit attributum operationi: sic enim quasi omnes intelligunt actum; secundo autem exinde fuit translatum ad formam, in quantum forma est principium operationis et finis. Unde et similiter duplex est potentia: una activa cui respondet actus, qui est operatio; et huic primo nomen potentiae videtur fuisse attributum: alia est potentia passiva, cui respondet actus primus, qui est forma, ad quam similiter videtur secundario nomen potentiae devolutum. Sicut autem nihil patitur nisi ratione potentiae passivae, ita nihil agit nisi ratione actus primi, qui est forma. Dictum est enim, quod ad ipsum primo nomen actus ex actione devenit. Deo autem convenit esse actum purum et primum; unde ipsi convenit maxime agere, et suam similitudinem in alias diffundere, et ideo ei maxime convenit potentia activa; nam potentia activa dicitur secundum quod est principium actionis.”

⁴¹ See *DV* q.27 a.3 ad 25; *InEthic* VII 1.12.9, for the same division of act. See Reith (1958) for discussion of active and passive powers.

⁴² See *ST* I-II.55.2 co; *SCG* II.25 [2].

⁴³ See, for instance, *DSC* a.2 co, (FitzPatrick (trans.), slightly modified, 33; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 375): “Now no activity belongs to any given thing except through some form which exists in the thing itself, either a

to be act.”⁴⁴ In *ST I.50.5* co Aquinas writes “...each thing is in act by means of form,”⁴⁵ because form is the principle of *esse*. Plausibly, then, Aquinas’ notion of being in first act involves existing by means of, or in accordance with a form.

In the *De Potentia* passage above Aquinas calls first act, or form, a principle of operation. He states that patients are acted on in accordance with their potency for form whereas agents act by reason of their form. The similarity of this to the *in-act* principle, and Aquinas’ identification of first act as the principle of operation suggest that the notion of act involved in the *in-act* principle is first act, i.e., form. On this reading, nothing acts except insofar as it is in act with respect to form. Given the connection between form and existence, a more natural reading of the principle would be, *nothing acts except insofar as it actually exists*.⁴⁶ Indeed in some versions of the *in-act* principle, including the argument for subsistence from *ST I.75.2*, Aquinas specifies that an agent acts insofar as it is a *being* in act, an *ens actu*.⁴⁷ In these instances of the principle, the notion of existence is explicit. This

substantial or an accidental form, because nothing acts or operates except in insofar as it is in act. Now each individual thing is in act through some form, either substantial or accidental, since a form is act; thus, for instance, fire is actually fire through “fireness,” and actually hot through heat. [Nulla autem operatio convenit alicui nisi per aliquam formam in ipso existentem, vel substantialem vel accidentalem; quia nihil agit aut operatur nisi secundum quod est actu. Est autem unumquodque actu per formam aliquam vel substantialem vel accidentalem, cum forma sit actus; sicut ignis est actu ignis per igneitate, actu calidus per calorem. Oportet igitur principium huius operationis quod est intelligere, formaliter inesse huic homini.]”

⁴⁴ *DPN* ch.1 (translation mine; Leonine XLIII, 4): “Et quia forma facit esse in actu, ideo forma dicitur esse actus.”

⁴⁵ *ST I.50.5* co (translation mine; Leonine V, 12): “... unumquodque enim est ens actu secundum quod habet formam.”

⁴⁶ John Wippel (2000b) interprets the *in-act* principle as concerning actual existence but does not specify whether the existence involved is existence *simpliciter* or *secundum quid*, or both. He conjectures, however, that the principle is true for Aquinas because non-existent agents do not produce effects, and thus seems to interpret the principle as *nothing acts except insofar as it exists simpliciter*. This, I will argue, is problematic. Bernhard Blankenhorn (2002) connects the notion of act involved in the principle with a thing’s participation in *esse*. Jan Aertsen (1988) notes that a thing’s actuality accounts for its possessing an active power, which he identifies as form. Thus he too interprets the *in-act* principle as involving first act, or form. These authors do not discuss the *in-act* principle at length.

Marianne Miller (1954, 147-149) discusses the distinction between act as form and act as operation and the connections between act, *esse*, and form as a principle of operation. In her discussion she identifies form as the relevant notion of act involved in the *in-act* principle and points to form’s role as a principle of being in connection to its status as act.

⁴⁷ See *ST III.77.3* co; *InSent III d.14 q.1 a.2 qc.2* co.

provides strong support for taking the relevant notion of “act” to involve existence rather than operation or a more general notion of perfection or completeness.⁴⁸

Nevertheless we ought not to interpret the *in-act* principle as *nothing acts except insofar as it actually exists simpliciter*. This is, of course, true. Only things that exist *simpliciter* can act. But Aquinas frequently contrasts the *in-act* principle with a parallel claim about suffering, namely, that *nothing is acted on except insofar as it is in potency* (i.e., *passive potency*).⁴⁹ Yet it is equally true that something must exist *simpliciter* to be acted on. So such a reading fails to provide the contrast Aquinas attempts to draw.

In the *Quaestiones de Anima*, Aquinas specifies that to operate, an agent must be in act *in the respect that corresponds to its operation*. He writes “First indeed, since everything acts inasmuch as it is in act, namely, as it is that which it does. For fire warms, not insofar as it is something bright, but insofar as it is actually something hot.”⁵⁰ Here we are told that an agent’s actuality corresponds to its operation. Fire heats insofar as it is *hot*, not insofar as it is *bright* (or insofar as it exists *simpliciter*). Aquinas reiterates this in *De Veritate* where he writes, “It should be said however that a thing is in potency to some action insofar as it is in complete act in respect to that action.”⁵¹ Things must be in act in that respect which is relevant to their operation.

Such a reading preserves Aquinas’ contrasting principles of acting and being acted on. He characterizes acting as making actual what was merely potential in a patient.⁵² Agents do

⁴⁸ We can, out of hand, dismiss a reading on which the relevant notion of being in act is that of second act, or operation, since the resulting principle would lack explanatory power.

⁴⁹ See SCG I.16 [6]; SCG III.23 [9]; ST I.25.1 ad 1.

⁵⁰ QDA a.12 co, (Robb (trans.), slightly modified, 157; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol. 2, 326): ‘Primo quidem, quia unumquodque agit secundum quod actu est, illud scilicet quod agit; ignis enim calefacit non in quantum actu est lucidum, sed in quantum est actu calidum...’

⁵¹ DV q.23 a.4 ad 13 (translation mine; Leonine XXII.3.1, 664): “dicitur autem esse potens ad aliquid agendum, secundum quod est in actu completo respectu eius quod agendum est.”

⁵² See ST I.115.1 co; DP q.2 a.1 co; DP q.3 a.8 co; SCG II.16 [6].

this by inducing forms in their patients, thereby rendering them actual in some way.⁵³ Indeed he maintains that created agents can only act on patients by changing their forms.⁵⁴ For Aquinas, as for Aristotle, something in passive potency can only be brought into actuality by an already actualized agent. So for an agent to act it must be actual in the relevant sense to actualize its patient. In contrast, to suffer, a patient must be in potency to the act of the agent in order to receive it. Although agent and patient must both exist *simpliciter*, the agent can only act insofar as it is in act and the patient suffer insofar as it is in potency. These considerations help explain why Aquinas' *in-act* principle holds within his metaphysical framework.

Two additional considerations further explain the connection between acting and being in act. First, Aquinas takes his principle to show that agents act through the part of themselves that corresponds to act. He writes,

Again, each thing acts insofar as it is in act. Therefore, what is not wholly act acts not with the whole of itself, but with part of itself. But what does not act with the whole of itself is not the first agent, since it does not act through its essence but through participation in something. The first agent, therefore, namely, God, has no admixture of potency but is pure act.⁵⁵

In this *reductio* for the claim that God is pure act Aquinas infers from the *in-act* principle that things that are not wholly act only act through part of themselves—presumably with the part that corresponds to act. This is implicit in his case of heating. The hot thing heats insofar as it is hot and not insofar as it is bright, because it heats by means of its heat, not its brightness. This shows that being in act is a prerequisite for acting precisely because agents act through their actualities.

⁵³ See SCG I.23 [3].

⁵⁴ See ST III.75.4 co.

⁵⁵ SCG I.16 [5] (Pegis (trans.), 100-101; Leonine XIII, 117): “Unumquodque agit secundum quod est actu. Quod igitur non est totus actus, non toto se agit, sed aliquo sui. Quod autem non toto se agit, non est primum agens: agit enim alicuius participatione, non per essentiam suam. Primum igitur agens, quod Deus est, nullam habet potentiam admixtam, sed est actus purus.”

In created substances, forms account for a thing's existing in the ways that it does and therefore account for its being actual in the ways that it is. Since agents act only through their actualities, forms are required to serve as the principles by which they operate.⁵⁶ Aquinas writes,

Now no activity belongs to any given thing except through some form which exists in the thing itself, either a substantial or an accidental form, because nothing acts or operates except in insofar as it is in act. Now each individual thing is in act through some form, either substantial or accidental, since a form is act; thus, for instance, fire is actually fire through "fireness," and actually hot through heat.⁵⁷

Here Aquinas maintains that every operation is carried out through some form, either substantial or accidental, because form is that through which the agent is in act. Form renders an agent in act by accounting for its existing in the relevant way for the operation in question. This fits well with his repeated identification of form as a principle of operation. For instance, he writes,

The principle of every operation, furthermore, is the form by which a thing is in act, since every agent acts so far as it is in act.⁵⁸

Now the first effect of form is being, for everything has being by reason of its form. The second effect is operation, for every agent acts through its form.⁵⁹

In the first passage, Aquinas identifies the principle of every action as the form by which an agent is in act. In the second, he notes the dual role of form, first as a source of existence, and

⁵⁶ SCG III.69 [26] (Bourke (trans.), 234; Leonine XIV, 201): "Manifestum est enim quod corpus non potest agere se toto, cum sit compositum ex materia, quae est ens in potentia, et ex forma, quae est actus: agit enim unumquodque secundum quod est actu. Et propter hoc omne corpus agit secundum suam formam."

⁵⁷ DSC a.2 co, (Fitzpatrick (trans.), slightly modified, 33; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol. 2, 375): "Nulla autem operatio convenit alicui nisi per aliquam formam in ipso existentem, vel substantialem vel accidentalem; quia nihil agit aut operatur nisi secundum quod est actu. Est autem unumquodque actu per formam aliquam vel substantialem vel accidentalem, cum forma sit actus; sicut ignis est actu ignis per igneitate, actu calidus per calorem. Oportet igitur principium huius operationis quod est intelligere, formaliter inesse huic homini." See also SCG II.16 [6]; SCG II.59 [12]; DP q.3 a.1 co; and DUI ch.3.

⁵⁸ SCG II.47 [4] (Anderson (trans.), 143; Leonine XIII, 377): "Principium cuiuslibet operationis est forma per quam aliquid est actu: cum omne agens agat in quantum est actu."

⁵⁹ ST I.42.1 ad 1 (English Dominican Fathers (trans.), bk.2, 181; Leonine IV, 436): "Primus autem effectus formae est esse, nam omnis res habet esse secundum suam formam. Secundus autem effectus est operatio, nam omne agens agit per suam formam." See also *InPhys* III.4.

second as a principle of operation. Because agents act through their actualities, and all the actualities of substance are the result of form, all agents act by means of form.

3.4 The *In-Act* Principle in the Argument for Subsistence

At this point we can return to the question of how the *in-act* principle helps Aquinas establish that something that operates *per se* must exist *per se*. We have just seen that operation requires a formal principle in the operator. So to operate *per se*, a thing must be the subject of a form. This form inheres in the operator, rendering it in act and thereby serving as its principle of operation.⁶⁰ Not just any sort of thing within Aquinas' ontology can be the subject of a form, however. Forms stand to their subjects as act to potency. A thing can receive a form, an actuality only if it is in potency to that actuality. Subjects must, therefore, possess an element of potency to receive and substand forms. Aquinas writes,

It must be said that the character of a form is in sharp contrast to the character of a subject: for every form, as such, is an act, whereas every subject is related to that of which it is the subject, as a potency is related to an act. If therefore, there is any form which is exclusively an act, such as the divine essence, it cannot in any sense be a subject; and it is of this form that Boethius is speaking. Now if there happens to be a form, which is in act in one respect and is in potency in another, it will be a subject only in that precise respect in which it is in potency.⁶¹

⁶⁰ See *ST* I.77.5 co (Freddoso (trans.), 43; Leonine V, 244-245): "The subject of operative power is that which is able to operate, for every accident denominates its proper subject. Now the same is that which is able to operate, and that which does operate. Wherefore the "subject of power" is of necessity "the subject of operation," as again the Philosopher says in the beginning of *De Somno et Vigilia*. Now, it is clear from what we have said above, that some operations of the soul are performed without a corporeal organ, as understanding and will. Hence the powers of these operations are in the soul as their subject. But some operations of the soul are performed by means of corporeal organs; as sight by the eye, and hearing by the ear. And so it is with all the other operations of the nutritive and sensitive parts. Therefore the powers which are the principles of these operations have their subject in the composite, and not in the soul alone. [Respondeo dicendum quod illud est subiectum operativae potentiae, quod est potens operari, omne enim accidens denominat proprium subiectum. Idem autem est quod potest operari, et quod operatur. Unde oportet quod eius sit potentia sicut subiecti, cuius est operatio; ut etiam philosophus dicit, in principio de somno et vigilia. Manifestum est autem ex supra dictis quod quaedam operationes sunt animae, quae exercentur sine organo corporali, ut intelligere et velle. Unde potentiae quae sunt harum operationum principia, sunt in anima sicut in subiecto. Quaedam vero operationes sunt animae, quae exercentur per organa corporalia; sicut visio per oculum, et auditus per aurem. Et simile est de omnibus aliis operationibus nutritivae et sensitivae partis. Et ideo potentiae quae sunt talium operationum principia, sunt in coniuncto sicut in subiecto, et non in anima sola.]"

⁶¹ *DSC* a.1 ad 1 (FitzPatrick (trans.), 24; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol. 2, 371): "Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod ratio formae opponitur rationi subiecti. Nam omnis forma, in quantum huiusmodi, est actus; omne autem subiectum

In this passage Aquinas notes that the character of form is opposed to the character of a subject, since forms are acts whereas subjects are potencies to their acts, that is their forms. He uses this to argue that God, as pure actuality cannot be a subject. There is no potency in God to be further actualized or perfected by an additional act. Nevertheless Aquinas maintains that a form that is a composite of potency and act could be a subject in the respect that it is in potency. This leaves open the possibility that subsistent forms (like the angels) can be subjects of intellective and volitional powers. As we saw in Chapter 1, subsistent forms are composites of potency and act in the sense that they are composites of essence (i.e., form) and *esse*.

God, as pure actuality, is the obvious example of an actuality that cannot serve as the subject of forms. But Aquinas also identifies forms that do not subsist as incapable of serving as the subject of powers. He writes,

A simple form which does not subsist, or, if it does, is pure act, cannot be the subject of an accident. Now a soul is a subsisting form and is not pure act, that is, if we are speaking of a human soul. Consequently it can be the subject of certain powers, for example, the intellect and will. On the other hand, the powers of the sensitive and nutritive parts of the soul are in the composite as in a subject; because the action belongs to that which has the power, as is clear from what the Philosopher says in his book *De Somno et Vigilia*.⁶²

Here Aquinas maintains that neither subsistent forms that are pure act nor non-subsistent forms (i.e., material forms) can serve as the subjects of accidents, and thus cannot serve as the

comparatur ad id cuius est subiectum, ut potentia ad actum. Si quae ergo forma est quae sit actus tantum, ut divina essentia, illa nullo modo potest esse subiectum; et de hac Boetius loquitur. Si autem aliqua forma sit quae secundum aliquid sit in actu, et secundum aliquid in potentia; secundum hoc tantum erit subiectum, secundum quod est in potentia. Substantiae autem spirituales, licet sint formae subsistentes, sunt tamen in potentia, in quantum habent esse finitum et limitatum. Et quia intellectus est cognoscitivus omnium secundum sui rationem, et voluntas est amativa universalis boni; remanet semper in intellectu et voluntate substantiae creatae potentia ad aliquid quod est extra se. Unde si quis recte consideret, substantiae spirituales non inveniuntur esse subiectae nisi accidentium quae pertinent ad intellectum et voluntatem.”

⁶² *QDA* a.12 ad 16 (Robb (trans.), slightly modified, 160; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol. 2, 327): “Ad decimumsextum dicendum quod forma simplex quae non est subsistens, vel si subsistit, quae est actus purus, non potest esse subiectum accidentis. Anima autem est forma subsistens et non est actus purus, loquendo de anima humana; et ideo potest esse subiectum potenciarum quarumdam, scilicet intellectus et voluntatis. Potentiae autem sensitivae et nutritivae partis sunt in composito sicut in subiecto; quia cuius est actus eius est potentia, ut patet per philosophum in libro de Somn. et vigilia.”

subject of operative powers. In contrast, forms like the human soul, which do subsist but are not pure act, can serve as the subject of powers. The relevant distinction between these two groupings seems to be that the former do not have an element of potency whereas the latter do. Because non-subsistent forms and God are not composites of act and potency, they cannot serve as subjects.

As we saw in Chapter 1, for Aquinas, material substances are composites of act and potency in two ways. First, they are composites of matter and form, where matter is related to form as potency to act. Within this division, form is act, not potency. Second, the form and matter of a material substance constitute its essence or nature, and this essence or nature is related to its *esse* or act of being as potency to act.⁶³ On this division, material forms are parts of the natures of substances, which are in turn related to *esse* as potency to act. Material forms in their own right apart from matter, however, are not potencies for *esse*. They are merely principles *quo* and so they are not the sorts of things that could exist apart from matter. Only together are material forms and matter potencies for *esse*. So although a material substance is a composite of potency and act, its material form is not.

Therefore, we can see that for Aquinas, neither God, nor a non-subsistent form can be the subject of a formal principle of operation. Neither is a composite of potency and act in the requisite sense. God does not need formal principles of operation. In accordance with the *in-act* principle, God acts by means of his own essence. Created agents do need formal principles however. So created agents must be the sorts of things that can serve as the subjects of accidental forms, which serve as their powers of operation.

⁶³ In contrast, incorporeal subsistent forms are composed of essence (wholly constituted by their form) and *esse*. While they are pure forms in the sense that they are not composites of form and matter, their essences are related to their act of being as potency to act. See *ST* I.50.2.

To summarize then, the *in-act* principle tells us that agents act by means of the parts of themselves that correspond to act. So created agents act by means of a formal principle that renders them in act in the requisite way. This requires them to be the subjects of the forms by which they act. So created *per se* agents must be the sorts of things that can serve as subjects. Only something that exists as a composite of potency and act can serve as such a subject. Only something that exists *per se*, as a primary subject of *esse* can be a composite of potency and act. Created substances are composites of potency and act because their natures stand to their *esse* as potency to act. Therefore, to be a composite in the requisite sense to serve as the subject of a power a thing must be a primary subject of *esse*; it must exist *per se*. So, in order to operate *per se*, a thing must exist *per se*. In this way, the *in-act* principle grounds the correspondence between a thing's *per se* operation and its *per se* existence.⁶⁴

Thus the human soul, as the *per se* operator of intellectual operations, must be the sort of thing that can serve as a subject. This means that it must have an element of potency. Because intellectual operations require an incorporeal subject, the soul cannot be a subject in virtue of being a composite of matter and form. Instead it must possess an element of potency in the way that separate substances do, namely, in composition with *esse*.⁶⁵ Its potency-act composition allows it to serve as the subject of accidents, in particular, of the intellectual powers.⁶⁶ As a primary subject of *esse*, the soul is not merely the principle by which the

⁶⁴ The *in-act* principle also tells us that the formal principles by which a thing is in act are the formal principles by which that thing acts. So the *in-act* principle also grounds the correspondence between a thing's operating merely as a principle *quo* and its existing merely as a principle *quo*. If its mode of operation is merely derivative, so is its mode of existence.

⁶⁵ See, for instance, *QDA* a.1 ad 6 (Robb (trans.), slightly modified, 49; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 285): "A human soul, although it is subsistent, is composed of potency and act; for the substance of the soul is not identical with its act of existing but rather is related to it as potency is related to act. [Ad sextum dicendum quod anima humana, cum sit subsistens, composita est ex potentia et actu. Nam ipsa substantia animae non est suum esse, sed comparatur ad ipsum ut potentia ad actum.]"

⁶⁶ Consider, *ST* I.77.1 ad 6 (Freddoso (trans.), 50; Leonine V, 237): "Even though the soul is not composed of matter and form, it nonetheless has potentiality mixed in with it, as was explained above, and so it can be the subject of an accident. [Ad sextum dicendum quod anima, licet non sit composita ex materia et forma, habet tamen aliquid de potentialitate admixtum ut supra dictum est. Et ideo potest esse subiectum accidentis.]"

material composite that it informs possesses *esse*. It is also a subsistent thing in its own right. The soul's intellectual operation, therefore, reveals its status as a *hoc aliquid*.

3.5 The Subsistence of the Soul and the Subsistence of the Hand

We have now seen how Aquinas argues for the subsistence of the soul. But as we have also seen, Aquinas recognizes two senses of subsistence or existence *per se*, only one of which entails the ability to exist apart, or on one's own. While complete substances alone count as *per se* existents in the strict sense, incomplete integral parts are also considered subsistent in a weaker sense because their existence is not that of inherence. Aquinas maintains that the rational soul, like an integral part of a human being, is a *hoc aliquid* in the weak sense only.⁶⁷

He writes,

So, then, since the human soul is a part of the human species, it can be called a *hoc aliquid*, i.e., subsistent, in the first sense, but not in the second sense. For in the second sense what is called a *hoc aliquid* is that which is composed of a soul and a body.⁶⁸

A human soul is not a *hoc aliquid* in the sense of being a complete substance which possesses its specific nature but rather in the sense of being part of a being which has a complete specific nature, as is clear from what has been said.⁶⁹

Aquinas's weaker notion of a *hoc aliquid* allows him to say that the soul is subsistent without necessarily committing himself to the claim that the soul is a complete substance.⁷⁰ Since the

⁶⁷ Bernardo Carlos Bazan (1997) discusses how Aquinas, by identifying the soul as a *hoc aliquid* only in the weak sense, offers an alternative between the metaphysically problematic view that the soul is a complete substance and, essentially the form of the body, and the view that the soul is a complete substance and only accidentally united to the body.

⁶⁸ *ST* I.75.2 ad 1 (Freddoso (trans.), slightly modified, 5; Leonine V, 196): Sic igitur, cum anima humana sit pars speciei humanae, potest dici hoc aliquid primo modo, quasi subsistens, sed non secundo modo, sic enim compositum ex anima et corpore dicitur hoc aliquid

⁶⁹ *QDA* a.1 ad 3 (Robb (trans.), 49; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol. 2, 284): "Ad tertium dicendum quod anima humana non est hoc aliquid sicut substantia completam speciem habens; sed sicut pars habentis speciem completam, ut ex dictis patet. Unde ratio non sequitur."

⁷⁰ Gregory Coulter (1991) takes 'subsistence' to include completeness in a specific nature. He contrasts the subsistent mode of existence with that of dependence, which he takes to involve existential incompleteness. So Coulter argues that the *per se* operation of the soul not only shows that the soul is a subsistent thing, but it also reveals that the soul is complete in a nature. Coulter concludes that Aquinas cannot defend the incompleteness of the soul.

human soul *qua* subsistent thing is still only a part of the human being as a whole, it is not complete in a specific nature and so, only subsists in the way that the hand or eye subsists—as a part of a larger whole.⁷¹ (I discuss whether Aquinas is entitled to claim that the rational soul is indeed incomplete in a specific nature in Chapter 4. For now I will set this question aside.) But the fact that the hands, or eyes, or indeed any other body part of the human being subsists does not interfere with its unqualified unity. Subsistent parts can be unified into a single substantial whole in virtue of their sharing the same principle *quo*, that is, the same substantial form. So long as the soul subsists in the way that a hand subsists, its subsistence will not be a threat to human unity.

We might worry, however, that given his own premises, Aquinas is not entitled to the claim that the hand, or any other corporeal part of the human being subsists at all. He begins his argument for subsistence by stating that the soul has an operation apart from the body, in which the body does not share. He uses this to establish that the soul has a *per se* operation. The first claim could be taken to mean that subsistence involves separability, or the ability to operate in a separated state. It suggests that the kind of existence *per se* that is relevant in the soul's subsistence involves the kind of separability had by complete substances and not their subsistent parts. Because the soul operates *separately* from the body, it also exists in its own

Coulter problematically recognizes only one way that a thing can be existentially incomplete whereas Aquinas recognizes two, namely, the derivative existence of accidents and forms, and the derivative existence of integral parts. In his mutually exclusive and exhaustive dichotomy Coulter has left no room for integral parts. As we have seen, Aquinas maintains that subsistent parts can operate and support accidents and yet they remain incomplete because their operation and existence depend on the substantial form of the whole of which they are a part. While subsistence involves existence *per se* in the weak sense, it does not necessarily involve existence *per se* in the strong sense that includes completeness in a nature or species. It is wrong therefore, to conclude that subsistence entails completeness in a nature. As long as Aquinas admits of integral human parts as subsistent, subsistence in itself will not threaten human unity.

⁷¹ A further question remains about whether or not the soul, or any subsistent part for that matter, counts as a substance. Aquinas offers a number of different accounts of substance. See, for instance, *InMet* VII.1; *InMet* VII.6 [1291]. Pasnau (2001, 48–49) suggests a dual-meaning for ‘substance’ that parallels the stronger and weaker notions of being a *hoc aliquid*. Whether or not Aquinas considers the soul, or any integral part, a substance is somewhat tangential to the debate about human unity. If Aquinas denies that subsistent parts of substances are substances then only the soul's status as a substance would threaten human unity. Since Aquinas maintains that the soul is a subsistent part of the human being, on this view of substance, the soul would fail to count as a substance and hence fail to threaten human unity. If Aquinas affirms that subsistent parts are also substances, then the soul would count as a substance, but would not necessarily threaten human unity. It would present a threat to the extent that the hand or eye threatens unity.

right. And indeed Aquinas does maintain that the human soul can exist and operate after the corruption of the body.⁷²

But the human hand does not have an operation in which the body does not share because the hand is itself a part of the body. Moreover, it is not clear that the hand or eye or any other part of the body could operate apart from the rest of the body. Aquinas is clear that a hand cut off from the body is a hand in name only—no part of the body can survive its separation from the whole.⁷³ So in an important respect the hand and soul are not on a par: the soul can exist and operate without the body. But the hand or eye cannot exist or operate cut off from the body. Since the first premise is critical for Aquinas' argument, we might object that the hand does not subsist at all. Unlike the soul, it is utterly dependent on the whole of which it is a part. If this is right, then he is not entitled to the claim that the soul and hand are on a par with respect to subsistence and his defense of human unity is significantly weakened.

However I believe that this reading of the first premise and the entailed understanding of 'subsistence' misrepresent Aquinas' account. Unlike the hand or eye, the *only way* the soul can be said to operate *per se* is if it operates independently from the body. If the soul's intellectual operations were not performed apart from the body, then they would be performed in some bodily organ that was perfected by the intellectual powers.⁷⁴ In this case, the soul would not be the *per se* operator, but the organ-power composite. Aquinas writes,

The organ of a power is the principle of that power's operation. Hence, if the possible intellect were united to an organ, its operation would also be the

⁷² See *ST* I.75.6.

⁷³ See *ST* I.76.8 co.

⁷⁴ Consider, *SCG* II.69 [5] (Anderson (trans.), slightly modified, p.208; Leonine XIII, p.447): "Accordingly, if an operation of the soul is carried out by means of a bodily organ, then the power of the soul which is the principle of that operation must be the actuality of that part of the body whereby such an operation is performed; thus, sight is the actuality of the eye. [Si igitur operatio animae per organum corporale completur, oportet quod potentia animae quae est illius operationis principium, sit actus illius partis corporis per quam operatio eius completur: sicut visus est actus oculi.]"

operation of that organ, and thus it would be impossible for the principle by which we understand, to lack every sensible nature.⁷⁵

If the soul is to operate *per se*, it cannot share that operation with matter, that is, the operation cannot be carried out in the body or some part of it. If the soul does share its operation with matter, then the soul is not the *per se* operator but the formal principle by which the composite operates. This is precisely how the soul is involved in the operations of sense. Aquinas writes, “The soul is a principle of sensing, not as a thing that senses, but as that by which a sensing thing senses. Consequently the sentient powers do not exist in the soul as a subject, but come from the soul as a principle.”⁷⁶ When operations are carried out with matter (i.e., in the body), the soul is the principle by which they are performed, but not the *per se* operator. For this reason, the only way for a form that is the actuality of a material body to operate *per se* is for it to have an operation that it performs alone, apart from matter and thus the body.

The relevant feature for determining whether something subsists, then, is whether *it* operates (as opposed to being the formal principle of operation), not whether that operation can take place when cut off from the rest of the substance. For the soul, only an operation independent from the body is strong enough to secure its subsistence precisely because it is a form. Hands and eyes and other integral parts have their proper operations. Although Aquinas may call them the means by which the *human being* sees, or waves, or breathes, they are nevertheless a seat of operation in some sense and not merely the formal cause of the seeing or waving or breathing. This is sufficient to render them subsistent *hoc aliquid*s in the

⁷⁵ QDA a.2 ad 3 (Robb (trans.), 60; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 289): “Ad tertium dicendum, quod organum alicuius potentiae est principium operationis illius potentiae. Unde si intellectus possibilis uniretur alicui organo, operatio eius esset etiam operatio illius organi; et sic non esset possibile quod principium quo intelligimus, esset denudatum ab omni natura sensibili.”

⁷⁶ See for instance, QDA a.19 ad 15 (Robb (trans.), 230; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 354): “Ad decimumquintum dicendum quod anima est principium sentiendi, non sicut sentiens, sed sicut id quo sentiens sentit. Unde potentiae sensitivae non sunt in anima sicut in subiecto, sed sunt ab anima sicut a principio.”

weak sense, although their status as parts prevents them from counting as complete substances. Subsistence in the weak sense does not require the degree of independence had by the soul. When Aquinas states that the soul has an operation apart from the body, he does not just have in mind the soul's post-mortem existence and operation apart from the soul. The soul operates apart from the body in the relevant sense in both its embodied and disembodied states.

Pasnau has tried to make sense of the analogy between the soul and hand and retain a more robust notion of independence or separability in the notion of subsistence.⁷⁷ While he recognizes that separability is not a good guide to subsistence, he attempts to make sense of the soul-hand analogy by speculating that under vastly different conditions a hand could exist and operate on its own without the body. He writes.

Still, for a thing to subsist is for it to exist “on its own” (*per se*), and this strongly suggests that subsistent things should be comparably independent from other substances. If the human soul and the human hand turn out to be utterly different in this regard, it would be hard to defend the claim that they are equally subsistent (and so equally substances). Now I think that comparability can be established in this regard. To see that this is so, we have to imagine the possibility in general of a hand's existing all by itself. For although *my* hand cannot exist apart from my body, there is nothing incoherent in the possibility of *a* hand's coming into and remaining in existence apart from some further body. This is every bit as possible, I want to suggest, as a soul's existing apart from any body. ... Likewise, it seems that in principle a hand could exist apart from a circulatory and nervous system. That is: a disembodied hand seems possible. What would be required, apparently, is that the hand be able to function as a hand.⁷⁸

Pasnau attempts to motivate the notion that a hand is subsistent by showing that it is possible, under different circumstances, for a hand to exist separated from a body. Under these very different circumstances, a disembodied hand would be capable of operation.

Although Pasnau does not commit himself to the obviously problematic claim that a severed

⁷⁷ See Pasnau (2001a, 66-77).

⁷⁸ Pasnau (2001a, 66-67).

or disembodied hand can *actually* operate as a human hand, the attempt to salvage some sort of separability in the notion of subsistence seems to be more misleading than helpful.⁷⁹

The analogy of the severed hand as an incomplete subsistent part is problematic because it masks the very features that Aquinas attempts to affirm concerning the soul. Aquinas maintains that the human soul is capable of *per se* operation, and on this account is subsistent, yet it is nevertheless incomplete in a nature. Thus, like a hand or eye, the human soul is itself an *operator* rather than a mere formal principle of operation. Nevertheless the soul is an operator whose formal principle for operation flows from the substantial form of a larger whole—namely that of a human being. Hands do not exist or operate by means of a hand-substantial form, nor does the intellect exist or operate by means of an intellect-substantial form. They are incomplete parts of a whole, actualized by the form of the whole. If we compare the soul to a severed hand, these salient features of the soul's subsistence are obscured. The severed hand either subsists strongly or is an accidental unity of strongly subsistent individuals. So it is misleading, at best, to compare souls and severed hands with respect to their status as *hoc aliquid*s.

⁷⁹ This example of the disembodied hand has been problematically taken up in the literature. For instance, Stump (2005, 209) writes: "In the first place, although for Aquinas the separated soul exists on its own after death, it nonetheless is not a substance in its own right. Aquinas distinguishes two kinds of subsistent things that can exist on their own, those that are complete substances and those that just subsist, that is, that are able to exist on their own but are not complete substances. A severed hand is a subsistent thing in this latter sense, and so is the soul." Elsewhere Stump notes several significant distinctions between the soul and severed hand, for instance (Stump, 2006, 158). There she correctly notes that because the hand ceases to function as a hand when it is severed from the human being, Aquinas does not consider it to be a substance at all. Here, however, she compares the subsistence of the soul to that of a severed hand.

In a footnote, Christina Van Dyke uses the example of an amputated hand as a something "possessing a certain kind of independent existence." (See VanDyke, (2009, 192).) Although, Van Dyke points out salient ways in which the soul and amputated hand differ—namely, that the soul, as substantial form of the body is incomplete in a different way than the amputated hand—like Stump, she treats an amputated hand as a weakly subsistent thing.

But a severed hand, for Aquinas, is a hand in name only. That is, it ceases to be a part of a larger whole when it is cut off from the whole and thus separated from the human substantial form. Concerning the subsistence of a severed "hand" therefore, Aquinas has two options. Either he can maintain that the "hand" is a complete substance actualized by corpse-hand form, or, and perhaps more plausibly, he can maintain that the severed "hand" is an accidental arrangement of smaller organic substances. Given these options, the severed "hand" is either a *complete* subsistent thing, and so unlike the soul, or it is an accidental arrangement of smaller parts, and again, unlike the soul. In neither case does it count as an *incomplete* subsistent part.

Instead we should understand subsistence as a way of existing that is to be distinguished from *existing in a subject* like an accidental form, or being that by which something exists, like a substantial form. The relevant distinction between subsistent things and non-subsistent things is the difference between being *that which exists* and *that by which* something exists (either *simpliciter* or *secundum quid*). Indeed, Aquinas explicitly draws attention to this distinction in some versions of his argument for subsistence. He writes

Therefore forms that have no operations without the participation of matter do not operate, but the composite operates through the form. Whence forms of this kind do not exist, properly speaking, but by them another exists.⁸⁰

And in *De Potentia* he writes,

The rational soul differs from other forms, in that the latter have a being not wherein they subsist but whereby the things informed by them subsist: whereas the rational soul has being in such wise as to subsist therein: and this is made clear by their respective modes of action.⁸¹

Passages like these suggest that the relevant claim made in regards to the soul's subsistence is that is not just a principle *quo*. Subsistent things are not necessarily capable of utterly separate operation. When we understand the argument in this way, it is clear why Aquinas affirms that both the hand and the eye have an operation of their own without making any mention of their separability from the human being. Subsistence alone does not entail separability understood in terms of the capacity to exist or operate cut off from the whole.

Aquinas sees his recognition of the weak and strong notions of *hoc aliquid* as providing the room he needs to avoid substance dualism and a *secundum quid* union of body and soul. He argues that the soul is not a complete substance but merely an incomplete

⁸⁰ *DUI* ch.1 (translation mine; Leonine XLIII, 298): "Formae igitur quae nullam operationem habent sine communicatione suae materiae, ipsae non operantur, sed compositum est quod operatur per formam. Unde huiusmodi formae ipsae quidem proprie loquendo non sunt, sed eis aliquid est."

⁸¹ *DP* q.3 a.9 co (English Dominican Fathers (trans.), bk.1, 151; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol. 2, 65): "Prima est, quia rationalis anima in hoc a ceteris formis differt, quod aliis formis non competit esse in quo ipsae subsistant, sed quo eis res formatae subsistant; anima vero rationalis sic habet esse ut in eo subsistens; et hoc declarat diversus modus agendi."

subsistent part of the human being, just like the hand, or eye, or any other integral part of the body. We do not worry about the hand or eye as a threat to human unity. Accordingly we should not regard the subsistence of the soul as a threat to unity—provided Aquinas is entitled to the claim that the soul is specifically incomplete, which I discuss in Chapter 4.

3.6 Independence and Separation

I have argued that subsistence does not necessarily involve the robust sort of independence had by complete substances. There are, however, numerous passages where Aquinas describes the soul, or intellect, as a form not dependent on the body or the matter it informs for its existence, and other places where he calls the soul separate or separable from the body. Many of these passages contain arguments very similar to the argument in *ST* I.75.2. For instance he writes,

Accordingly, therefore it is clear that the intellective principle by which a human being understands possesses an existence that transcends its body and is not dependent upon its body.⁸²

Thus in such a fashion from the operation of the human soul the mode of its very existence can be known. For insofar as a soul possesses an operation which transcends material things, its very existence is raised above and does not depend on its body.⁸³

Now the principle of this activity is not a form whose actual being is dependent on matter and tied down to or immersed in matter, because this activity is not effected by means of the body, as its proven in III *De Anima* [4, 429a 24]; and hence the principle of this activity possesses an activity that has nothing in common with corporeal matter. Now, the way in which each thing acts is a consequence of its being. Hence the actual being of that principle must be an

⁸² *QDA* a.14 co (Robb (trans.), 177; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol. 2, 334): “Sic igitur patet quod principium intellectivum quo homo intelligit, habet esse elevatum supra corpus, non dependens a corpore.”

⁸³ *QDA* a.1 co (Robb (trans.), 48; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol. 2, 284): “Sic igitur ex operatione animae humanae, modus esse ipsius cognosci potest. In quantum enim habet operationem materialia transcendentem, esse suum est supra corpus elevatum, non dependens ex ipso.”

actual being which is raised above corporeal matter and not dependent on it.⁸⁴

In each of these passages Aquinas describes the human soul as something that either does not depend on the body or does not depend on corporeal matter for its existence. In the second and third passages, Aquinas clearly appeals to the soul's operation as an indication of its not depending on matter or on the body. He tells us that the soul transcends, or is raised above matter and the body rather than depending on matter and the body. Yet it is unclear that we ought to take these claims of independence or non-dependence on matter (or the body) as affirmations of the soul's capacity for separate, disembodied existence. In *Quaestiones de Anima* just before the first of the three passages above, Aquinas contrasts the human soul with other material forms. He writes,

And because each being acts insofar as it is in act, it is necessary that an intellectual soul possess an independent *per se esse* which is not dependent on its body. For forms which have *esse* which depends on matter or on a subject do not possess *per se* operations.⁸⁵

In this passage, Aquinas uses the same characterization of the soul as something which does not depend on the body for its existence and contrasts it with forms that do depend on the body for their existence. Forms that do depend on matter or the body are forms that require matter or a substantial subject for their inherent mode of existence. When Aquinas tells us that the soul does not depend on the body, that it transcends the body, he may not have in mind disembodied existence, but the fact that the soul's subsistence renders it non-dependent on matter or a body as a subject in which to inhere.

⁸⁴ *DSC* a.2 co (FitzPatrick (trans.), 33-4; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol. 2, 375): "Principium autem huius operationis non est forma aliqua cuius esse sit dependens a corpore, et materiae obligatum sive immersum; quia haec operatio non fit per corpus, ut probatur in III de anima; unde principium huius operationis habet operationem sine communicatione materiae corporalis. Sic autem unumquodque operatur secundum quod est; unde oportet quod esse illius principii sit esse elevatum supra materiam corporalem, et non dependens ab ipsa." See also *QDA* a.14 ad 9; *SCG* II.79 [10]; *QDA* a.1 co.

⁸⁵ *QDA* a.1 co (Robb (trans.), slightly modified, 47; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 284): "Et quia unumquodque agit secundum quod est actu, oportet quod anima intellectiva habeat esse per se absolutum non dependens a corpore. Formae enim quae habent esse dependens a materia vel subiecto, non habent per se operationem."

Similarly, Aquinas sometimes uses a notion of separability to distinguish between accidents and substances. Again, the notion of separability does not seem to be the kind of separability involved in existing apart, on one's own, not as a part of a larger whole. For example, in his *Commentary on the Metaphysics* he writes,

For there are two characteristics which seem to belong most properly to substance. The first is that it is capable of separate existence, for an accident is not separated from a substance, but a substance can be separated from an accident. The second is that substance is a determinate particular thing, for the other genera do not signify a particular thing.⁸⁶

In this passage Aquinas writes that a substance, a *per se* existent, is capable of separate existence when contrasted with an accident. In this context the relevant notion of 'separate existence' is such that the substance does not require a subject in which to exist. In this sense substances are separable from accidents since substances do not exist in anything else as a subject. Accidents, however, which essentially exist in another, cannot exist in separation from their substantial subjects. When 'separate' is used in this way, the hand could reasonably be said to count as a substance according to these criteria. The hand is the sort of thing that serves as a subject of accidents but does not require a subject for its existence in the same way. The hand is capable of existing without a subject, yet it is not capable of existing without the whole human.

There are a few passages however that we might be tempted to interpret as supporting the notion that the kind of independence conferred to a thing by its subsistence involves the separability had by complete substances and had by the soul itself. For instance in *De Potentia* Aquinas writes, "... it follows of necessity that being must be ascribed to the rational

⁸⁶ *InMet* VII.2 [1291] (Rowan (trans.), 436; Marietti, 323): "Deinde cum dicit sed impossibile ostendit contrarium huius conclusionis; dicens, quod impossibile est solam materiam esse substantiam, vel ipsam etiam esse maxime substantiam. Duo enim sunt, quae maxime propria videntur esse substantiae: quorum unum est, quod sit separabilis. Accidens enim non separatur a substantia, sed substantia potest separari ab accidente. Aliud est, quod substantia est hoc aliquid demonstratum. Alia enim genera non significant hoc aliquid."

soul as subsisting, but not to other forms. For this reason the rational soul is the only form that can exist separate from the body.”⁸⁷ Here, after arguing for the subsistence of the soul based on its *per se* operation, Aquinas notes that the rational soul is said to subsist whereas other forms, presumably material forms, are not. From this he concludes that the rational soul, unlike these other forms, can exist apart from the body. However, in this argument Aquinas also specifies the soul’s role as a form. He states that the soul is the only *form* that can exist apart from the body. As we will see in Chapter 4, Aquinas argues that the soul is incorruptible based on the soul’s status as subsistent thing and substantial form. In this passage, then, Aquinas is not relying solely on the soul’s status as subsistent, but on its status as subsistent *form* to draw his conclusion.

Therefore we need not, and should not, attribute to Aquinas the view that subsistence involves separability in the way that the soul is separate in its disembodied state.

3.7 Inherence versus Subsistence

As a result of its subsistence, the human soul is crucially different from other substantial forms in the material realm. The incorporeity of the intellect secures a *per se* operation of the soul and this requires that the soul be a subject of operation rather than just a principle *quo*. Yet like other material forms, the soul is still the substantial form of the human being, and thus of its corporeal part, i.e., the body. Aquinas affirms that the soul is the form of the body in *ST* I.76.1 after having argued for its subsistence in *ST* I.75.2. Moreover, Aquinas defends the doctrine of the unicity of substantial form. This means that there is one and only one substantial form in a substance. A substance’s substantial form is the first form through which it, and all of its parts, have being. Given that the rational soul is the substantial form of the

⁸⁷ *DP* q.3 a.9 co (English Dominican Fathers (trans.), bk.1, 152; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol. 2, 65): “... necesse est ipsi rationali animae esse attribui quasi rei subsistenti, non autem aliis formis. Et ex hoc est quod inter formas, sola rationalis anima a corpore separatur.”

human being, and human beings are partly corporeal, there is no other form in the human body prior to its being enformed by the human soul. That is, there is no *body* prior to human soul's actualization of prime matter. Aquinas writes,

Therefore, since a soul is a substantial form because it constitutes a human being in a determinate species of substance, there is no other substantial form intermediate between a soul and prime matter; but it is the soul itself which perfects a human being according to diverse levels of perfection, so that he is a body, and a living body, and a rational animal.⁸⁸

The rational soul is the very first form to give matter actual existence as part of the hylomorphic composite (i.e., the body). Therefore, the human soul, as substantial form, is not united to an independently existing corporeal body, which it then perfects as rational. Instead, it is united to prime matter and accounts for the human's existence as a body, a living body, and a rational animal.

When we say that the soul is the act or form of the body, we are not setting the body up as something apart from the soul. As we saw in Chapter 1, Aquinas compares our talk of the soul as form of the body to that of light as the form of the transparent, or of heat as the form of the hot thing.⁸⁹ Something transparent, like air, is only actually transparent when it is illuminated. Apart from light it is not transparent but opaque. So when we call light 'the act of the transparent', we do not exclude light from the transparent. Instead we express the fact that light is that by which the transparent is transparent. Likewise, when we call the soul 'the act' or 'the form' of the human body, this does not entail that the human body is something apart from the soul. The body cannot be apart from the soul. The soul is included in the body as its act. By calling the soul 'its act' or 'its form,' we express the claim that the soul is that by

⁸⁸ *QDA* a.9 co (Robb (trans.), 129; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 314): "Sic igitur cum anima sit forma substantialis, quia constituit hominem in determinata specie substantiae, non est aliqua alia forma substantialis media inter animam et materiam primam; sed homo ab ipsa anima rationali perficitur secundum diversos gradus perfectionum, ut sit scilicet corpus, et animatum corpus, et animal rationale." See also *ST I.76.4* co; *DSC* q.3.

⁸⁹ See *QDA* a.1 ad 15; *ST I.76.4* ad 1.

which the body is the body. So although Aquinas often talks of the human being as a composite of body and soul, given his account of the soul as substantial form of the human body, when we think of the human body, what we think of already includes the soul as form. So the human being is a composite of body and soul insofar as the body and soul are subsistent parts of the human being, but the body itself is a composite of prime matter and the soul.

On Aquinas' view, then, the soul exists in matter insofar as it is the substantial form of the human body. The soul informs matter, making it to be a living, sensing, human body, just as the souls of other animals make matter to be living, sensing, animal bodies.⁹⁰ To the extent, therefore, that it is the form of the body, it exists in matter as a principle *quo*. Aquinas writes,

The possible intellect, although it does not have a determinate matter, nevertheless is a power of the substance of the soul which does have determinate matter, not as a constitutive principle from which the soul arises, but as that in which the soul is received and exists.⁹¹

Here Aquinas notes that although the soul does not arise from matter, as material forms are said to be educed from the potency of matter, the soul is still received in and exists in determinate matter. In the *Summa Contra Gentiles* Aquinas explains that the soul is not a material form although it is in matter. He writes,

However it is not necessary that the intellectual substance be a material form although its being is in matter, as the third argument shows. It is not in matter as if immersed in matter, or wholly enveloped by matter, but in another way, as was said.⁹²

⁹⁰ Unlike the souls of brute animals, the human soul informs matter by sharing with it its own *esse* with it, nevertheless it is still the formal component in the body.

⁹¹ *QDA* a.3 ad 12 (Robb (trans.), 12; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 294): “Ad duodecimum dicendum quod intellectus possibilis, licet materiam determinatam non habeat, tamen substantia animae, cuius est potentia, habet materiam determinatam, non ex qua sit, sed in qua sit.” See also *ST* I.76.1 ad 1.

⁹² *SCG* II.69 [4] (translation mine; Leonine XIII, 447): “Non autem oportet substantiam intellectualem esse formam materialem, quamvis esse eius sit in materia: ut tertia ratio procedebat. Non enim est in materia sicut materiae immersa, vel a materia totaliter comprehensa, sed alio modo, ut dictum est.”

In this passage Aquinas states that the intellectual substance, that is, the intellective soul, is not a material form despite the fact that it exists in matter. As we saw in Chapter 2, he often describes the intellective soul as not fully immersed or embedded in matter. This language suggests that he thinks of the soul as being immersed in matter to the extent that is the actuality of the body.

However, in his characterizations of subsistence, existence *per se*, and what it means to be a *hoc aliquid*, Aquinas contrasts these notions of existence with the inherent mode of existence had by accidents and material forms.⁹³ He says that the term ‘subsistent’ excludes that which exists in another as a subject, and that which inheres in another as an accident or material form. This suggests that inherence and subsistence are mutually exclusive. So we might wonder how to reconcile his claim that the soul is the form of the human being, or the human body, with his claim that subsistence excludes inherence in matter or in a subject.

Despite Aquinas’ frequent characterizations of subsistence and existence *per se* as in direct contrast to inherence, I do not believe that Aquinas is inconsistent. I think we ought to take as central to his characterizations of subsistent things and *hoc aliquid*s that such things do not *require* some outside foundation or subject for their existence. The trouble with accidents and material forms is not that they inhere in something as its act, but that they depend on that subject for their existence. That is, without such a subject, they cannot exist at all. When Aquinas argues for the soul’s subsistence, therefore, I take it that he is not arguing against the view that the soul is a form in matter, but against the view that the soul depends on the matter it informs for *per accidens* existence. Although, for Aquinas, the human soul inheres in matter insofar as it is the actuality of body, its existence does not depend on its inherence in its composite. The soul’s subsistence does not negate its role as substantial form.

⁹³ See for instance, *QDA* a.1 ad 9.

As a result of its subsistence, the rational soul is both a principle *quo* and a *quod* of existence. Gyula Klima aptly describes the soul in the following way:

It is certainly material in the sense that it is inherent in the matter of the human body, simply because it has its being as *quo est*, as that by which this matter is actualised in a human form. In fact, it has the very same act of being that the whole human being has in a different way, namely, as *quod est*, as that which primarily exists. But Aquinas' further claim is that it is not only the whole human, but also the soul that has, again, the same act of being (the life of this human) not only as *quo est*, but also as *quod est*, i.e., also in the sense as the whole human person has it.

And there is certainly no inconsistency in this position. The soul is material, insofar as it is inherent in the matter of the human body, having the substantial act of being of this human as *quo est*, as that by which this body is actualised, organised into a living human being. But with this it is certainly compatible that the soul also has this act of being not only as *quo est*, but also as *quod est*.⁹⁴

Klima explains that the soul is material, i.e., it inheres in matter, insofar as it is the *quo est* of the body, which is a *quod est*, a subsistent thing. However, the soul is also a *quod est*. It too is a subject of the *esse* of which it is the principle *quo*.

As both a principle *quo* and a *quod est*, the human soul is similar to the separate substances in Aquinas' ontology. These incorporeal substances are both the subjects of their *esse* and the principles on which that *esse* follows. Of course, the rational soul differs from angels because its role as principle *quo* extends beyond itself to the body as well. Within Aquinas' metaphysics, then, there are forms that are their own principles of existence, like the separate substances, and forms that are the principles of existence of material composites, like material forms. The rational soul is both. The *esse* of which it is the source or principle belongs to itself and to the human body.

⁹⁴ Klima (2009, 171).

Conclusion

For Aquinas, the subsistence of the soul entails that the soul is more than that by which the human being exists and operates. It is more than a mere principle *quo*. Instead, it is an actualized part of the human being, an *ens in actu* actualized by the same substantial form as the human as a whole. The soul is therefore capable of serving as the subject of forms involved in intellectual cognition and is the part of the human being that performs intellectual operations. Subsistence, however, does not entail completeness in a specific nature. Hands and eyes and other body parts subsist and are yet incomplete parts of a unified whole. Aquinas maintains that the soul, like the hand or eye, is an *incomplete* part of the human being. As such, he argues that the soul can still be united to the incomplete body to form a unified human being.

In principle, the mere subsistence of the soul is insufficient to threaten human unity. There may be reasons to doubt, however, whether the soul ought to count as incomplete, particularly given its incorruptibility and capacity for disembodied existence. This separability and more robust independence from the body, which I discuss in Chapter 4, may prove more problematic for Aquinas' account of human unity.

Chapter 4: The Incorruptibility and Existential Completeness of the Rational Soul

Aquinas affirms that the human soul is incorruptible and capable of disembodied existence. Once created by God, the soul possesses *esse* that it cannot lose except by divine annihilation. So although human beings are susceptible to death and corruption, their souls continue to exist and even operate in this separated state. As we will see, Aquinas maintains that the soul's incorruptibility follows from the fact that it is both a subsistent thing and a substantial form.

Despite the fact that the soul is capable of existing on its own, Aquinas remains committed to the unqualified unity of the human being. He puts forth two main defenses of human unity. First, he admits that a genuine threat to human unity would arise if the soul were a complete substance in its own right (i.e., complete in a specific nature). Accordingly, he argues that the soul is not complete in a specific nature and so, only an incomplete part of the human being. Second, he argues the soul and body share a single act of being. Although the soul as a subsistent thing that possesses *esse*, he maintains that it communicates this very same *esse* to the body. Soul and body are, therefore, unified by their common *esse*. These considerations preserve the unqualified unity of soul and body despite the soul's incorruptibility.¹ In this chapter I consider whether or not Aquinas' attempt to reconcile the incorruptibility of the rational soul with the unqualified unity of the human being is successful.

¹ Aquinas' account of the rational soul as incorruptible has received considerable attention in the secondary literature. Many interpreters focus on whether his arguments for incorruptibility are successful, or the extent to which the incorruptibility of the soul secures its immortality. (See Bazán (2010); Cross (1997); Eberl (2004); Novak (1987); Owens (1987); Pasnau (2001); Toner (2010).) Others discuss whether the incorruptibility of the soul ensures a personal survival of death. (See Stump (2011, 2006); Toner (2010); Pasnau (2001); Brown (2007); Conn (2012).) Still others discuss the persistence conditions for human beings and/or human persons in light of the soul's disembodied existence and/or the resurrection of the body, (see Hughes (1997); Van Dyke (2007); Langley (2001); Adams (1992)), and the individuation of human beings (Brown 2003). For the most part I set aside these questions of personal identity, persistence conditions, and personal survival of death. My concern in this chapter is to determine the extent to which Aquinas' commitment to the incorruptibility of the soul is problematic for his account of human unity.

This chapter has six sections. In §4.1, I present Aquinas' argument for the incorruptibility of the soul found in *ST* I.75.6 and *QDA* a.13. In §4.2, I introduce his first defense of human unity, namely, that although the soul is existentially complete, it is nevertheless specifically incomplete. In §4.3 and §4.4 I consider two ways that we might account for his claim that the soul is incomplete. In §4.5 I turn to his second defense of human unity and discuss how, on his view, the soul and body share an act of existence. In §4.6 I argue that the incorruptibility of the soul and the existential completeness it entails are consistent with his account of human unity. Moreover I discuss how the status of human beings, as composites of both corruptible and incorruptible subsistent parts (although unique and in some ways strange) is fitting given Aquinas' metaphysical system.

4.1 Argument for Incorruptibility

Aquinas' argument for the incorruptibility of the soul relies on the fact that the soul is both a subsistent thing and the substantial form of the human being. In *ST* I.75.6 Aquinas begins his argument by enumerating the ways that a thing can be corrupted. He writes,

One must claim that the human soul, which we call the intellectual principle, is incorruptible. For a thing is corrupted in one of two ways, either (a) *per se* or (b) *per accidens*. But it is impossible for anything subsistent to be generated or corrupted *per accidens*, i.e., generated or corrupted because something else is generated or corrupted. For being generated and being corrupted belong to a thing in the same way as does its *esse*, which is acquired through generation and lost through corruption. Hence, that which has *esse per se* can be generated or corrupted only *per se*, whereas things that do not subsist, such as accidents and material forms, are said to be made and corrupted through the generation and corruption of composite things.²

² *ST* I.75.6 co (Freddoso (trans.), 13; Leonine V, 203): “Respondeo dicendum quod necesse est dicere animam humanam, quam dicimus intellectivum principium, esse incorruptibilem. Dupliciter enim aliquid corrumpitur, uno modo, per se; alio modo, per accidens. Impossibile est autem aliquid subsistens generari aut corrumpi per accidens, idest aliquo generato vel corrupto. Sic enim competit alicui generari et corrumpi, sicut et esse, quod per generationem acquiritur et per corruptionem amittitur. Unde quod per se habet esse, non potest generari vel corrumpi nisi per se, quae vero non subsistunt, ut accidentia et formae materiales, dicuntur fieri et corrumpi per generationem et corruptionem compositorum.”

In this passage Aquinas sets out to show that the human soul cannot be corrupted. First he notes that corruption can occur in one of two ways—either *per se* or *per accidens*. These alternatives are both mutually exclusive and exhaustive. So by showing that the soul cannot be corrupted in either way, he takes himself to have established that the soul cannot be corrupted at all. *Per se* corruption involves the corruption of a thing in its own right. In material things this consists in the separation of the formal and material principles of a hylomorphic substance.³ *Per accidens* corruption involves the corruption of a thing along with the corruption of its subject. When a substantial subject is corrupted, the accidents and forms inhering in the subject also cease to exist. Their existence depends on the substantial subject⁴ so that when the subject is corrupted they cease to exist.

The way that a thing is corrupted tracks its mode of being so that things that exist *per se* are only subject to *per se* corruption, whereas things that exist *per accidens*, are only subject to accidental corruption. An unborn piglet, say, may die along with the death of its mother, but it nevertheless undergoes *per se* rather than *per accidens* corruption because it is a composite, a subsistent thing, rather than a material form or accident. Indeed, like the piglet, all of the integral parts of the sow are said to be corrupted *per se* (but because they are incomplete parts of the sow, their corruption is nothing over and above the corruption of the sow considered as a whole). By contrast, the mother's pinkness and her porcine substantial form are corrupted accidentally along with her death. Since they exist by inhering, they cease to exist when the subject in which they inhere is corrupted.

Material substances, including human beings, are susceptible to *per se* corruption because the prime matter out of which they are composed retains its potency for other forms. Prime matter does not naturally remain perpetually informed by the same form. Instead, it is

³ Here I am speaking of substantial or unqualified generation and corruption, not corruption *secundum quid*.

⁴ Or on matter as in the case of material substantial forms.

always in potency to non-being and this accounts for the corruptibility of the composite of which it is a part. Since form is the actuality of matter that constitutes the composite and its source of *esse*, when the matter and form of a material composite are separated, the matter ceases to have the form as its actuality and principle of *esse* and the composite ceases to exist.

Ordinarily, matter and form are corrupted *per accidens* with the corruption of the composite because they exist *per accidens* as metaphysical parts of the composite. But as we saw in Chapter 3, the human soul possesses *per se* existence. It is not just a principle *quo* that exists by inhering. Accordingly if the soul can be corrupted, it must be corrupted *per se*.

But Aquinas argues that the soul cannot be corrupted *per se*. This is a result of its status as a form. He writes,

However, this [*per se* corruption] is wholly impossible—not only in the case of the human soul, but in the case of any subsistent thing that is just a form. For it is clear that what belongs to a thing because of its very self (*secundum se*) is inseparable from that thing. But *esse* belongs *per se* to form, i.e., to actuality. This is why matter acquires *esse* in actuality to the extent that it acquires form, whereas corruption occurs in it to the extent that form is separated from it. But it is impossible for a form to be separated from itself. Hence, it is impossible that a subsistent form should cease to exist.⁵

In this passage Aquinas concludes that it is impossible for a subsistent form to be corrupted *per se*. Form is the source of a subsistent thing's *esse* or being. A subsistent form is, therefore, the principle of its own being. Since a subsistent form cannot be separated from itself, neither can it be separated from its source of being. A subsistent form cannot cease to be.

We can think of this in terms of the actualizing role of substantial form: Forms are the actuality of matter or of themselves (in the case of separate substances) into subsistent composites. A form that exists *per se* plays both the role of the actuality and the actualized.

⁵ ST I.75.6 co (Freddoso (trans.), 13; Leonine V, 204): “Quod quidem omnino est impossibile non solum de ipsa, sed de quolibet subsistente quod est forma tantum. Manifestum est enim quod id quod secundum se convenit alicui, est inseparabile ab ipso. Esse autem per se convenit formae, quae est actus. Unde materia secundum hoc acquirit esse in actu, quod acquirit formam, secundum hoc autem accidit in ea corruptio, quod separatur forma ab ea. Impossibile est autem quod forma separetur a seipsa. Unde impossibile est quod forma subsistens desinat esse.”

When a form is separated from that which it actualizes, the composite ceases to exist. But since a form that is its own actuality cannot be separated from itself, the form cannot cease to serve as its own actuality and principle of *esse*. Accordingly, the resulting composite cannot be corrupted *per se*.⁶ Since the human soul is a subsistent form that is its own actuality and principle of *esse* in addition to that of the body, it cannot be corrupted *per se* or *per accidens*.

4.2 Incorruptibility and Existential Completeness

The soul's incorruptibility is significant because it ensures that it remains in existence after the death of the human being.⁷ This sets the soul apart from the substantial forms of all other material beings, and it sets the soul apart from all other subsistent parts of the human being. Any other part, when separated from the whole, ceases to be what it was—a severed hand, for example, is a “hand in name only.”⁸ However, because the soul is a substantial form that is the actuality of both itself and of matter, it remains its own actuality even after it ceases to be the actuality of the matter it once informed. Accordingly, unlike the human hand or eye, the soul can exist apart from the rest of the human being, actualized by the very same form that once actualized the entire human being.

Aquinas also maintains that the soul can operate in this separated state, albeit in a sub-optimal way.⁹ While embodied, the human soul relies on the powers of sensation to provide phantasms from which to abstract intelligible forms. However, in its separated state, God can infuse intelligible forms directly into the human soul, and through these, the soul can understand.

⁶ For a detailed discussion of this stage in Aquinas' argument, see Owens (1987).

⁷ There is debate in the literature about whether the separated human soul constitutes the human being after the corruption of the body. Based on Aquinas' remarks that death is a substantial change I take the death of a human being to entail the corruption of the human being as well as the corruption of the human body. Consider, for instance, *QDA* a.1 co (Robb (trans.), 47; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 284): “Consequently death, which signifies the separation of soul and body, would not be a substantial corruption, and this is obviously false [Mors igitur, quae inducit eorum separationem, non esset corruptio substantialis: quod patet esse falsum.]”

⁸ See for instance *ST* I.76.8 co.

⁹ See *QDA* a.15 and *ST* I.89.1-8 for detailed accounts of the separated soul's mode of cognition.

Thus the soul's incorruptibility goes hand in hand with a kind of independence or completeness not had by other substantial parts. Aquinas' characterizes it as complete in being, that is, as having *esse completum*.¹⁰ Once created, the rational soul suffices for its own existence. So it alone is capable of separate existence and operation from the rest of the human being.

The soul's independence in existence and operation creates an apparent tension in Aquinas' account of the human being as something unqualifiedly one. The more independent and complete the soul is in its own right, the more difficult it becomes to maintain that it is unqualifiedly united to the body to form a single substantial subject. Indeed, he typically applies the notion of *esse completum* to complete substances only—things that cannot be united to something further to form an unqualified unity. For instance in *Summa Contra Gentiles* he writes,

For whatever comes to a thing after it is complete in its being [*post esse completum*], comes to it accidentally, since it is outside that thing's essence. Now, every substantial form makes a being complete in the genus of substance, for it makes a being in act, and this particular thing [*hoc aliquid*]. Therefore, whatever accrues to a thing after its first substantial form will accrue to it accidentally.¹¹

Here Aquinas argues that anything that is added to a thing after it is complete in its being is at most accidentally united to it. Any such additions would fall outside of the essence of that to which it is added.¹² This assumes that being existentially complete (i.e., having *esse*

¹⁰ See *QDA* a.1 ad 1.

¹¹ *SCG* II.58 [6] (Anderson (trans.), 174; Leonine XIII, 409-410): "Omne enim quod advenit alicui post esse completum, advenit ei accidentaliter: cum sit extra essentiam eius. Quaelibet autem forma substantialis facit ens completum in genere substantiae: facit enim ens actu et hoc aliquid. Quicquid igitur post primam formam substantialem advenit rei, accidentaliter adveniet."

¹² See also *QDA* a.11 co (Robb (trans.), 149-150; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 323): "Another difficulty also follows from Plato's principles. For something unqualifiedly one does not arise from several things which exist in act unless there be something which unites them by binding them together in some manner...Now since it is impossible to assign such a cause of their unity, it will remain true that a human being will not be one except as an aggregate is one...[Sequitur etiam aliud inconveniens. Ex pluribus enim actu existentibus non fit unum simpliciter, nisi sit aliquid uniens et aliquo modo ligans ea ad invicem... Unde, cum hoc non sit assignare, remanebit quod homo non erit unum nisi aggregatione.]"

completum) entails being complete with respect to essence, and thus being complete in a specific nature. If this is the case, Aquinas' attribution of *esse completum* to the soul is obviously problematic, for as we have just seen he affirms that something with *esse completum* cannot form something *unum simpliciter* with anything else.

However, in the *Quaestiones De Anima* Aquinas rejects the claim that *esse completum* entails specific completeness. He writes,

Although a soul has a complete act of existence, [*anima habeat esse completum*] it does not follow that its body is accidentally united to it: both because that identical act of existence which belongs to the soul is communicated to its body in order that there might be one act of existence for the whole composite, and also because the fact that although a soul could subsist *per se*, it does not possess a complete nature, but its body is joined to it to complete its nature.¹³

In this passage Aquinas affirms that the soul has a complete act of existence and yet denies that it is only accidentally united to the body. In support of this latter claim he offers two explanations of why the soul's possession of *esse completum* does not entail its accidental union with the body. First, the soul and body share an act of existence. (I discuss this defense in §4.5.) Second, that although the soul subsists, it is incomplete in a nature. (I discuss this defense in §4.3-§4.4). This passage, therefore, tells against the tight connection or coextension of possessing *esse completum* and being complete in a specific nature.

Patrick Toner has captured the distinction by introducing two different notions of completeness, namely, *completeness in substantial perfection* and *completeness in the line of a*

And DSC a.1 ad.9 (FitzPatrick (trans.), 26; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 372) : “For an accidental form differs from a substantial form because a substantial form makes this given thing to be something, whereas an accidental form is added to a thing which already exists as “this something.” If then the first form by which the individual is placed in a genus will make the individual to be “this something,” all the other forms will be added to an individual that subsists in actuality, and consequently they will be accidental forms. [Forma enim accidentalis a substantiali differt, quia forma substantialis facit hoc aliquid, forma autem accidentalis advenit rei iam hoc aliquid existenti. Si igitur prima forma, per quam collocatur in genere, facit individuum esse hoc aliquid; omnes aliae formae advenient individuo subsistenti in actu, et ita erunt formae accidentales.]”

¹³ QDA a.1 ad.1 (Robb (trans.), 49; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 284): “Ad primum ergo dicendum quod licet anima habeat esse completum non tamen sequitur quod corpus ei accidentaliter uniatur; tum quia illud idem esse quod est animae communicat corpori, ut sit unum esse totius compositi; tum etiam quia etsi possit per se subsistere, non tamen habet speciem completam, sed corpus advenit ei ad completionem speciei.”

specific nature.¹⁴ On his reading, something is complete in substantial perfection when it can “... exist without being substantially united with any other substances to form a further substance.”¹⁵ This notion of completeness includes whole substances and the human soul (since it is capable of separate existence) but it excludes things that require a larger whole to exist like a hand or eye. Something is complete in the line of specific nature when it can discharge all of the proper operations of its natural kind. So while the soul counts as complete in substantial perfection, it fails to count as complete in the line of a specific nature since it can discharge only the intellectual functions of the human being.¹⁶ Toner’s notion of completeness in substantial perfection captures the kind of existential completeness that Aquinas attributes to the soul while still allowing for the soul’s incompleteness with respect to specific nature.

Both the passage from *Summa Contra Gentiles* and the passage from *Quaestiones De Anima* suggest that the real barrier to unity has to do with the specific completeness of a substance. Later in *Quaestiones De Anima* he writes,

A substantial unit cannot be produced from two substances which are actually existing and are complete in their own species and nature. However, the soul and the body are not substances of this kind, since they are parts of human nature. Consequently nothing prevents them from becoming a substantial unit.¹⁷

Although the human soul can actually exist apart from the matter of the human body, neither the soul nor the body is, according to Aquinas, complete in a species and nature. Both are simply parts of a human being that require one another for the completion of human nature. On his view, this incompleteness in nature preserves their unqualified union. If a thing is

¹⁴ Toner (2009).

¹⁵ Toner (2009, 128).

¹⁶ In §4.4 I discuss whether this failure accounts for the soul’s being complete in a nature.

¹⁷ *QDA* a.2 ad 11 (Robb (trans.), 62; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 289): “Ad undecimum dicendum quod ex duabus substantiis actu existentibus et perfectis in sua specie et natura non fit aliquid unum. Anima autem et corpus non sunt huiusmodi, cum sint partes humanae naturae; unde ex eis nihil prohibet fieri unum.”

specifically complete, then it has everything included in its nature. Nothing more can be added to it to complete that nature, and so it can at most be united accidentally to other things.

For the most part, specific completeness coincides with existential completeness, because almost always a thing that possesses *esse completum* exists by means of its own unique substantial form that accounts for its existence as a species member. Indeed, only in the case of the disembodied human soul is there an entity that exists by means of a substantial form (in its case, itself) without that substantial form serving as the actuality of all that it is by nature meant to inform. It is usually safe to assume that if something possesses *esse completum* it cannot be united to anything further to form something *unum simpliciter*. This common tight connection between existential and specific completeness may explain why Aquinas occasionally speaks of *esse completum* as incompatible with a thing's unqualified union with another, as he does in the passage from *Summa Contra Gentiles*.

We might wonder, however, in what sense the soul is specifically incomplete, given that it is existentially complete. In the sections to follow (§4.3-§4.4) I present and evaluate two ways that Aquinas accounts for the specific incompleteness of the soul in spite of its existential completeness.

4.3 Incomplete in a Nature: Operational Dependence on the Body

Aquinas' first defense of human unity relies on the claim that neither soul nor body is, in itself, complete in a specific nature. Aquinas provides two main explanations of why the soul is incomplete in this regard. The first of these arises from the soul's dependence on the body for its intellectual operation. He writes,

However, human souls differ from these higher substances in this, namely, that they possess the nature of acquiring the immaterial knowledge of the intellect from that knowledge which comes from sensing material things ... But insofar

as a soul by nature acquires its immaterial knowledge from what is material, it is clear that the fulfillment of its nature cannot be achieved apart from union with the body. For a thing is not complete in nature unless it possesses those things which are demanded for the proper operation of that nature.¹⁸

Here Aquinas explains that the human soul is unable to achieve the fulfillment of its nature apart from the body because the human intellect acquires knowledge from what is material. As we saw in Chapter 2, the possible intellect understands by means of intelligible *species* that are produced through abstraction from phantasms. Although the intellect carries out intellectual operations incorporeally, it depends on the body to provide the requisite phantasms. He takes this soul's dependence on the phantasms' as a sign of its specific incompleteness and claims that a thing cannot be complete in a nature unless it "possesses those things which are demanded for the proper operation of that nature." Since a human intellect cannot carry out intellectual cognition without turning to the phantasms, the human soul cannot be complete in a nature apart from the body.¹⁹

However, this defense of specific incompleteness is not entirely satisfying. In particular, Aquinas' claim that something must possess the things required for their proper operation in order to be specifically complete is unclear. To begin with, many proper operations of substances require that certain external conditions be met for their exercise. An animal may have the power of sight, and eyes in good working condition, but without light and a transparent medium, that animal will not see. Light and a transparent medium are required for the exercise of sight, and yet they are not part of an animal, nor would we say that an animal is specifically incomplete when these requirements are not present.

¹⁸ *QDA* a.1 co (Robb (trans.), 48; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 284): "In hoc tamen ab eis differunt, quod intellectus animae humanae habent naturam acquirendi cognitionem immaterialem ex cognitione materialium, quae est per sensum. ... in quantum vero immaterialem cognitionem ex materiali est nata acquirere, manifestum est quod complementum suae speciei esse non potest absque corporis unione. Non enim aliquid est completum in specie, nisi habeat ea quae requiruntur ad propriam operationem ipsius speciei."

¹⁹ Donald Abel (1995, 231) notes the intellect's dependence on phantasms as a central sign of its incompleteness. Although Abel does not claim that the soul's incompleteness *consists in* its dependence on the body for phantasms, he offers no further account of the soul's incompleteness.

Likewise, the exercise of sight depends on the presence of visible objects. An animal cannot see if there is nothing to be seen, even if the external conditions are suitable. But again, we would not say that an animal is specifically incomplete when it is unable to see, hear, smell, etc. simply because it lacks a sensible object. So it is not the case that a substance must possess *everything* required for the exercise of its proper operations in order to count as specifically complete. In particular, we do not consider things specifically incomplete when they lack their object or fail to be in the appropriate external conditions.

But, as we saw in Chapter 3, Aquinas considers phantasms to be related to the agent intellect as its object. The agent intellect turns to the phantasms and through its abstractive process produces from them an incorporeal intelligible *species*. He likens the relationship between the phantasms and agent intellect to that between a visible object and the eye. Indeed, it is crucial to his argument for the subsistence of the soul that the body plays no instrumental role in intellectual cognition and is only involved as the object on which the agent intellect performs its abstractive process. This means that the intellectual soul, considered apart from the body, is equipped with all that it needs to perform its proper operation except that which is related to the agent intellect as an object. But it is not obvious that specific completeness requires a thing to possess the objects it relies on for its operation. We do not consider the objects of sensation to be parts of sensitive creatures in order to complete their nature. So if an animal can be specifically complete even though it does not have within itself everything needed to carry out an essential operation, then the soul could equally be said to be specifically complete although it does not include the objects required for abstraction.

Moreover, although the intellective soul must have a phantasm in its embodied state in order to understand, the separated soul is capable of cognition without phantasms.²⁰ Aquinas writes,

To understand intellectually in conjunction with a phantasm is the proper operation of the soul insofar as it is united to the body. However, when it is separated from the body, it will have another mode of understanding like that of other substances that are separated from a body.²¹

Like other separate substances, the separated soul receives intelligible *species* by which it is capable of understanding through an influx from God or higher intelligences. While phantasms are a necessary component of embodied intellectual cognition, the intellect does not necessarily rely on phantasms for its operation. The intellect requires *species* to understand, but these *species* can come from God. Once the soul has its *species*, it has everything it needs to understand. Again this consideration weakens its status as incomplete. It reaffirms the intellect's dependence on the body *only for its object* because even in its embodied state, it can perform its operation. Given that the soul can (and does) understand apart from the body, it is not clear that Aquinas is entitled to claim that the soul does not possess the things that it requires for its proper operation. Nothing corporeal or bodily is inherently necessary for the soul to exist and operate.

Perhaps Aquinas' position is subtler than this, however. He repeatedly distinguishes the human intellect from other higher intellects by noting that the human intellect is unique because by nature it is designed to understand the natures of all things from what is material. In the *Summa Theologiae* he writes,

Now as was established above (q. 55, a. 2), within the order of nature the

²⁰ For further discussion of the separated soul's mode of understanding, see Pasnau (2002a, 366-376). For discussion of the separated soul's knowledge of itself and its relationship to the person it once was a part of, see Still (2001).

²¹ *ST I.75.6 ad 3* (Freddoso (trans.), 15; Leonine V, 204): "Ad tertium dicendum quod intelligere cum phantasmate est propria operatio animae secundum quod corpori est unita. Separata autem a corpore habebit alium modum intelligendi, similem aliis substantiis a corpore separatis, ut infra melius patebit."

intellective soul occupies the lowest grade among intellectual substances. For unlike the angels, the intellective soul is not endowed by nature with knowledge of the truth, but instead, as Dionysius puts it in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 7, it must gather its knowledge from divisible things by way of the senses.²²

In this passage Aquinas describes the human intellect as one that must achieve knowledge by means of the senses. The human soul can and does understand in a different way when in its separated state, but it is not its *natural* mode of cognition.

Furthermore, since human beings are designed to understand from what is material, only embodied human intellects have the most perfect and distinct understanding. Aquinas writes,

Therefore, if human souls had been constituted by God in such a way as to have intellective understanding in the mode in which separated substances have it, then they would not have had perfect cognition, but would instead have had indistinct cognition in general. Therefore, in order for them to be able to have perfect and proper cognition of things, they were naturally constituted in such a way as to be united to bodies and so to receive their proper cognition of sensible things from the things themselves...²³

As the lowest type of intellect in Aquinas' hierarchy of being, the human soul achieves its most perfect understanding when it understands through sensible things, that is, by means of intelligible *species* abstracted from a phantasm.²⁴ Although the separated soul can understand by means of *species* obtained from higher intelligences, Aquinas maintains that the understanding it achieves in this way will not be as perfect or distinct as that which it achieves

²² *ST* I.76.5 co (Freddoso (trans.), 37; Leonine V, 228): "Anima autem intellectiva, sicut supra habitum est, secundum naturae ordinem, infimum gradum in substantiis intellectualibus tenet; intantum quod non habet naturaliter sibi inditam notitiam veritatis, sicut Angeli, sed oportet quod eam colligat ex rebus divisibilibus per viam sensus, ut Dionysius dicit, VII cap. de Div. Nom." See also *QDA* a.8 co.

²³ *ST* I.89.1 co (Freddoso (trans.), 218; Leonine V, 375): "Si igitur animae humanae sic essent institutae a Deo ut intelligerent per modum qui competit substantiis separatis, non haberent cognitionem perfectam, sed confusam in communi. Ad hoc ergo quod perfectam et propriam cognitionem de rebus habere possent, sic naturaliter sunt institutae ut corporibus uniantur, et sic ab ipsis rebus sensibilibus propriam de eis cognitionem accipiant."

²⁴ For detailed discussion of how the human intellect's operation differs from that of higher intelligences, see Pegis (1940).

by means of abstraction. Indeed he uses this to justify and explain the soul's embodied state.²⁵ The intellective soul cannot, on its own, accomplish its most perfect understanding since it is naturally suited to understand by means of abstracted *species*. Only the human composite can operate in accordance with this mode of understanding. Accordingly, it is for the good of the intellect that it be unified with the body.

We might conclude, then, that Aquinas believes that the human soul is incomplete because it possesses an intellect that is by nature designed to understand in a particular way but is incapable of doing so in separation from the body. The soul alone does not possess all that is required for the mode of intellective understanding that is most natural to it, which occurs by means of abstracted *species*. Thus, while it can function apart from the body, the intellect depends on its union with the body to provide the requisite corporeal contribution for its *optimal* and *natural* function.

These considerations are clearly central to Aquinas' account of the relationship between the soul and the body. They may not however sufficiently account for the specific incompleteness of the soul considered on its own. The soul might be designed so as to operate best when it abstracts from phantasms, yet it is still capable of independent operation when separated from the source of these phantasms. If we consider the highest operation in the human being to be intellectual understanding from what is material, the soul itself may fail to be complete in *human* nature since it cannot perform all the essential operations of human life (which include sensation and nutrition). But given that the soul can exist and operate in separation from the body and that it depends on the body only for the object of its abstraction, it may still be complete in its *own* specific nature.

²⁵ See for instance *ST* I.76.5 and *QDA* a.15.

4.4 The Disembodied Soul as an Incomplete Actuality

A second way to account for the specific incompleteness of the soul, and I believe a more promising one, arises from its role as the actuality of matter. In its role as substantial form, the rational soul is meant to be the actuality of a *human being*. It is not only meant to be its own principle of *esse*. The sensitive and nutritive operations of the human being require that she be at least partly corporeal. Hence the soul, by its nature, must be the actuality of matter. When disembodied, the soul's nature as the substantial form of the human being is thwarted. Since it is separated from matter it cannot serve as the actuality of the human body. Aquinas is clear that the disembodied soul does not lose its propensity to inform matter when it ceases to inform matter. There is no change in its essential nature. It remains the sort of thing that ought to actualize matter, even when it does not do so. He writes, "When the body ceases to be through corruption, the soul does not lose that essential feature by which it is appropriate to the soul to be a form, although the soul does not actually perfect matter so that it is a form."²⁶ It is essentially appropriate to the soul that it be a form even though it ceases to actualize matter upon the corruption of the body. Corruption befalls a human being on account of deficiencies in its matter and not because the soul ceases to be a principle for configuring matter. He writes,

A human body is matter that is proportioned to a human soul with respect to a soul's operations, but it is subject to corruption and other defects because of the exigencies of matter, as we explained earlier.²⁷

The fact that a soul remains after its body stems from a defect of the body, i.e., death. This defect was not supposed to exist at the beginning of the soul's

²⁶ *QDA* a.1 ad.10 (Robb (trans.), 50; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 285): "Ad decimum dicendum quod corrupto corpore non perit ab anima natura secundum quam competit ei ut sit forma; licet non perficiat materiam actu, ut sit forma."

²⁷ *QDA* a.14 ad.13 (Robb (trans.), 180; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 335): "Ad decimumtertium dicendum quod corpus humanum est materia animae humanae proportionata quantum ad operationes eius; sed corruptio et alii defectus accidunt ex necessitate materiae, ut supra ostensum est."

creation.²⁸

The body may fall away from the soul when matter succumbs to its potency for non-being, but the soul's disposition for actualizing matter remains, although its natural inclination is thwarted. Given that the soul retains its character as the substantial form of a material composite, in its separated state it fails to exist as it ought. It can only incompletely fulfill its role as an actuality.

This is particularly apparent in Aquinas' discussion of whether the powers of the soul remain in the disembodied soul. As a substantial form, the soul is the root and source of the essential powers of vital operation that flow from it and serve as the further actualities and operative principles of various subsistent parts of the human being. The nutritive and sensitive powers, whose exercise is carried out in a bodily organ, are the actualities of their respective organs and exist in them as in a subject. These powers cannot exist apart from their corporeal subjects. Aquinas writes,

Therefore it is clear that the powers of the sensitive part of the soul are in the composite as in a subject, but come from the soul as from a principle. Consequently when its body is destroyed, the sensitive powers of the soul are destroyed, but they remain in the soul as in a principle.²⁹

Because the sensitive powers of the soul (and the nutritive powers) exist in the composite of soul and matter (i.e., the body), they cannot continue to exist when their subject ceases to exist. The separated soul cannot itself serve as their subject, and so the separated soul cannot perform any sensitive or nutritive operations. Nevertheless, Aquinas affirms that the powers

²⁸ *ST* I.90.4 ad 3 (Freddoso (trans.), 239; Leonine V, 390): "Ad tertium dicendum quod animam remanere post corpus, accidit per defectum corporis, qui est mors. Qui quidem defectus in principio creationis animae, esse non debuit."

²⁹ *QDA* a.19 co (Robb (trans.), 228; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 353): "Manifestum est ergo quod potentiae partis sensitivae sunt in composito sicut in subiecto; sed sunt ab anima sicut a principio. Destructo igitur corpore, destruuntur potentiae sensitivae, sed remanent in anima sicut in principio. Et hoc est quod alia opinio dicit, quod potentiae sensitivae manent in anima separata solum sicut in radice."

of the soul remain in the soul insofar as the soul is their principle. He sometimes characterizes them as virtually present in the disembodied soul. For instance, he writes,

By contrast, certain of the powers, viz., all the powers of the sentient and nutritive parts of the soul, have the conjoined being as their subject. Now when a subject is destroyed, its accidents cannot remain. Hence, when the conjoined being is corrupted, powers of the sort in question do not remain in actuality but remain only virtually in the soul as in their principle or root. And so the claim made by some, viz., that powers of this sort remain in the soul even after the body is corrupted, is false.³⁰

In this passage Aquinas again rejects the view that the sensitive and nutritive powers could inhere in the separated soul as in a subject, but maintains that the soul continues to serve as their root or principle. It is as if the powers remain in an undeveloped, inchoate way. Because the soul remains their root, if they were to regain a corporeal subject, they would again flow forth from the soul. In its disembodied state, then, the nutritive and sensitive powers are virtually present, but unable to come forth from the soul and actualize as they are meant to.

In *De Spiritualibus Creaturis*, Aquinas writes,

As to the fifth it must be said that no part has the perfection of a nature, when separated from the whole. And hence the soul, since it is a part of human nature, does not have the perfection of its own nature, save in union with the body. This is clear from the following fact: that there are virtually in this soul certain powers that flow from it which are not acts of corporeal organs, inasmuch as it exceeds its proportion to the body; and again, that there are powers that flow from it which are the acts of organs, inasmuch as can be produced from bodily matter. Nor is a thing perfect in its own nature unless what is virtually contained in it can be actually brought out. And hence the soul, although it can exist and understand when separated from the body, nevertheless does not have the perfection of its own nature when it is separated from the body...³¹

³⁰ *ST I.77.8 co* (Freddoso (trans.), 63; Leonine V, 249): “Quaedam vero potentiae sunt in coniuncto sicut in subiecto, sicut omnes potentiae sensitivae partis et nutritivae. Destructo autem subiecto, non potest accidens remanere. Unde, corrupto coniuncto, non manent huiusmodi potentiae actu; sed virtute tantum manent in anima, sicut in principio vel radice. Et sic falsum est, quod quidam dicunt huiusmodi potentias in anima remanere etiam corpore corrupto.”

³¹ *DSC a.1 ad 5* (FitzPatrick (trans.), slightly modified, 37; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 371): “Ad quintum dicendum quod nulla pars habet perfectionem naturae separata a toto. Unde anima, cum sit pars humanae naturae, non habet perfectionem suae naturae nisi in unione ad corpus. Quod patet ex hoc quod in virtute ipsius animae est quod fluant ab ea quaedam potentiae quae non sunt actus organorum corporalium, secundum quod excedit corporis proportionem; et iterum quod fluant ab ea potentiae quae sunt actus organorum, in quantum potest contingi a materia

In this passage Aquinas tells us that a thing cannot be perfect in its nature unless what is virtually contained in it is actualized. Since the separated soul is incapable of informing matter, the powers that require corporeal organs for instruments cannot be actualized. Many of the powers in it cannot flow forth as they ought. The disembodied soul is stunted in regards to its role as an actuality, not because of a change in its own nature or some failure on its part, but due to the deficiency of matter. This prevents the soul from being perfect in its nature as a form and explains why the soul and body make something perfect in a nature when united.

For a thing to be complete in a specific nature, it must possess those powers that are essential to its nature and that flow from its substantial form. The intellectual soul, *qua* subsistent thing, is existentially complete, yet it fails to be specifically complete because it is only a part of the whole of which it is meant to be the actuality. It cannot be the actuality of a thing according to all the essential features of which it is the principle because many of the powers required can exist only in a corporeal subject. As a result, the separated soul *qua* actuality is unable to fulfill its complete role as a substantial form.

When the soul is in its separated state, it is essentially incomplete *qua* formal principle because it is unable to actualize its subject according to all the principles that flow from it. Furthermore, it is incomplete *qua* subsistent thing because it fails to possess all the essential powers called for by the kind of substantial form that actualizes it. So it is neither complete in the specific nature of the human being nor in some other specific nature, when considered in itself. Only when the soul is united to matter as the actuality of the body is the result

corporali. Non est autem aliquid perfectum in sua natura, nisi actu explicari possit quod in eo virtute continetur. Unde anima, licet possit esse et intelligere a corpore separata, tamen non habet perfectionem suae naturae cum est separata a corpore ...”

something that possesses the full range of powers in its substantial form and is, thus, specifically complete.

Moreover, we can appeal to considerations from the previous section to explain why the human soul is the kind of thing with the roots of intellective as well as sensitive and nutritive powers. Because human beings are by nature designed to understand universals from what is singular and material, it is fitting that their substantial forms possess the requisite corporeal principles. The natural and optimal operation of the human intellective capacities accounts for why the human substantial form is the source or root of nutritive and sensitive powers in addition to the intellectual. Because the human intellect is the lowest of the intellects and is thus naturally suited to understand from material things, it is fitting for it to be part of a substance that has the sophisticated sensory capacities required to produce phantasms from which the agent intellect can abstract.

4.5 A Shared Act of Existence

Aquinas' second central defense of human unity appeals to the fact that the soul and body share a common act of existence.³² In *Quaestiones De Anima* he writes,

Although a soul has a complete act of existence, [*anima habeat esse completum*] it does not follow that its body is accidentally united to it: both because that identical act of existence which belongs to the soul is communicated to its body in order that there might be one act of existence for the whole composite...³³

Aquinas claims that soul and body are not necessarily united accidentally, despite the soul's complete act of existence, because the very same act of existence of the soul is communicated to the body. Since the soul is its own principle of *esse*, it communicates the *esse* by which it

³² See Klima (2007, 98) for a discussion of the relationship between substantial form, composite, and the act of existence.

³³ *QDA* a.1 ad.1 (Robb (trans.), 49; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 284): “Ad primum ergo dicendum quod licet anima habeat esse completum non tamen sequitur quod corpus ei accidentaliter uniat; tum quia illud idem esse quod est animae communicat corpori, ut sit unum esse totius compositi”

itself subsists to matter so as to form the body. Not only does this preserve the possibility of an unqualified union between body and soul, it in fact entails it. For Aquinas, *esse*, a thing's act of existence is bestowed by substantial form. Things actualized by a single substantial form will be endowed with a single act of existence and form an unqualified unity. This is how all substantial forms unify the composites they inform. Given the essential powers that flow from it, the human substantial form is the sort of thing that calls for both corporeal and incorporeal human parts. Yet the *esse* it bestows to these parts is numerically one, just as the being of the different parts of the human body is numerically one. All of the various body parts and the subsistent soul share an act of being that unifies them into a single substance.

We might worry, however, that a single act of existence should entail that the being that possesses it is generated, exists, and is corrupted as a whole. This of course does not happen in the case of the human being because of the soul's incorruptibility. The fact that one thing remains in existence after the corruption of another normally serves as a strong indication that the two things were actualized by distinct substantial forms and could therefore at most form an accidental unity. However, in the case of the human being, the unique nature of the human soul prevents its corruption, while the matter that composes its corporeal body remains subject to corruption. The *esse* communicated to matter cannot remain in it perpetually and, yet, because the principle of the matter's *esse* is also a partial subject of it, the soul cannot cease to possess that *esse*. The soul's incorporeity ensures that it must survive the corruption of the body. The matter falls away, and so the *esse* recedes from matter but it cannot recede from the soul, so it does not. This is not because the soul and body each possess their own act of being, but is a result of the corruptible nature of material substance and the incorruptible nature of the subsistent soul.

4.6 Human Beings in Aquinas' Hierarchy of Being

Within Aquinas' metaphysical system, humans are clearly unique. Aquinas describes the human soul as "constituted on the boundary line between the corporeal and separate substances."³⁴ The human soul is the actuality of a substance that is partly corporeal and partly incorporeal. Moreover, as the incorporeal part, the soul itself is incorruptible. While this metaphysical nature is odd, Aquinas' account of human nature is not *ad hoc*.³⁵ Over the last three chapters we have seen how he argues for it in a principled way. He uses philosophical reasoning and commitments to establish the incorruptibility of the soul.³⁶ The nature of the objects of our intellectual cognition demands an incorporeal intellectual principle. This in turn entails the subsistence of the soul, and the soul's subsistence coupled with its status as form entails its incorruptibility. The unique status of the human being, ontologically speaking, stems from its intellectual capacity.

Yet the human's status as the lowest of the intellectual substances requires that it glean understanding through abstraction from material things. This places the human being on the borderline between the intellectual and corporeal realms. Aquinas is committed to the view that every possible nature exists, and that this consists in the perfection of the universe. He writes,

³⁴ *QDA* a.1 co (Robb (trans.), 48; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 284): "manifestum est quod ipsa est in confinio corporalium et separatarum substantiarum constituta."

³⁵ Abel (1995, 233) worries that Aquinas' account of the shared act of existence is an *ad hoc* attempt to defend the soul's dual status as form and substance. Abel fails to appreciate how Aquinas' account of the shared act of existence between the form and the body follows naturally from his account of human nature more generally. As we have seen, the human being is capable of both rational and sensitive and nutritive operations. It is fitting that the human being should have this range of essential operations given that the rational powers are the lowest of all intellectual powers and naturally suited to reach intellectual cognition through sense experience. As such, the substantial form of the human being must be the principle *quo* of both incorporeal and corporeal parts. Given that, the notion that the soul communicates its *esse* to matter to constitute the body seems considerably less *ad hoc*.

³⁶ It is important to Aquinas to offer an account of human nature that entails the incorruptibility of the human soul thereby accounting for the possibility of the human after-life. This makes Aquinas' project ambitious and interesting. This emphasis on providing a philosophical defense of theological truths is sometimes overlooked in the secondary literature. For instance Jason Eberl (2004) appeals to God's creation of the rational soul to explain the soul's status as something *per se*. But this explanation downplays a major part of Aquinas' project and leaves unstated the fundamental rationale behind the soul's subsistence. Indeed, the reason God must create each soul is precisely because the soul must exist *per se* because of its intellectual operation. (See *ST* I.90.2 co.)

For the perfection of the universe seems to be such that it does not lack any nature which can possibly exist, and this is why [Genesis I] each thing is said to be good, and all things together exceedingly good.³⁷

Since the universe does not lack any possible nature, there is a fullness of being. Every rung on the ladder of existence is filled. Given that there are corporeal beings and intellective ones, it is fitting that there should be a being that is both corporeal and intellective. Moreover, because the human being straddles these realms we should not be troubled or surprised that the human case is metaphysically unique. Instead we should expect the human being to resemble God and the angels in some ways, and resemble material substances in others. This is precisely what we find.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have considered the final unique characteristic that Aquinas attributes to the rational soul, namely, incorruptibility. The soul's incorruptibility is a direct result of its status as a subsistent substantial form. Although the soul cannot cease to exist with the corruption of the body, in its separated state it remains incomplete in a specific nature. Only when the soul serves as the principle *quo* of the human body does it fulfill its role as the actuality of the human being and constitute something specifically complete in human nature. Moreover, the soul communicates the act of being in which it subsists to matter so as to form the human body. So soul and body, though both subsistent, are unqualifiedly unified, just as the various parts of a body are united to form something *unum simpliciter*. The human being is ontologically unique and we should expect it to be, given its position in the universe and yet, Aquinas' criteria for substantial unity apply to it in the same way that it applies to every other created substance.

³⁷ DSC a.5 co (FitzPatrick (trans.), 69; Marietti 9th rev. ed., 389): "Talis enim videtur esse universi perfectio, ut non desit ei aliqua natura quam possibile sit esse; propter quod singula dicuntur bona, omnia autem simul valde bona."

Chapter 5: Aristotelian Argument for the Hylomorphic Union of Soul and Body.¹

In *Summa Theologiae* I.76.1 Aquinas devotes a lengthy article to the nature of the soul's union with the body. In the first part of the *respondeo*, he offers an argument, which he adapts from Aristotle's *De Anima* II.2, to show that the rational soul is the substantial form of the human body.² Naturally Aquinas' version bears a strong resemblance to the relevant passage from the *De Anima* on which it is based. Aquinas employs Aristotle's central premises, (1) that a thing's first principle of operation is its form, and (2) that the soul is the first principle of operation for the body. Moreover he uses Aristotle's examples to support and illustrate these premises. These similarities have contributed to the notion that Aquinas' version is nothing more than a repetition of Aristotle's argument. For instance, Pasnau characterizes Aquinas' version as a mere recitation of Aristotle,³ and describes it as "following *De Anima* II.2 almost line for line..."⁴ Aquinas' argument, while deeply Aristotelian, does not follow *De Anima* II.2 line for line, as we will see.

Aquinas supplements Aristotle's argument by providing an additional line of argument as justification for the first premise. In this additional line of reasoning, he appeals to the *in-act* principle, which was introduced in Chapter 3, to argue that a thing's principle of operation is a form in it. The *in-act* principle has roots in the work of Aristotle but is not explicitly used by him. However Aquinas' addition is not merely of interest because it marks a textual departure from the work of Aristotle. I argue that Aquinas' appeal to the *in-act*

¹ Portions of this chapter appear in Fisher (2017), "Aquinas on Hylomorphism and the *In-Act* Principle," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, DOI: 10.1080/09608788.2017.1300571.

² Although in *ST* I.76.1 Aquinas does not explicitly conclude that the rational soul is the *substantial* form of the body, in later articles, Aquinas explicitly states that he has already shown that the soul is the *substantial* form of the body. For instance, in *ST* I.76.4 co (Freddoso (trans.), 34; Leonine V, 223): "However, if, as we have already claimed above (a. 1), the intellective soul is united to the body as its substantial form, then it is impossible for any other substantial form besides it to be found in a man. [Sed si anima intellectiva unitur corpori ut forma substantialis, sicut supra iam diximus, impossibile est quod aliqua alia forma substantialis praeter eam inveniatur in homine.]" See also *ST* I.76.6 co and *ST* I.76.7 co. So it is clear that we ought to understand Aquinas' conclusion as affirming that the soul is the substantial form of the human body.

³ See Pasnau (2002a, 74).

⁴ See Pasnau (2002b, 241).

principle renders his argument incompatible with Averroes' account of the rational soul. Because of the way Aquinas understands the *in-act* principle, he takes it to be incompatible with the idea that a created agent could engage in an operation without possessing a formal power by which it operates. As Aquinas sees it this is precisely what Averroes attempts to do with respect to human understanding. So Aquinas' *in-act* principle serves as a central presupposition within his metaphysical framework that motivates his critique of Averroes. Through its examination we are better able to understand Aquinas' disagreement with Averroes.

Although Aquinas' argument in *ST I.76.1* has received little attention in the literature, likely because of its strong similarities to Aristotle, his conclusion, or rather the way he articulates it, has been a topic of considerable debate.⁵ Aquinas' premises tend toward the conclusion that the rational *soul* is the form of the body, and yet in his conclusion he affirms that the *intellect* is the form of the body. This is problematic because Aquinas distinguishes between the intellectual soul and the intellectual powers of the soul and denies that the intellectual powers are the actuality of any body. In the second half of this chapter I evaluate different interpretive solutions to this problem and consider how Aquinas conceives of the relationship between the intellectual powers and the body.

This chapter has eight sections. I begin §5.1 by presenting the passage that Aquinas identifies as Aristotle's demonstration in *De Anima II.2* along with Aquinas' relevant commentary. By considering Aristotle's argument we can appreciate the departures from *De Anima II.2* involved in Aquinas' version. In section §5.2 I present the first half of Aquinas' version of the argument in *ST I.76.1*. This first part of the argument contains his additional

⁵ See Bazan (1974; 1981), Lee (2006), McInerny (1993, 206), and Pasnau (2002b, 240) for different accounts of how to reconcile Aquinas' expression of his conclusion with his account of the soul and its powers. I discuss this interpretative problem and their views concerning it in §5.5. These authors, however, do not undertake a detailed examination of the argument itself.

justification for the first premise with his appeal to the *in-act* principle. In §5.3 I consider the second half of Aquinas' argument, where he returns to the specific case of the rational soul. Aquinas argues that the soul's role as the principle by which the human being performs its vital operations shows that it must be the form of the human body. In §5.4 I consider how the *in-act* principle applies in the cases of sensation and intellectual cognition. Since these are operations that are perfections of the agent and not a patient, the principle applies somewhat differently. Nevertheless the principle must apply for Aquinas' argument to succeed. In §5.5 I argue that his version of the argument reveals his anti-Averroist agenda. In §5.6 I discuss and evaluate interpretative options offered in the secondary literature that attempt to account for Aquinas' claim that the intellect or intellectual soul is the form of the body. In §5.7 I argue that we ought to read Aquinas' conclusion as concerning the intellectual soul, not the intellectual power of the soul. Lastly, in §5.8 I propose an additional consideration that may contribute to Aquinas' tendency to use the term 'intellect' to apply to both the intellectual soul and the intellectual power.

5.1 Aristotle's Argument in *De Anima* II.2

Aquinas adapts his central positive argument for the hylomorphic union of body and intellectual soul from Aristotle's *De Anima* II.2. In *De Anima* II.1, Aristotle provides a general definition of soul as the actuality of a body having life potentially.⁶ In *De Anima* II.2 he elaborates on this definition and affirms that the soul is related to the body as its form.

Aquinas identifies the following passage as Aristotle's demonstration for this conclusion,

That by means of which we live and perceive is so spoken of in two ways, as is that by means of which we know (we so speak in the one case of knowledge, in the other of soul, for by means of each of these we say we know.) Similarly, we are healthy in the first place by means of health and in the second by means of a part of the body or even the whole. Now, of these knowledge and health are

⁶ See Aristotle, *De Anima* II.1 [412a15-21].

shape and a kind of form and principle, and as it were activity of the recipient, in the one case of that which is capable of knowing, in the other of that which is capable of health (for the activity of those things which are capable of acting appears to take place in that which is affected and disposed). Now the soul is in the primary way that by means of which we live, perceive, and think. Hence it will be a kind of principle and form, and not matter or subject.⁷

Aristotle begins by noting that there are two meanings for the phrase “that by which we live and have sensation.” He likens this to the phrase “that by which we know”, which he takes to refer to either the soul or to knowledge depending on which of the two meanings of “that by which” is used. Although both the soul and knowledge can be called “that by which” we know, knowledge is “that by which” we know primarily and the soul is “that by which” we know secondarily. Knowledge has priority over the soul because in order to know the soul must receive knowledge. Aristotle then claims that that by which we know in the prior sense is the actuality or *ratio* of that by which we know in the secondary sense. In contrast, that by which we know in the secondary sense serves as the matter or substratum receptive of the form. Presumably this generalizes so that, of the two candidate references for “that by which we live and have sensation,” the prior serves as the form or principle of the posterior. This allows Aristotle to conclude that the soul, which is the first principle by which we live and have sensation, is the principle or form of the body.⁸

In the *Commentary on the De Anima*, Aquinas presents the general moves of this demonstration as follows:

In connection with the first he introduces a demonstration of the following sort: when there are two things, both of which we speak of as *being* something or as *doing* something, then one of them—the one that is first—serves as the form, whereas the other serves as the matter. Soul, however, is the first thing through which we live, although we live through soul and body. Therefore soul is the form of a living body. And this is the definition of the soul introduced earlier: that soul is the first actuality of a physical body potentially having life

⁷ Aristotle, *De Anima* II.2 414a4-13 (Hamlyn (trans.), 13-14).

⁸ For discussion of Aquinas' interpretation of Aristotle's characterization of the soul as that by which we live, see Bledsoe (1973).

[II.1.412a27-28]. It is clear, however, that the medium for this demonstration is a certain definition of soul—namely, that soul is the first thing through which we live.⁹

Aquinas begins with the claim that there are two principles of life, one formal and one material. He identifies the prior of the two as the formal one. Although the body and the soul are principles of life, the soul is prior. So he takes Aristotle to conclude that the soul, as prior, is the formal principle. As Aquinas notes, Aristotle’s demonstration relies on the definition of the soul as the first principle of life of a body that is potentially alive.

After this initial gloss, Aquinas offers a more detailed examination of Aristotle’s argument. Aquinas writes,

In connection with this demonstration Aristotle does four things. First, he introduces the major premise, saying that that through which we live and sense is spoken of in two ways (viz., in one way as form and in another way as matter) just as that through which we know is also spoken of in two ways (for there are two things through which we are said to know, knowledge and soul). Likewise that through which we are restored to health is spoken of with regard to two things, one of which is health, whereas the other is some part of the body or even the whole body. In both cases one serves as form whereas the other serves as matter... Second, beginning at whereas soul is this, etc., Aristotle introduces the minor premise. He says that soul is the first thing through which we live, sense, are moved, and intellectually cognize. And these four [operations] refer to the four kinds of life to which he referred earlier. For living is traced back to the nutritional principle, since he said earlier that “it is on account of this principle that living is present in all living things.” It is important to know, however, that although we are said to be healthy through health and body, nevertheless health is the first thing through which we are said to be healthy. For we are said to be healthy through our body only insofar as it has health. And likewise knowledge is the first thing through which we are said to be knowing: for we are said to be knowing through soul only insofar as it has knowledge. Likewise, too, we are said to be living through body only insofar as it has soul. This is the reason why he says here that soul is the first

⁹ *InDA* II.4 [271] (Pasnau (trans.), 146; Leonine XLV.1, 85): “Duorum, quorum utroque dicimur esse aliquid aut operari, unum, scilicet quod primum est, est quasi forma, et aliud quasi materia. Sed anima est primum quo vivimus, cum tamen vivamus anima et corpore: ergo anima est forma corporis viventis. Et haec est definitio superius de anima posita, quod anima est actus primus physici corporis potentia vitam habentis. Manifestum est autem, quod medium huius demonstrationis est quaedam definitio animae, scilicet anima est quo vivimus primum.”

thing through which we live, sense etc.¹⁰

In this passage Aquinas describes two ways that a thing may be called “that by which”, that is, a principle *quo*. One of these applies to formal principles *quo*, the other to material principles *quo*. Material principles are principles “by which” insofar as they serve as the subjects of the formal principles.¹¹ The soul is that by which we understand only insofar as it is the subject of knowledge (i.e., an intelligible form).¹² The body is that by which we are healthy only insofar as it is a subject of the form of health. In this way, knowledge and health are prior to the soul and the body respectively because the soul and body can only be called principles “by which” when they possess the formal principles. Likewise both the soul and body can be called “that by which we live.” But the body is only called “that by which” we live insofar as it is the subject of soul. So the soul is the prior of the two and must be related to the body as its form.

¹⁰ *InDA* II.4 [272-273] (Pasnau (trans.), 147; Leonine XLV.1, 85): “Circa hanc autem demonstrationem quatuor facit. Primo ponit maiorem; dicens, quod quo vivimus et sentimus dicitur dupliciter: scilicet altero, sicut forma, et altero sicut materia. Sicut et quo scimus dicitur dupliciter. Duobus enim dicimur scire: quorum unum est scientia, et aliud est anima. Et similiter quo sanamur dicitur de duobus: quorum unum est sanitas, et aliud est aliqua pars corporis, vel etiam totum corpus. Utrobique autem unum est quasi forma, et aliud quasi materia... Secundo ibi, anima autem hoc, ponit minorem propositionem: et dicit, quod anima est primum quo et vivimus, et sentimus, et movemur, et intelligimus. Et referuntur haec quatuor ad quatuor genera vitae de quibus superius fecerat mentionem. Vivere enim refert ad principium vegetativum, quia superius dixerat, quod vivere propter hoc principium inest omnibus viventibus. Sciendum est autem, quod quamvis sanitate et corpore dicamur esse sani, tamen sanitas est primum quo sani dicimur esse. Non enim dicimur esse sani corpore nisi inquantum habet sanitatem. Et similiter scientia est primum quo dicimur esse scientes, quia anima non dicimur esse scientes nisi inquantum habet scientiam. Similiter etiam et corpore non dicimur esse viventes, nisi inquantum habet animam: et propter hoc, hic dicitur, quod anima est primum quo vivimus, sentimus, et cetera. Tertio ibi, quare ratio quaedam, ponit conclusionem, et pendet hucusque constructio ab illo loco quoniam autem quo vivimus et cetera. Concludit ergo ex praedictis, quod anima se habet ut ratio et species, et non sicut materia et subiectum.”

¹¹ In his own work, Aquinas does not typically call things material principles *quo*. Rather, the material principles *quo* are simply the *per se* operators or existents. They are the subjects that exist or operate by means of a formal principle *quo*. Most often, when Aquinas calls something ‘that by which’ he means that it is a formal principle *quo*, but this is not always the case. For instance, when he says that the man sees by means of his eye (see *ST* I.75.2 ad 2). In this case, Aquinas has in mind a material/subject-like principle *quo*. In this case as well, the material principle *quo* corresponds to the *per se* operator.

¹² Here Aquinas follows Aristotle's example of the soul as the material, or better, the subject-like principle by which we understand. This may initially seem puzzling because in his argument Aquinas will argue that the soul is the first *formal* principle by which we understand. In his view the soul is both a formal and a material principle by which we understand. Insofar as the soul is the subject of the intellective powers of the possible intellect and actualized by it, the soul is in potency to intelligible forms through which it understands. In this sense the soul is a material or subject-like principle by which we understand. It understands insofar as it is the subject of an intelligible form, that is, an intelligible *species*. When we consider the soul as the source of the powers of the soul, including the intellective, the soul is a remote formal principle by which we understand. This is the claim that Aquinas relies on to establish that the soul is the form of the body.

5.2 Aquinas' Argument for the Intellectual Soul as Form of the Body

Modeling his argument for hylomorphism on Aristotle's passage in *De Anima* II.2, Aquinas argues that the intellectual soul must be the substantial form of the body because it is the first principle of life. He begins,

One must claim that the intellect, which is the principle of an intellectual operation is the form of the human body. For that by which something first operates is the form of that to which the operation is attributed. For instance, that by which the body is first made healthy is health, and that by which the soul first knows is knowledge; hence, health is a form belonging to the body, and knowledge is a form belonging to the soul. The reason for this is that nothing acts except insofar as it is in act, and so that by which it is in act is that by which it acts.¹³

Initially Aquinas' version of the argument reads much like Aristotle's. The argument involves central premises similar to those found in the *De Anima* passage, namely,

- (P1) That by which something first operates is a form for the operator.¹⁴
- (P2) The intellectual soul is that by which we first operate (first perform vital works).

From these Aquinas concludes that the intellectual principle or soul is united to the human body as its form. He illustrates his first premise using Aristotle's examples of knowledge and health. But Aquinas offers a further argument for (P1). He writes, "The reason for this is that

¹³ *ST* I.76.1 co (Freddoso (trans.), slightly modified, 19-20; Leonine V, 208): "Respondeo dicendum quod necesse est dicere quod intellectus, qui est intellectualis operationis principium, sit humani corporis forma. Illud enim quo primo aliquid operatur, est forma eius cui operatio attribuitur, sicut quo primo sanatur corpus, est sanitas, et quo primo scit anima, est scientia; unde sanitas est forma corporis, et scientia animae. Et huius ratio est, quia nihil agit nisi secundum quod est actu, unde quo aliquid est actu, eo agit."

¹⁴ Aquinas qualifies the type of principle in (P1) to that by which something first [*primo*] operates. Aristotle's version involves this qualification as well. However Aristotle begins by stating that whenever there are two operative principles, one is prior and the other posterior, and the prior is related to the posterior as form or species to a subject. (See Aristotle, *De Anima* II.2, quoted on 3). The prior principle's presence in the second accounts for the second's status as a principle of operation. Aquinas does not distinguish between the prior and posterior of two principles, so it is not immediately clear what he means by '*primo*.' He may have in mind the priority of a most basic principle. Since an agent could operate by means of multiple principles to carry out a particular action, that by which something first operates might pick out the very first of these. This interpretation is supported by passages later in *Summa Theologiae* where Aquinas describes the soul as a remote or originating principle of operation. (See *ST* I.77.1 ad 4.) It should be noted that Aquinas uses very similar premises to those in *ST* I.76.1 to argue that the intellectual power (the proximate principle of intellectual activity) is a form in the human being.

nothing acts except insofar as it is in act; and so that by which it is in act *is* that by which it acts.”¹⁵ This justification for (P1) involves three steps, two explicit and one tacit:

- (a) Nothing acts except insofar as it is in act.
- (b) That by which a thing is in act is that by which it acts.
- (c) Each thing is in act through its form. (Tacit premise)

Claim (a) is a version of the *in-act* principle that we saw in Chapter 3. Here Aquinas uses it to show that (created) agents act or operate by means of their forms. As we saw in Chapter 3, the *in-act* principle places a restriction on agents, namely, that they exist as actual in the way that corresponds with their operation. For instance, a thing must be actually hot in order to heat something else. This is so because agents act by means of their actualities. Something must be in act to operate because it operates through its actuality just as the hot thing heats another through its own heat.

In *ST* I.76.1 Aquinas moves from the *in-act* principle to claim (b), *that by which a thing is in act is that by which it operates*. This follows from the *in-act* principle. Since agents act through their actualities, the principle by which a thing is in act is the principle by which they will operate. The source of their actuality is also the principle of their operation. This secures the numerical identity between that by which a thing is in act and that by which it operates called for in (b).

To reach Aquinas’ desired conclusion, namely, *that by which a thing operates is its form*, however, we must supply (c), *that by which something is in act is its form* to (a) and (b). Claim (c), as we have already seen, also follows from the *in-act* principle. For Aquinas, material substances are hyломorphic composites of form and matter. Form corresponds to act and matter to potency. Form is, therefore, that by which a material composite is in act. Thus,

¹⁵ *ST* I.76.1 co (Freddoso (trans.), slightly modified, 20; Leonine V, 208): “...quia nihil agit nisi secundum quod est actu, unde quo aliquid est actu, eo agit.”

in accordance with the *in-act* principle, material composites act by means of their forms.¹⁶ In immaterial substances too, form is a principle of *esse* and therefore a principle of a thing's existing as it does. So, incorporeal substances also act by means of their forms. God alone is pure act and accordingly acts with his whole self and has no need of formal principles of operation.

Although (c) is tacit in *ST* I.76.1, Aquinas explicitly employs it in related arguments, most notably, in his arguments for the claim that the possible intellect must be a form in the human being.¹⁷ For instance in *De Spiritualibus Creaturis*, Aquinas writes,

Now no activity belongs to any given thing except through some form which exists in the thing itself, either a substantial or an accidental form, because nothing acts or operates except insofar as it is in act. Now each individual thing is in act through some form, either substantial or accidental, since a form is an act; thus, for instance, fire is actually fire through "fireness," and actually hot through heat. Accordingly, it must be the case that the principle of that activity which is understanding should be in "this man" in the way of a form.¹⁸

Here Aquinas maintains that every operation is carried out through some form, either substantial or accidental, because form is that through which the agent is in act. Significantly, he specifies that the form by which an agent acts must be a form that inheres in the agent. He reaffirms this in his *Commentary on the De Anima* where he argues against Averroes' view that the intellective power (i.e., the possible intellect) exists separately from human knowers.

He writes,

¹⁶ See for instance, *SCG* III.69 [26] (Bourke (trans.), 234; Leonine XIII, 201): "For it is clear that a body cannot act in its entirety, since it is composed of matter which is its potential being, and of form which is its act. Indeed, each thing acts insofar as it is in act. And because of this, every body acts in accord with its form; and related to it is another body, namely, the patient, which is a subject by virtue of its matter, because its matter is in potency to the form of the agent. [Manifestum est enim quod corpus non potest agere se toto, cum sit compositum ex materia, quae est ens in potentia, et ex forma, quae est actus: agit enim unumquodque secundum quod est actu. Et propter hoc omne corpus agit secundum suam formam.]"

¹⁷ See *ST* III.75.4 co; *SCG* II.47 [4].

¹⁸ *DSC* a.2 co, (FitzPatrick (trans.), slightly modified, 33; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 375): "Nulla autem operatio convenit alicui nisi per aliquam formam in ipso existentem, vel substantialem vel accidentalem; quia nihil agit aut operatur nisi secundum quod est actu. Est autem unumquodque actu per formam aliquam vel substantialem vel accidentalem, cum forma sit actus; sicut ignis est actu ignis per igneitatem, actu calidus per calorem. Oportet igitur principium huius operationis quod est intelligere, formaliter inesse huic homini." See *SCG* II.16 [6]; *SCG* II.59 [12]; *DP* q.3 a.1 co; and *DUI* ch.3.

Now that by which something operates as by an active principle can be separated in existence from that which operates—e.g., if we say that the bailiff operates by the king because the king moves him to operate. But it is impossible for that by which something operates *formally* to be separated from it in existence. That is so because something acts only insofar as it is in actuality. Therefore, something operates formally by something as it is made actual by it. But a thing is not made actually existent by anything if it is separated from it in existence. That is why it is impossible that that by which something acts formally be separated from it in existence. It is impossible, therefore, that the possible intellect by which a human being has intellectual cognition—sometimes potentially, to be sure, but other times actually—be separated from that human being in existence.¹⁹

Although this argument concludes that the possible intellect is in the human being as a form rather than that the rational soul is the form of the human body, the claims Aquinas infers from the *in-act* principle are still relevant. Here he insists that the principle by which something operates formally cannot exist apart from the operator. If it did, it could not appropriately render the agent in act so that it could operate. Although an agent may operate by means of some principles that are separate from them in existence, as the bailiff and the king, whatever additional operative principles an agent might employ, there must also be a form inhering in it by which it operates.²⁰ Aquinas' remarks here further support the notion that, as he understands the *in-act* principle, only a form that inheres in its subject can render it in act so that it might operate. Thus, when Aquinas asserts P1, *that by which a thing first operates is a form*, he has in mind an inherent form, a form that exists in the subject and accounts for the subject's existence in some way. This consideration, as I discuss in §5.5 is a source of anti-Averroism in Aquinas' version of the argument.

¹⁹ *InDA* III.7 [690] (Pasnau (trans.), slightly modified, 349; Leonine XLV.1, 206): “Illud autem, quo aliquid operatur, sicut activo principio, potest secundum esse separari ab eo quod operatur: ut si dicamus, quod balivus operatur per regem, quia rex movet eum ad operandum. Sed impossibile est illud, quo aliquid operatur formaliter, separari ab eo secundum esse. Quod ideo est, quia nihil agit nisi secundum quod est actu. Sic igitur aliquid formaliter operatur per aliquid, si cum eo sit actu. Non autem fit aliquid cum aliquo ens actu, si sit separatum ab eo secundum esse. Unde impossibile est quod illud, quo aliquid agit formaliter, sit separatum ab eo secundum esse.”

²⁰ In his discussion of Aquinas' critique of Averroes, Richard Taylor (2009, 190) calls this latter claim the *principle of intrinsic formal cause*, which he articulates as ‘nothing carries out an activity except through some power which is formally in itself.’ Taylor locates the *principle of intrinsic formal cause* at the center of Aquinas' criticisms of Averroes. In Chapter 6 I consider how the *in-act* principle contributes to Aquinas' disagreement with Averroes regarding the relationship between the body and intellectual power as the source of the *principle of intrinsic formal cause*.

5.3 The Soul as the Principle of Vital Operation

At this point in *ST I.76.1*, Aquinas takes himself to have established P1. He now returns to the specific case of the human soul. He writes,

But it is obvious that the soul is that by which the body is first alive. And since life is made manifest by different operations within the different grades of living things, the soul is that by which we perform each of these vital works. For instance, the soul is that by which we first assimilate nourishment, have sensory cognition, and move from place to place; and, similarly, the soul is that by which we first have intellectual understanding.²¹

Aquinas affirms that the soul is that by which the body is first [*primo*] alive. He takes for granted Aristotle's claim that the soul is that by which we first perform our vital operations²² and enumerates the ways that life is manifested in human beings. Since life for humans involves nutritive, sensitive, locomotive, and intellectual operations, as the first principle of life, the soul must also be the first principle of these operations. Although this passage suggests that living just is performing vital operations, it is better thought of as having the capacity for performing vital operations. In *ST I.18.2* Aquinas writes, "For he says (*Ethic ix. 9*) that to live is to sense or to understand—in other words, to have a nature capable of sensation or understanding."²³ So Aquinas clarifies that when Aristotle writes that the *esse* of a living thing is to perform some set of vital operations, this ought to be understood as having the capacity for such actions rather than actually performing them. When we say, "to live as an animal is to sense," we ought to understand it as, "to live as an animal is to have the capacity for sensation." The soul, as a principle of life, is better understood as the principle by which a living thing exists with a certain set of vital capacities.

²¹ *ST I.76.1* co (Freddoso (trans.), slightly modified, 20; Leonine V, 208-209): "Manifestum est autem quod primum quo corpus vivit, est anima. Et cum vita manifestetur secundum diversas operationes in diversis gradibus viventium, id quo primo operamur unumquodque horum operum vitae, est anima, anima enim est primum quo nutrimur, et sentimus, et movemur secundum locum; et similiter quo primo intelligimus."

²² See Aristotle, *De Anima* II.2 [414a4-414a28].

²³ *ST I.18.2* ad 1 (English Dominican Fathers (trans.), bk.1, 253; Leonine IV, 227): "Dicitur enim IX *Ethic.*, quod esse est sentire vel intelligere, idest habere naturam ad sentiendum vel intelligendum."

This reflects Aristotle and Aquinas' account of the soul as the *first actuality* of a body having life potentially.²⁴ Aristotle, and Aquinas following him, distinguishes between first and second actuality with respect to operations or actions. Having a capacity for some operation counts as a first actuality, but this first actuality is ordered toward the actual exercise of that capacity, which is a second actuality. According to Aquinas, actually living involves being in a state of first actuality with respect to vital operations. He writes,

Next, when Aristotle says “Yet this [actuality] is spoken of in two ways,” etc., he explores a second portion of the definition. Actuality, he says, is spoken of in two ways: in one way as knowledge, and in another way as considering (as was explained earlier [118–129]). And it is clear that soul is an actuality like knowledge, because as a result of soul's existence there is both sleep and waking in an animal. Waking, obviously, is analogous to consideration, since just as consideration is the use of knowledge, so waking is the use of one's senses. Sleep, on the other hand, is analogous to dispositional knowledge when someone is not acting in connection with that disposition. For while an animal is asleep, its capacities are at rest.²⁵

In this passage, Aquinas notes that the soul actualizes a living thing both when it is sleeping and waking. When an animal or a human is asleep many of its capacities are inactive. Yet it retains those capacities and it remains an animal or a human even though it is not actually performing all of its vital operations. So a human soul actualizes a human being into the sort of thing that has the capacity for nourishment, sensation, and intellectual cognition. It does not actualize the human being into the sort of thing that is always actually nourishing itself, sensing and intellectually cognizing. The exercise of the vital capacities requires further actualization. This further actualization is, according to Aquinas, carried out by the powers of the soul. Aquinas does not explain this in *ST* I.76.1, but he maintains that the vital operations

²⁴ See *InDA* II.1.

²⁵ *InDA* II.1 [227] (Pasnau (trans.), 125; Leonine XLV.1, 71): “Deinde cum dicit hic autem venatur secundam particulam definitionis: et dicit quod actus dicitur dupliciter: alius, sicut scientia, et alius sicut considerare, ut supra expositum est. Et manifestum est, quod anima est actus sicut scientia, quia in hoc quod anima inest animali et somnus et vigilia. Et vigilia quidem assimilatur considerationi; quia sicut consideratio est usus scientiae, ita vigilia est usus sensuum; sed somnus assimilatur habitui scientiae, quando aliquis secundum ipsum non operatur, in somno enim quiescunt virtutes animales.”

are carried out immediately by means of the powers of the soul. The soul is the remote and originating principle of the operations because it is the source of the formal principles that flow from the soul and inhere in the various organs and parts of the human being responsible for vital operation as their actualities. These formal powers of the soul, therefore, further actualize the human being rendering it in act so that it can operate and serve as the immediate principles by which it operates.

Thus the soul is the first principle of the vital operations because it is the natural source of the powers through which the operations are carried out. It is, therefore, one step removed as a formal principle *quo*. Nevertheless, as the source of the powers of the soul, it is the principle ultimately responsible for the existence of the human being as a creature with the capacity for the complete range of essential human operations. Through its information, the human being receives its essential powers. That is, by the soul, the human being actually exists as a thing with nutritive, sensitive, locomotive, and rational powers. Since the soul accounts for this first state of actuality with respect to essential operation, it is a principle of operation and, as such, must be a form in the human being. Aquinas writes,

Therefore, this principle by which we first have intellectual understanding—regardless of whether it is called the intellect or the intellectual soul—is the form of the body. This is Aristotle’s demonstration in *De Anima* II.²⁶

Having shown that the soul is a principle of operation, including the principle by which we understand, Aquinas concludes that the soul is the form of the body.

5.4 Immanent Action and the *In-Act* Principle

Aquinas argues that the soul is the form of the body because it is the operative principle of sensation, understanding, and nutrition. Accordingly, it must be that by which the human

²⁶ *ST* I.76.1 co (Freddoso (trans.), 20; Leonine V, 209): “Hoc ergo principium quo primo intelligimus, sive dicatur intellectus sive anima intellectiva, est forma corporis. Et haec est demonstratio Aristotelis in II de anima.”

being is in act in the relevant respect to sense, understand, and nourish itself. So the success of his argument depends on the *in-act* principle's application to all operations, including sensation and understanding. However, sensation and understanding differ importantly from Aquinas' paradigm case of heating, in which an actually hot thing actualizes a patient making the patient actually hot. In sensation and understanding the *agent* is actualized, rather than actualizing a patient,²⁷ and the sense organs and possible intellect by which they are carried out receive rather than induce form. So far we have only seen how the *in-act* principle fits into a framework for action where actualized agents induce their forms in others. Because this does not occur in sensation and understanding, it is not immediately clear what it would mean for a sensor or knower to be in act, or why one must be in act in order to operate.

Nevertheless Aquinas explicitly affirms that the *in-act* principle holds in all cases of operation, including ones where the agent is perfected like sensation and intellectual cognition.²⁸ Two considerations may help. The first arises from Aquinas' mechanics of cognition. Sensation and understanding occur through sensible and intelligible *species* received by the relevant cognitive power. These *species* are involved in a two-part actualization of the cognitive powers. By coming to inhere in a cognitive power, their presence renders the power in act with respect to form—the power comes to exist as informed by a *species*. This first state of being in act automatically puts the power into second act, i.e., operation.²⁹ Aquinas writes,

But this necessitation of action by form is different in the case of action that remains in the agent itself, as understanding and willing, and in action which passes into something else, as heating. In the first case, the necessity of the action itself results from the form by which the agent is made actual, because in

²⁷ Actions that remain in the agent as perfections of the agent are often referred to as “immanent actions.” See Miller (1946); Royce (1960); George (2014) for discussions of immanent action in Aquinas.

²⁸ See *DV* q.8 a.6 co.

²⁹ Miller (1946) argues that immanent actions follow on the perfection of the agent in this two step way. First the agent is perfected (as we can see, in the case of intellectual cognition this occurs through the intelligible *species*) and the operation of the intellect follows on this actualization (Miller, 1946, 154).

order for this kind of action to exist, nothing extrinsic, as a terminus for it, is required. Thus, when the sense power is actualized by the sensible species, it necessarily acts; and so, too, does the intellect when it is actualized by the intelligible species. But in the second case, the action's necessity results from the form, so far as the power to act is concerned; if fire is hot, it necessarily has the power of heating, yet it need not heat, for something extrinsic may prevent it.³⁰

Here Aquinas tells us that the operation of the sensitive and intellective powers follows on their actualization through the reception of form. A *species* received in one of these powers renders the agent in act and, in the case of cognitive powers, this necessarily puts the agent into a state of operation. Thus the powers of intellect and sense nicely illustrate Aquinas' pair of principles regarding action and passion: they receive the forms through which they cognize insofar as they are in potency, yet they act (i.e., cognize) insofar as they are in act through the presence of such a form.

Second, while the senses and the intellect only cognize insofar as they exist perfected by a *species*, they can only be perfected by such a form because they exist as naturally suited to receive it. Existing with eyes or an intellect is a way of being in act that renders one appropriately in potency to the relevant *species*. In order to be in potency to the forms by which a thing operates, it must exist as actually in potency to the relevant forms. So the *in-act* principle again applies, albeit one step removed. A cognitive power must actually be in potency to the *species* by means of which it cognizes. That by which the operator exists as actually in potency to the forms by which it operates will also be a form in it that accounts for its existing in that way.

³⁰ SCG II.30 [14] (Anderson (trans.), 88-89; Leonine XIII, 339): "Differenter tamen hoc accidit in actione quae in ipso agente manet, sicut intelligere et velle; et in actione quae in alterum transit, sicut calefacere. Nam in primo genere actionis, sequitur ex forma per quam agens fit actu, necessitas actionis ipsius: quia ad eius esse nihil extrinsecum requiritur in quod actio terminetur. Cum enim sensus fuerit factus in actu per speciem sensibilem, necesse est ipsum sentire; et similiter cum intellectus est in actu per speciem intelligibilem. In secundo autem genere actionis, sequitur ex forma necessitas actionis quantum ad virtutem agendi: si enim ignis sit calidus, necessarium est ipsum habere virtutem calefaciendi, tamen non necesse est ipsum calefacere; eo quod ab extrinseco impedi potest."

This second way of applying the *in-act* principle to perfections of the agent is most helpful for Aquinas' argument in *ST I.76.1*. He needs to show that the *soul*, not just a *species*, is a principle of sensitive and intellective operations that renders the human being appropriately in act. The soul can be this only in the sense that it accounts for the human's being actually in potency to sensible and intelligible *species*—not in the sense that the *species* are operative principles (i.e., as the means by which the cognitive power cognizes its object). As we find in *ST I.77.1*, the soul, for Aquinas, is the source of accidental forms that flow from it and account for the presence of functional eyes and intellect in the human being. Therefore it is the first principle by which the human being actually exists in the appropriate state of potency to intelligible and sensible *species*.

Aquinas argues that the soul must be a form in the body since it is the first principle by which the vital operations are performed. For the body to act or operate, it must be appropriately in act. That is, it must exist with the requisite capacities for operation whether these capacities require a further form for their actualization (as sensation and intellective cognition) or not. Since the soul is the first operative principle, it accounts for the body's existing in such a way. It is, therefore the form and actuality of the human body.

5.5 Anti-Averroism in Aquinas' Argument for Hylomorphism

Aquinas' argument for the soul as form of the body in *ST I.76.1* is not merely a repetition of Aristotle. He develops Aristotle's argument in ways that reflect his more general systematization and integration of the Aristotelian thought into his own metaphysical system. In particular his appeal to the *in-act* principle can help us understand how the claim that the soul is the form of the body is grounded in his broader accounts of potency and act and the metaphysics of creaturely operation. Moreover, Aquinas' version of the argument reflects his anti-Averroist agenda, and in particular, his rejection of Averroes' claim that the principle by

which we understand is not united to the body as its form. This is, in part, a result of Aquinas' appeal to the *in-act* principle, but it is also due to his repeated and explicit characterization of the rational soul as intellective. To see how Aquinas' argument fits within his polemic, it will be useful to articulate the central components of Averroes' account of the intellect and rational soul.

Averroes posits a principle that is in potency to intelligibles, the material intellect, and a principle that makes the intelligibles actually intelligible, the agent intellect.³¹ Unlike for Aquinas, however, these principles are not powers that exist by inhering in individual human beings. Instead, for Averroes each is a separate and unique substance that exists apart from individual human knowers and is used by all. Averroes was led to this account by his interpretation of Aristotle. In *De Anima* III.4 Aristotle argues that the intellect that is in potency must be separate and unmixed to know all things. Averroes took this as a reflection of the universal nature of our intellectual cognition. He reasons as follows: Since humans understand universal notions, the material intellect must be capable of receiving universal forms or intentions without individuating them. Accordingly the intellect cannot be matter, a material form, or a matter-form composite, since as such, it would necessarily individuate any intentions it received. These intentions would then be particular rather than universal in nature. But the universality of intentions is precisely what accounts for their intelligibility. Thus the material intellect must be separate and immaterial in order to preserve the universality of the intentions that come to exist in it.³²

³¹ For Averroes the material intellect is that by which humans understand. In Aquinas, it corresponds to the possible intellect, which is the power in potency to intelligible *species*. Averroes espoused different accounts of the material intellect in his three commentaries on the *De Anima*. See Hyman (1981); Davidson (1986); and Black (1993b) for discussion of his progression of thought. See Taylor (1998; 2004) for further reading on Averroes' account of the material intellect.

³² Aquinas maintains that a *species* of the intelligible object, rather than the object itself exists in the intellect. So he does not recognize the need for a subject of universal intelligible forms. Bazan (1981) discusses how Aquinas' doctrine of intelligible *species* differs from Averroes' account of the intelligible object.

According to Averroes, the material intellect is operationally united to individual human beings through intentions in their imaginations. Human beings acquire sensory information that is stored in the imagination where it is potentially intelligible. The agent intellect unites with the human being to make these intentions actually intelligible so that they can move the material intellect.³³ The actually intelligible intentions then come to exist in the material intellect where they can continue to exist as un-individuated, universal objects of understanding. In this way, the human being is united to the intelligibles that correspond to the intentions in her own imagination because the intentions in her imagination are part of the intelligible in the material intellect. Accordingly, she comes to understand intelligibles specific to her situation. Thus, for Averroes the intellective soul is not the actuality of the body. Instead the intellects that constitute it exist as separate substances. He maintains, therefore, that the intellective soul is only called “soul” equivocally.³⁴ The intellective principles are not powers in the human body (and thus the human being).

In *ST* I.76.1 Aquinas does not simply argue that the soul is the form of the body. His conclusion is more specific—the *intellective* principle, that by which we first understand, is the form of the body. It is not just any soul that serves as the actuality of the human being, it is a rational one, a soul with intellective powers. Indeed, at certain points, he seems to identify the soul with the intellect or intellective power. For instance, at the outset of the argument he writes, “One must claim that the intellect, which is the principle of an intellectual operation is the form of the human body.”³⁵ At the end of his argument he concludes, “Therefore this principle by which we first have intellective understanding—regardless of whether it is called

³³ See Averroes, *Long Commentary on the De Anima* (hereafter *LCDA*) III.5 [410-411]; *LCDA* III.18.

³⁴ See Averroes, *LCDA* II.21.

³⁵ *ST* I.76.1 co (Freddoso (trans.), 20; Leonine V, 208): “Respondeo dicendum quod necesse est dicere quod intellectus, qui est intellectualis operationis principium, sit humani corporis forma.”

the intellect or the intellectual soul—is the form of the body.”³⁶ Clearly, Aquinas means to bring to our attention the intellectual nature of the soul that is united to the human body as its form.

Although Aristotle does identify the soul as “that by which we live, perceive, and think,” he draws our attention to the soul’s role as a formal (that is, a prior) principle of thought only once. Aquinas reiterates the intellectual nature of the form of the body or calls it “intellect” five times in the course of his version. Although Aquinas takes himself to be in agreement with Aristotle that the human soul is the principle of intellectual cognition, he is far keener to emphasize the intellectual nature of the form of the human body. By explicitly emphasizing the rational nature of the soul that is the form of the body, Aquinas draws our attention to his disagreement with the Averroist.³⁷

Aquinas’ additional emphasis on the soul as the principle by which we understand (in addition to that by which we sense, nourish ourselves, and move from place to place) highlights that in Aquinas’ view, there is a single soul that is the source of the full range of our vital operations—including those carried out by means of incorporeal powers. Although Aquinas, too, maintains that the intellectual powers are not the actuality of the body, he affirms that they are powers in the human being and flow from the self-same soul that is the actuality of the body and the source of the nutritive and sensitive powers. By emphasizing the fact that the soul that is the form of the body is an intellectual soul Aquinas distances himself from Averroes. The rational soul is, like nutritive and sensitive souls of plants and animals, the actuality of an organic body having life potentially. Moreover, there is a single soul, which

³⁶ *ST I.76.1 co* (Freddoso (trans.), 20; Leonine V, 209): “Hoc ergo principium quo primo intelligimus, sive dicatur intellectus sive anima intellectualis, est forma corporis.”

³⁷ For discussion of Aquinas’ disagreement with Averroes see Black (1993a; 1993b); Conolly (2007); Dewan (1996); Taylor (2009); Carrasco (2012); Lee (2006). For discussion of his opposition to the rise of Latin Averroism at the University of Paris see Bazan (1974; 1997); Mahoney (1974); Weisheipl (1974); Dales (1995, 113-150).

accounts for the nutritive, sensitive, and rational operations in the human being. The rational soul is not set apart.

Aquinas' additional argument in support of P1 and, in particular, his appeal to the *in-act* principle serves as a second source of anti-Averroism in his general argument forhylomorphism. The *in-act* principle requires that agents be *in act* in order to operate and it tells us that a thing's principle of operation is related to it as a form, a form that inheres in the agent. Only an inherent form can render something appropriately in act so as to operate. So even as the remote principle of operation, if the intellectual soul is that by which the human being first performs its vital operations, including its intellectual operations, it must inhere in the body as its form. Only then can it render the human being the sort of thing with the capacities for nutritive, sensitive, and intellectual operation.

By including his argument for (P1) in the argument for hylomorphism, Aquinas smuggles in the notion that the form by which an agent operates must be a form inhering in the agent. It is, therefore, incompatible with Averroes' claim that the intellectual soul exists apart from human knowers. There must be a formal principle in the human being by which she is capable of understanding. Aquinas not only considers Averroes' position philosophically indefensible, he also rejects it on the grounds that, in his view, it conflicts with the teaching of Aristotle.³⁸ By presenting his version of the argument as Aristotle's, his argument appears not only as support for his own position, but also as evidence that Aristotle himself would have rejected Averroes'.

5.6 The Intellect, Intellectual Soul, and Intellectual Power

As we have seen, in his argument in *ST I.76.1* Aquinas shifts between talk of the intellectual soul and of the intellect and he concludes that the "intellect" is the form of the body. He

³⁸ See for instance *DUI* ch.1; *SCG* II.61.

begins by claiming that the intellect is the form of the body, then states that the soul is the principle by which we perform the vital operations, and concludes that the principle by which we understand, “regardless of whether we call it the intellect or intellectual soul” is the form of the body. This suggests that the intellect and intellectual soul are one and the same.

However, given his distinction between the soul and its powers, we know that for Aquinas the intellect and intellectual soul are not one and the same. It is misleading at best to shift between talk of the intellect, the intellectual principle, and the intellectual soul.

This raises some significant interpretive questions, namely, (1) Does Aquinas identify the intellectual power and intellectual soul?, (2) If not, why does he seem to identify them in his argument?, and (3) Which does he conclude is the form of the body? The intellectual soul? The intellectual power? Both?

Interpreters have offered different answers to these questions. It is generally agreed upon that Aquinas remains committed to the distinction between the intellectual soul and its powers in *ST I.76.1*.³⁹ After all, in the replies to multiple objections in *ST I.76.1* Aquinas distinguishes the intellectual power from the intellectual soul. He uses the distinction to explain how the soul can at once serve as the form of the body while the intellectual powers remain incorporeal in accordance with Aristotle’s claim that the intellect is not mixed with matter.⁴⁰ Pasnau, Ralph McInerny, and Bernardo Carlos Bazan have each offered suggestions as to why Aquinas uses the terminology that he does.

Pasnau suggests that Aquinas is simply loose with his terms throughout the argument because he has yet to distinguish between the soul and its powers (which he does later in the

³⁹ Although Edouard-Henri Weber (1970, 15-25) suggests that Aquinas abandons his distinction. See Lee (2006) for discussion of Weber’s interpretation and its critique by Bazan (1974).

⁴⁰ See *ST I.76.1 ad 1-3*. See Aristotle, *De Anima* III.4.

Summa Theologiae in *ST I.77.1*).⁴¹ According to Pasnau, when Aquinas speaks of the intellectual principle or the principle by which we understand in the course of the argument, he has in mind the intellectual soul, not the intellectual power. Thus his conclusion affirms that the *soul*, not the intellect, is the form of the body.

McInerny notes that Aquinas recognizes that different grades of soul are sometimes denominated by their highest power.⁴² For instance, Aquinas writes,

‘Sense’ is sometimes taken for a power and sometimes for the sentient soul itself, since the sentient soul is denominated by the name of its principal power, viz., the sensory power. Likewise, the intellectual soul is sometimes denominated by the name ‘intellect’ as by its principal power. For instance, *De Anima* 1 says, “The intellect is a certain substance.” And this is also the sense in which Augustine says that the mind is ‘spirit’ or ‘essence.’⁴³

In this passage Aquinas tells us that sometimes the terms “sense” or “intellect” should be understood as referring to the sensitive and intellectual souls respectively since these are the highest powers in the respective souls. McInerny suggests that in cases where Aquinas affirms that the intellect is the form of the body, as he does in *De Unitate Intellectus* and *ST I.76.1*, we should read it as one of these cases and take it to mean that the intellectual soul is the form of the body.⁴⁴ Aquinas is simply denominating the soul by its highest power. He too agrees that Aquinas’ conclusion concerns the intellectual soul.

Bazan argues that Aquinas’ language is the result of his taking up the terminology of his opponents, namely, Averroes and Siger of Brabant.⁴⁵ Bazan notes that the phrase “the intellect is the form of the body” appears most often in polemical contexts in which Aquinas

⁴¹ Pasnau (2002b, 240).

⁴² McInerny (1993, 206).

⁴³ *ST I.79.1 ad 1* (Freddoso (trans.), 80; Leonine V, 258): “Ad primum ergo dicendum quod sensus accipitur aliquando pro potentia, aliquando vero pro ipsa anima sensitiva, denominatur enim anima sensitiva nomine principalioris suae potentiae, quae est sensus. Et similiter anima intellectiva quandoque nominatur nomine intellectus, quasi a principaliori sua virtute; sicut dicitur in *I de anima*, quod intellectus est substantia quaedam. Et etiam hoc modo Augustinus dicit quod mens est spiritus, vel essentia.”

⁴⁴ McInerny (1993, 206).

⁴⁵ Bazán (1974, 70).

is specifically targeting the Averroist view. Bazan argues that this is significant because Averroes and Siger of Brabant use the terms “rational soul” and intellect interchangeably. According to Bazan, Averroes did not consider the human substantial form to have intellectual powers. Thus “the intellectual soul” would refer exclusively, in his view, to the separate intellect. Bazan argues that Aquinas adopts his opponents’ terminology in order to argue against them. Thus we should take Aquinas’ conclusion, when re-understood in his own terms, as the claim that the soul that possesses intellectual powers is the form of the body, a claim that the Averroist denies.

This seems to be a plausible account of Aquinas’ choice in terminology, particularly since, as we have seen, and as Bazan notes, the passages in which Aquinas states that the intellect is the form of the body are surrounded by passages in which Aquinas affirms that the intellect is a power of the soul that is the form of the body. It is reasonable that Aquinas should construct his arguments against his opponents in such a way as to highlight points of disagreement and so it would be especially reasonable in anti-Averroist discussions concerning the intellectual principle for Aquinas to use intellect and intellectual soul interchangeably. Moreover in Aquinas’ very phrasing of his conclusion, he writes, “regardless of whether it is called intellect or the intellectual soul.” This does not come across as a strong identification of the two on his part. Instead, he seems to be allowing for some variance in terminology. This, therefore, fits well with a reading on which Aquinas assumes the terminology of his opponents in addition to his own.

Bazan, McInerny, and Pasnau agree that Aquinas’ conclusion concerns the soul rather than the intellectual power. Jaekyung Lee, however, argues that Aquinas affirms both that the intellectual power and the intellectual soul are forms of the body. Lee agrees with Bazan that Aquinas’ tendency to identify intellect and intellectual soul is the result of his taking up the

vocabulary of his opponents.⁴⁶ But he maintains that Aquinas is committed to the further claim that the intellective power is the form of the body on the grounds that it is the only interpretation of the argument in *ST* I.76.1 that targets Aquinas' Averroist opponent.⁴⁷ According to Lee, the Averroist does not object to the claim that the soul is the substantial form of the human being. Instead, the Averroist objects to the claim that the *intellective power* is the form of the body. So Aquinas' conclusion that the soul is the form of the body would be compatible with the Averroist position, not an argument against it.⁴⁸ On Lee's interpretation, Aquinas takes there to be two definitions of the soul, one that states that the soul is the actuality of the body, and another that states that the soul is the first principle of life. Because the intellect counts as a first principle of a vital operation, he claims that it also counts as the actuality of the body.

Lee's response, however, misses the significance of asserting that the *intellective* soul is the form of the body. By explicitly characterizing the soul as the principle by which we first understand, Aquinas specifies that the soul, which is the form of the body, is a soul with intellective powers. This is incompatible with the Averroist position that the soul that is the form and actuality of the human body does not have intellective powers. Although the claim that the intellective powers are the actuality of the body would most clearly and directly oppose the Averroist view, on this point Aquinas agrees with Averroes. Aquinas too denies that the intellective powers are the actuality of a body. But this is not the only way to disagree with Averroes. Aquinas clearly rejects Averroes' claim that the rational soul is distinct from the soul that is the actuality of the human body. By affirming that the human soul is that by which we first understand (in addition to that by which we first sense, nourish, and move

⁴⁶ Lee (2006, 249).

⁴⁷ Lee (2006, 244).

⁴⁸ Lee (2006, 244).

from place to place) and that it serves as the form of the body, Aquinas does indeed oppose the Averroist position.

Moreover, Lee's interpretation requires that we attribute an obviously invalid argument to Aquinas. Aquinas offers an argument that provides him with the philosophical grounds for concluding that the intellectual soul is the form of the body—not the intellectual power. His argument rests on the notions that that by which a thing first operates is a form for that thing, and that the *soul* is that by which we first operate. So, at most, he is philosophically entitled to the claim that the *soul* is the form of the body. Of course, given that human beings are capable of understanding, there must be some formal principle in the human being by which she understands, and indeed, Aquinas offers similar arguments for the conclusion that the intellect is a form in the human being (although not in the human body).⁴⁹ Nevertheless, the premises he offers in *ST* I.76.1 do not support the conclusion that the intellectual power is the form of the body. Thus the most charitable interpretation of this argument involves taking “intellect” to refer to the intellectual soul and not the intellectual power of the soul.

Furthermore, the argument appears in *ST* I.76, a question of the *Summa* that Aquinas explicitly identifies as a question that concerns the nature of the *essence* of the soul rather than its powers.⁵⁰ Therefore it is very improbable that the conclusion Aquinas draws in the first article of this question concerns the intellectual power of the soul rather than the soul itself.

Moreover, Aquinas clearly states that the intellectual powers are not the actualities of a body or any bodily organ.⁵¹ This is crucial to establishing the incorporeity (and hence

⁴⁹ See *DSC* a.2.

⁵⁰ See *ST* I.75 *proemium*.

⁵¹ See *ST* I.75.2 co, *QDA* a.1 co; *QDA* a.14 co; *DUI* ch.1.

subsistence and incorruptibility) of the rational soul. The intellectual powers cannot inhere in a corporeal subject. Accordingly, they cannot be the actuality of a bodily organ.

5.7 The Intellectual Soul as Form of the Body

To understand how Aquinas conceives of the relationship between the intellectual powers, intellectual soul, and the body, and whether the intellectual power is a form or actuality in the body it will be useful to consider what Aquinas has to say both in the remainder of *ST I.76.1* and in related discussions concerning the soul as form of the body. Elsewhere, Aquinas articulates more carefully the relationship between the intellectual power, the intellectual soul, and the body. For instance, in *De Spiritualibus Creaturis* he writes, “As to the thirteenth, it must be said that the intellect is not said to be the act of any part of the body, inasmuch as it is a power that does not make use of an organ. Nevertheless the soul’s very substance is united to the body as a form, as has been said,”⁵² and in *De Unitate Intellectus* he writes, “He [Aristotle] holds, therefore, that the intellect is a power of the soul, which is the act of the body.”⁵³ Aquinas is, therefore, generally aware⁵³ of the subtler relationship of the intellect to the body entailed by his commitments. The intellectual powers are in the soul to the extent that it is separate from matter. Aquinas explicitly appeals to the distinction between the essence of the soul and its powers to make sense of how the soul could be both the substantial form of the human being, and yet the intellect not be the act of any organ. He writes,

As to the fourth argument, the fact that an intellectual substance is united to the body as its form does not prevent the intellect from being, as the philosophers say, separate from the body. For in the soul two things must be taken into consideration: its essence and its power. Through its essence the soul gives being to such and such a body; by its power it performs its proper operations. Accordingly, if an operation of the soul is carried out by means of a

⁵² *DSC* a.2 ad 13 (FitzPatrick (trans.), 39; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 377): “Ad decimumtertium dicendum quod intellectus non dicitur esse actus partis alicuius corporis, in quantum est potentia non utens organo; ipsa tamen substantia animae unitur corpori ut forma, sicut dictum est.”

⁵³ *DUI* ch.1 (translation mine; Leonine XLIII, 294): “Vult ergo quod intellectus sit potentia animae, quae est actus corporis.”

bodily organ, then the power of the soul which is the principle of that operation must be the act of that part of the body whereby such an operation is performed; thus, sight is the act of the eye. But, if the soul's operation is not effected by means of a bodily organ, then its power will not be the act of a body. And this is what is meant by saying that the intellect is *separate*; nor does separateness in this sense prevent the substance of the soul of which the intellect is a power (namely, the intellective soul) from being the act of the body, as the form which gives being to such a body.⁵⁴

Here Aquinas clarifies that when he claims that the intellective soul is the form of the body, he means that the essence of the soul is the form of the body—not necessarily that the powers of the soul are the substantial act of the body, or any act of the body. Despite the fact that the intellect does not actualize part of the body even though it is a power of the soul, its incorporeity does not prevent the soul itself from serving as the substantial form of the body.

There are a handful of passages where Aquinas does affirm that the intellect is in the body as a form.⁵⁵ In these passages it is clear that Aquinas refers to the intellective power and not the soul as a whole. In one of these, however, Aquinas suggests that when he talks of the intellect as the form for the body he has something different in mind than when he talks of the soul as the form of the body. He writes,

However, the principle by which we understand is the intellect, as Aristotle says. It is necessary, therefore, for it to be united to the body as form, not indeed in such a way that the intellective power itself is the act of some organ, but because it is a power of the soul, which is the act of a physical organic body.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ SCG II.69 [5] (Anderson (trans.), slightly modified, 208; Leonine XIII, 447): “Nec tamen per hoc quod substantia intellectualis unitur corpori ut forma, removetur quod a philosophis dicitur, intellectum esse a corpore separatum. Est enim in anima considerare et ipsius essentiam, et potentiam eius. Secundum essentiam quidem suam dat esse tali corpori: secundum potentiam vero operationes proprias efficit. Si igitur operatio animae per organum corporale compleatur, oportet quod potentia animae quae est illius operationis principium, sit actus illius partis corporis per quam operatio eius compleatur: sicut visus est actus oculi. Si autem operatio eius non compleatur per organum corporale, potentia eius non erit actus alicuius corporis. Et per hoc dicitur intellectus esse separatus: non quin substantia animae cuius est potentia intellectus, sive anima intellectiva, sit corporis actus ut forma dans tali corpori esse.”

⁵⁵ For instance, see *DUI* ch.1; *DUI* ch.3.

⁵⁶ *DUI* ch.3 (translation mine; Leonine XLIII, 306): “Principium autem quo intelligimus est intellectus, ut Aristoteles dicit. Oportet igitur ipsum uniri corpori ut formam, non quidem ita quod ipsa intellectiva potentia sit alicuius organi actus, sed quia est virtus animae, quae est actus corporis physici organici.”

Here Aquinas states that that by which we understand, namely the intellect, is not the form of the body in the sense that the intellectual power is the act of some organ. Instead, it is united with the body as form because it is a power of the soul and this soul is the act of the physical organism. Thus, although Aquinas may speak of the intellect as the form of the body, he does not mean that the intellectual power actualizes the body or a part of the body. Instead intellect is called the form of the body because it inheres in the soul that is the act of the body.

Given these considerations, I take it that Aquinas does not maintain that the intellectual power is a form that inheres in the body. Instead, it inheres in the intellectual soul, and this intellectual soul is the form of the body. Although the intellectual power is united with the human being in virtue of the soul's hylomorphic union with the body, we should not understand Aquinas' conclusion as Lee does, that the intellectual power is the form of the body. It seems unlikely, and misleading, to maintain that because Aquinas considers the intellectual power to be a principle of human operation he automatically recognizes it as the actuality of a body. Of course, the intellectual powers are actualities in the *human being*, specifically, in its incorporeal part, the soul *qua* subsistent thing. But calling the intellectual power the form of the body hides the subtleties of Aquinas' position regarding the intellectual power, its relation to the rational soul, and its relation to the human body. These subtleties are crucial to Aquinas' account of the intellect as an incorporeal power, the soul as a subsistent, incorruptible, substantial form, and the human being as something unqualifiedly one.

5.8 Intellect or Intellectual Soul? A Further Source of Ambiguity

In §5.5 we considered several suggestions regarding Aquinas' apparent conflation of "intellect" and "intellectual soul" in his argument in *ST* I.76.1. There is, I believe, an additional consideration that may contribute to his occasional use of 'intellect' to refer to the

intellective soul. This additional consideration arises from the various kinds of things that Aquinas calls principles of operation.⁵⁷ For instance, in regards to sensation, he calls the soul, the powers of sensation that flow from the soul, and the organs of sensation all principles of operation. The soul and sense powers are formal principles of operation. The soul is the first principle, the remote and originating principle, because it is the source of the sense powers. The sense powers are the immediate formal principles of operation and the actualities of the sense organs. The organs are principles in the sense that through their actualization by soul and sense powers, they serve as the *per se* operators by which the human being senses. We say that the human being sees by means of his eye because the seeing takes place in the eye, and as the eye is a part of the human its operation properly speaking belongs to the whole of which it is a part. It is the material or subject-like principle *quo* from Aristotle's discussion in *De Anima* II.2. So, with respect to the operation of sight, the human soul, the power of sight, and the eye are all principles by which the human being sees.

In the case of intellective cognition, however, the soul is both the remote and originating formal principle of operation and the subsistent principle in which the operation takes place. While the nutritive and sensitive powers actualize the bodily organs and serve as the formal principles by which these bodily organs carry out the various nutritive and sensitive operations, the intellective power is the actuality of the soul itself and accounts for the soul's having and exercising the capacity for intellective cognition. The soul is the subject of the immediate formal principle of intellectual cognition in the way that the eye is the subject of the immediate formal principle of sight.

So, if we call 'intellect' that by which we understand, it can refer to two things, either the intellective power, as the immediate formal principle *quo*, or the soul itself, as the

⁵⁷ See *QDA* a.12 co for different uses of the term 'principle', one of which corresponds to a formal principle by which, and the other to a *per se* principle (i.e., Aristotle's material or subject-like principle).

subsistent thing that carries out the intellectual operations. Both are reasonable uses of the term. Yet given the distinction between the soul and its powers we must take care to clarify the referent of the term when evaluating Aquinas' claims. When used to pick out the subsistent soul, it may be perfectly true to say that the intellect is the form of the body. Nevertheless, when used to pick out the intellectual power, it may be false.

Conclusion

Through my examination I have shown that Aquinas' argument for the rational soul as form of the body goes beyond Aristotle in ways that reflect Aquinas' specific aims and motivation, and in particular, his anti-Averroist agenda. The argument should not be overlooked as a repetition of Aristotle, but evaluated within his own system of thought. Moreover, although Aquinas may seem to identify the intellectual soul and intellectual power in *ST I.76.1*, I have argued that we ought to understand his conclusion in light of his more detailed remarks concerning the relationship between the intellectual powers and the intellectual soul and, in turn, their respective relationships to the body.

Chapter 6: Hylomorphism and its Competitors

After presenting the Aristotelian argument for the hylomorphic union of intellectual soul and body in *Summa Theologiae* I.76.1, Aquinas offers a second argument for the same conclusion. In this second argument Aquinas considers three competing accounts of the relationship between the human body and intellectual soul, namely, a) the view that the human being is the soul alone, which he attributes to Plato, b) the Averroist view that the human being understands by means of a separate material intellect and, c) a family of dualist views on which the intellect and body both exist in their own right but are related as mover and moved.¹ (Call these the Moved-Mover views.)² In his argument, Aquinas raises objections to eliminate each of these competing accounts, and having done so, concludes that only his hylomorphic account is a viable option and so, must be correct. Aquinas begins this process of elimination by posing a challenge: Anyone who denies that the intellectual soul is united to the body as its form must account for how intellectual operations can be properly attributed to individual human beings.³ Aquinas argues against each competing view on the grounds that

¹ There is debate in the literature concerning whether Aquinas' account of human nature ought also to be counted as a dualist view, since the human being is partly corporeal and partly incorporeal. Some interpreters do consider him to be a dualist. See (Eberl, 2010). Others view Aquinas' position as offering a middle way between dualism and physicalism, or as offering a dualist position that avoids the traditional problems with substance dualism. See Cross (2002), Eberl (2010) Stump (1995). I set aside questions of how we ought to label Aquinas' view and whether his view avoids the perceived pitfalls of substance dualism and materialism.

² Aquinas eliminates materialist views on which the intellect or intellectual soul is itself a body or a body part in *ST* I.75.1-2 where he establishes that the intellectual soul and the intellectual power itself, are incorporeal.

³ At this point in the *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas has yet to distinguish between the possible and agent intellects, both of which are powers of the human soul. In his objections to his opponents, he seems to be concerned with how they unite the human body to the possible intellect, the power in potency to and receptive of the intelligible *species*. Averroes' material intellect corresponds to the possible intellect, and Aquinas reports that Plato did not posit an agent intellect in the human being (see *ST* I.79.4 co). So the nature of the intellect at issue in his rejection of these views can only correspond to his possible intellect. Moreover, in *DUI* ch.3 and *QDA* a.2 Aquinas raises some of the same objections to the Platonic, Averroist, and Moved-Mover views in discussions that explicitly concern the relationship of the possible intellect to the human being as a whole. Only later in *ST* I.79.3 does Aquinas consider whether we must posit an agent intellect in addition to the possible intellect and affirms that we must. In *ST* I.79.4 Aquinas uses the premises in his additional argument in the Aristotelian argument for the soul as form of the body discussed in Chapter 5 to show that the power of agent intellect must also be a power in the soul and not a separate substance. For Aquinas' commitment to the agent intellect as a power of the soul rather than a separate substance, see Lee (1981); Templeton (2008).

either it cannot answer the challenge or that in doing so it commits itself to an unacceptable consequence.

Aquinas' second argument for hylomorphism may initially seem unsatisfying. After all, merely pointing out flaws in other views does not necessarily entitle one to conclude that their own view is correct.⁴ Nevertheless Aquinas' process of elimination is not simply a haphazard attempt to eliminate competitors by whatever means necessary. Rather, I argue that when taken as a whole, his process of elimination reveals a commitment to a plausible set of *desiderata* regarding a theory of human nature, namely, that it account for the rationality, animality, and unity of the human being. Aquinas' argument provides what he takes to be the constraints on any viable account of human nature. Moreover, I argue that given Aquinas' metaphysical framework, only his hylomorphic account is able to satisfy the *desiderata*. These considerations can help us understand Aquinas' strong conclusion in favor of his own view.

Aquinas' *desiderata* of rationality, animality, and unity follow from the definition of the human being as a rational animal in the category of substance. The capacity to reason distinguishes human beings from all other animals. The capacity to sense distinguishes animals (including humans) from all other living things. Lastly, this definition places human beings in the category of substance. As substances, they must be substantial unities, that is, unqualified unities, not accidental unities or aggregates. As we will see, this last *desideratum* is somewhat derivative on the first two. Substantial unity is required, in part, because it is necessary for securing the rationality and animality of the human being.

Aquinas proceeds on the assumption that he and his interlocutors share a similar commitment to these *desiderata*. Indeed in many ways he represents his competitors as

⁴ Pasnau (2002a, 75) raises this concern. He notes that Aquinas' process of elimination does not eliminate all possible alternatives, and worries that Aquinas' argument does not entitle him to infer the truth of his own account. Pasnau cites materialism as a possible alternative that Aquinas does not treat in *ST I.76.1* as an indication that Aquinas' argument is not exhaustive. Aquinas has, however, already argued against the materialist position in *ST I.75.2* (although this is not to say that his treatment *is* exhaustive).

explicitly attempting to account for them in the articulation of their views.⁵ Aquinas' portrayals of competitors are often inaccurate in this regard and many of his objections miss their target, misrepresent his opponents, or beg the question against them. Nevertheless, my aim in this chapter is not to evaluate the strength or success of Aquinas' objections but to draw out the common elements in Aquinas' rejections to reveal his *desiderata* and his assumptions about how they must be met. These assumptions and commitments, when brought to the fore, help us better understand his disagreement with his competitors and make clear why he sees his own view as superior.⁶

This chapter has six sections. In section §6.1 I introduce Aquinas' challenge to competing accounts as it appears in *ST* I.76.1. In sections §6.2 and §6.3 I discuss his rejections of the Averroist position and one variant of the Moved-Mover position, both of which he sees as failing to meet the challenge. In §6.4 I turn to Aquinas' rejection of the Platonist view for failing to render the human being sensitive. In section §6.5 I consider Aquinas' commitment to the unqualified unity of the human being and his rejection of a second variant of the Moved-Mover view, which he argues cannot satisfy this commitment. Lastly in §6.6 I discuss how Aquinas takes his own view to have met all three *desiderata* and

⁵ For instance, Aquinas presents Averroes as offering his account of the relationship between the phantasms in the individual human being and the material intellect as an attempt to account for how intellectual acts are attributed to human beings. In fact, however, Averroes introduces the relationship in order to account for how intelligibles are on the one hand eternal and on the other corruptible and generable.

⁶ Pasnau (2002a) interprets Aquinas' central issue with the Platonic, Averroist, and Moved-Mover views as a failure to properly unify the body and soul. He writes, "In 76.1, Aquinas focuses exclusively on those alternatives that would unify soul and body without entirely reducing them to one single thing. Standardly, such accounts are motivated by the background assumption of substance dualism. But Aquinas has in mind other possibilities as well, above all, the various forms of monopsychism that were influential in his day... The goal is rather an indirect refutation that no such non-reductive theory can account for the unity of body and soul." (Pasnau, 2002a, 75-76)

This reading, however, is problematic because it attributes a question begging argument to Aquinas. The Platonist, Averroist, and Moved-Mover advocates have philosophical motivations for holding that the body and soul are distinct substances. So it is question begging to reject competitors on the grounds that they fail to adequately unify body and soul. Their views begin with the assumption that soul and body are not a single substance. In contrast, on my view, Aquinas' central issue with competing accounts is that none can adequately account for the rationality, animality of the human being. Aquinas' competitors all agree that the human being is rational and sensitive, so it is not question begging for Aquinas to reject competing accounts on the grounds that their metaphysical accounts of the human being are unable to account for these characteristics.

why he takes his view to be the only viable alternative, despite the fact that his rejection of competing accounts is not exhaustive.

6.1 Aquinas' Challenge

After offering his Aristotelian argument for the soul as form of the body in *Summa Theologiae* I.76.1 co, Aquinas poses his challenge. He writes,

Now if someone wants to claim that the intellective soul is not the form of the body, then he has to find a sense in which the action in question, viz., intellective understanding, is an action that belongs to this human being. For each of us experiences that it is he himself who understands.⁷

Aquinas states that if the intellective soul is not united to the body as its form, the intellect must be related to the rest of the person in a way that allows us to legitimately attribute intellectual operations to the person. Aquinas motivates his challenge with evidence from our introspective experience, pointing out that each of us experiences that we understand.

Aquinas appeal to our introspective experience could function in support of his challenge in one of two ways. In the first way, we might take the challenge as demanding an explanation of our introspective experience itself. On this reading, so long as a theory can explain how human beings have the conscious experience of performing intellective acts that they do, they are legitimate contenders.⁸ Alternatively, the appeal to experience could serve instead as support for the claim that we do in fact perform intellective acts. On this second reading, the challenge is not to explain our experience *per se*, but rather the fact given in our experience, namely, that we understand. In this case, competitors must provide an account of how intellective operations are attributable to human beings in such a way as to justify our

⁷ ST I.76.1 co (Freddoso (trans.), slightly modified, 20; Leonine V, 209): “Si quis autem velit dicere animam intellectivam non esse corporis formam, oportet quod inveniat modum quo ista actio quae est intelligere, sit huius hominis actio, experitur enim unusquisque seipsum esse qui intelligit.”

⁸ Black (1993a) offers an account of how Averroes could save the phenomenon of individual understanding despite the separateness and unicity of the material intellect. See section §6.2 for further discussion of Aquinas' *hic homo intelligit* objections.

experience of ourselves as knowers. Simply providing an account of our conscious experience, or the phenomenology of intellectual activity is insufficient, if that account is not grounded in an appropriate metaphysics.

Aquinas' appeal to introspective experience, I submit, functions in the second way. His concern is to justify the attribution of understanding to the human being, which in turn, justifies our experience of ourselves as rational. This reading is supported by how Aquinas proceeds after issuing his challenge. He writes,

But as is clear from the Philosopher in Physics 5, there are three ways in which an action is attributed to someone. For he is said to effect something, or to act, either (a) by himself as a whole, as in 'The physician heals'; or (b) by part of himself, as in 'The man sees with his eyes'; or (c) incidentally, as in 'The one who is white is building', since it is incidental to a builder that he is white.⁹

Here Aquinas enumerates three ways that actions can be attributed to an individual.: Either actions belong to an individual (a) because they act with their whole selves, (b) because they act with a part of themselves, or (c) because they act incidentally as a *per accidens* agent. Aquinas quickly dismisses (c) on the grounds that intellective cognition is an essential human operation, and therefore not incidental to the human being. He then treats the Platonic account, on which the human being understands by means of their whole self, and the Averroist and Moved-Mover accounts, which he characterizes as views on which the human being understands by means of a part of themselves. Because Aquinas is interested in the modes of attributing intellective operation to the human being, we can see that his main concern with respect to his challenge is to account for the legitimacy of attributing an operation to an individual. Our experience tells us that we are the subjects of intellectual acts. As such, there must be legitimate grounds that justify the attribution of intellectual acts to

⁹ ST I.76.1 co (Freddoso (trans.), 20; Leonine V, 209): "Attribuitur autem aliqua actio alicui tripliciter, ut patet per philosophum, V Physic., dicitur enim movere aliquid aut agere vel secundum se totum, sicut medicus sanat; aut secundum partem, sicut homo videt per oculum; aut per accidens, sicut dicitur quod album aedificat, quia accidit aedificatori esse album."

individual human beings. Competing accounts that cannot provide such grounds must be rejected.

Aquinas first attacks the Platonist, then the Averroist, and then two variants of the Moved-Mover view.¹⁰ However, since his rejections of the Averroist position and one version of the Moved-Mover view share common features and reflect the same sorts of presuppositions I will treat his rejections thematically rather than in the order in which he presents them.

6.2 A Separate Intellect: The Averroist and Moved-Mover Variant Positions

Aquinas deems both the Averroist view and one version of the Moved-Mover family of views untenable for failing to meet his initial challenge. Aquinas characterizes both of these views as attempts to show that the human being understands by means of some part of herself. But, as we will see, Aquinas denies that in either case the intellect is truly a part of the human being in such a way that allows for the attribution of its operations to the human being as a whole.

I will begin by examining Aquinas' rejection of the Averroest account on which the intellectual principle by which we understand is a separate substance, the material intellect, which is shared by all human knowers. The claim that the material intellect is one for all affirms the unicity of the intellect. Aquinas attacks both the separateness and the unicity of the material intellect. These two features are intimately connected. If the intellect is a power of the soul which is the form of the body then it is multiplied in accordance with the number of human beings. But if the intellect is a separate incorporeal substance then it is one shared by all, since it is utterly separate from matter, which is the principle of individuation. Nevertheless, Aquinas treats the separateness and unicity of the material intellect separately in

¹⁰ Aquinas identifies three variants of the Moved-Mover in *De Unitate Intellectus*. One of these is the same as the Platonic view so Aquinas argues against all three variants in *ST I.76.1*.

his discussions and employs different sets of arguments against each.¹¹ In his process of elimination in *ST I.76.1* Aquinas takes on the separateness of the material intellect.

Aquinas' most prominent arguments against the separateness of the intellect reflect his challenge at the outset of his argument by elimination in *ST I.76.1*: Aquinas insists that the Averroist cannot account for the fact that the individual human being understands, or *hic homo [singularis] intelligit*—something we know to be true based on our introspective experience of ourselves as knowers.¹² He writes,

In *De Anima* III the Commentator claims that this union is effected by the intelligible *species*, which has two subjects, viz. (a) the potential intellect and (b) the phantasms that exist in the bodily organs. And so it is through the intelligible *species* that the potential intellect is connected with the body of *this* man or *that* man.

However, this sort of connection or union is not sufficient for the intellect's action to be *Socrates'* action. This is clear from a comparison with sensation, on the basis of which Aristotle proceeds to a consideration of what is involved in intellectual understanding. For as *De Anima* III explains, phantasms are related to the intellect as colors are related to the visual power. Therefore, *species* of the phantasms exist in the potential intellect in the same way that *species* of colors exist in the visual power. But it is clear that the action of the visual power is not attributed to a wall in virtue of the fact that the colors whose likenesses are in the visual power exist in that wall. For we do not say that the wall *sees*; rather, we say that the wall *is seen*. Therefore, from the fact that *species* of the phantasms exist in the potential intellect it does not follow that Socrates, in whom the phantasms exist, *understands*; rather, what follows is that he or better, his phantasms *are understood*.¹³

¹¹ For instance, in *ST I.76.1* Aquinas addresses the separateness of the intellect, in *ST I.76.2* he addresses its unicity; in *DUI* ch.3 he addresses its separateness, in ch.4 he addresses its unicity; in *QDA* a.2 he addresses separateness, in a.3 he addresses unicity; in *DSC* a.2 he discusses separateness, *DSC* a.9 he discusses unicity. Aquinas also consistently offers distinct sets of arguments against each feature, and even in the two treatments of Averroes' position where Aquinas does not discuss the issues into separate articles, questions or chapters (in *InSent* II d.17 q.2 and *CT I.85*) he still employs distinct sets of arguments against each feature.

¹² Aquinas' repeated refrain that *hic homo singularis intelligit*, and the appeal to our introspective experience that supports it, appear in connection with the separateness of the material intellect, not its unicity. Even in *InSent* II d.17 q.2 and *CT I.85* where Aquinas treats the unicity and separateness together, the *hic homo intelligit* objections appear as evidence against the separateness of the intellect, which in turn Aquinas uses to argue against the unicity of the intellect. So it seems that Aquinas' insistence that the human being understands and his appeal to our experience of ourselves as knowers target the idea that we understand by means of a separate intellectual principle, and that he does not necessarily take them to show that we have introspective experience of ourselves as possessing or using individuated intellects rather than a shared intellectual principle.

¹³ *ST I.76.1* co (Freddoso (trans.), 21; Leonine V, 209): "Hanc autem unionem Commentator, in III de anima, dicit esse per speciem intelligibilem. Quae quidem habet duplex subiectum, unum scilicet intellectum possibilem; et aliiud ipsa phantasmata quae sunt in organis corporeis. Et sic per speciem intelligibilem continuatur intellectus possibilis

Aquinas maintains that although the human being, according to the Averroist, is the subject of intentions that come to be formally united to the material intellect to form intelligibles, she is only a subject insofar as these intentions are potentially intelligible, existing in her imagination. But, he argues, being the subject of potentially intelligible forms is insufficient for understanding. To understand, the human being must be the subject of actually intelligible forms existing in her own intellective power. On the Averroist account, the human being fails to understand because she lacks a knowing power. Aquinas writes,

...for what constitutes a knower is not the fact that there is in him a form whose image is in some knowing power, but the fact that there is in him the cognitive power itself.¹⁴

But it is easy to see that these notions are worthless and impossible. For the one who understands is the one who has intellect.¹⁵

In these passages Aquinas insists that understanding requires that the knower possess the appropriate cognitive power, the intellect. Insofar as the human being is not the subject of the intellective power, she fails to be a knower.

According to the Moved-Mover family of views, the intellect and body are complete substances in their own right, but the intellectual substance moves the body through a contact of power. The relationship provided by this contact of power unifies the body and intellect in a way that, as Aquinas presents it, justifies the attribution of intellectual operations to the human being as a whole. In *De Unitate Intellectus* Aquinas distinguishes three variants of the Moved-Mover position, one that identifies the human being as the intellect moving the body

corpori huius vel illius hominis. Sed ista continuatio vel unio non sufficit ad hoc quod actio intellectus sit actio Socratis. Et hoc patet per similitudinem in sensu, ex quo Aristoteles procedit ad considerandum ea quae sunt intellectus. Sic enim se habent phantasmata ad intellectum, ut dicitur in III de anima, sicut colores ad visum. Sicut ergo species colorum sunt in visu, ita species phantasmatum sunt in intellectu possibili. Patet autem quod ex hoc quod colores sunt in pariete, quorum similitudines sunt in visu, actio visus non attribuitur parieti, non enim dicimus quod paries videat, sed magis quod videatur. Ex hoc ergo quod species phantasmatum sunt in intellectu possibili, non sequitur quod Socrates, in quo sunt phantasmata, intelligat; sed quod ipse, vel eius phantasmata intelligantur.”

¹⁴ DSC a.2 co (FitzPatrick (trans.), 35; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 375): “Non enim hoc facit cognoscentem, ut sit in eo forma cuius similitudo est in potentia cognoscente; sed ut sit in ipso cognoscitiva potentia.”

¹⁵ SCG II.59 [9] (Anderson (trans.), 179; Leonine XIII, 415): “Quod autem haec frivola sint et impossibilia facile est videre. Habens enim intellectum est intelligens.” See also *InSent* II d.17 q.2 a.1 co.

(this he identifies as the Platonic view on which the human being is her soul), a second that identifies the human being as the body moved by the intellect, and a third that identifies the human being with the whole comprised of both.

In *ST I.76.1* Aquinas identifies his Moved-Mover target view as the whole comprised of both. However in one of his initial objections against this view, Aquinas argues that it collapses into the second variant. He then proceeds to offer the following attack on this second variant on which the human being is moved by the intellect, and thus understands in virtue of its relationship to the intellect as moved to mover. The view is similar to the Averroist in that the human being understands by means of an intellective principle that exists apart from it. Aquinas considers three putative grounds for attributing the operation of this intellect to the human being: (i) the human being understands because the operation of the intellect is passed to her as heat is passed from heater to heated, (ii) the human being understands because he is the instrument of the intellect, (iii) that the human being understands because he is united to the intellect as moved to mover, and this unity allows for the attribution of the action of the intellect to the individual human being.

Aquinas rejects the first option on the grounds that understanding is an immanent action that remains in the agent as a perfection of the agent. The actuality of the agent is not passed or induced in a patient in the way that heat is induced in a patient by an actually hot agent. Thus knowledge, unlike heat, cannot be passed from intellect to human being in the way that heat can be passed between two substances.

Aquinas rejects the second option on the authority of Aristotle. Aquinas takes Aristotle to have decisively shown that the intellect does not use a body as an instrument (and Aquinas

himself argues that this is so in *ST I.75.2*).¹⁶ Understanding cannot, therefore, be attributed to the human being because it is the instrument of the intellect because the intellect uses no corporeal instrument.

Lastly, Aquinas rejects the final alternative on the grounds that while the action of a part may be attributed to a whole, the action of a part is never attributed to another part. The second variant of the Mover-Mover position identifies the human being as the animate sensitive body, not the whole composed of body and intellect, so the attribution of intellectual cognition to the human being would involve attributing the operation of one part to another part.¹⁷ Although we attribute the operation of one part of the body, say the eye, to the whole human being when we say that the human sees, we would not attribute sight to some other part, for instance, the hand or foot. Likewise, we cannot attribute the operation of one part, the intellective soul, to another part, the sensitive body (i.e., the human being).

¹⁶ In other works Aquinas comes out even more forcefully against the thesis that intellectual operations can be attributed to the human being as an instrument. Consider, *QDA a.2 co* (Robb (trans.), 57-58; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 287): “Now if the possible intellect were a separate substance, it would be impossible that a human being should understand by means of it. For if a substance performs a given operation, it is impossible that that operation be attributed to another substance that is diverse from the first. For although one of two substances can be the cause of operation in the other as principle agent in relation to its instrument, still the action of the principle agent is not one in number with the action of the instrument, for the action of the principal agent consists in moving the instrument while the action of the instrument consists in being moved by the principal agent and in moving something else. Consequently, if the possible intellect be a substance which is separate in existence from this human being or from that human being, it is impossible that the act of understanding of the possible intellect belong to either human being. [Si autem intellectus possibilis esset substantia separata, impossibile esset quod eo intelligeret homo: non enim est possibile, si aliqua substantia operatur aliquam operationem, quod illa operatio sit alterius substantiae ab ea diversa. Licet enim duarum substantiarum diversarum una possit alteri esse causa operandi ut principale agens instrumento, tamen actio principalis agentis non est actio instrumenti eadem secundum numerum, cum actio principalis agentis sit in movendo instrumentum; actio vero instrumenti in moveri a principali agente, et movere aliquid alterum. Sic igitur, si intellectus possibilis sit substantia separata secundum esse ab hoc homine sive ab illo homine; impossibile est quod intelligere intellectus possibilis sit huius hominis vel illius. Unde cum ista operatio quae est intelligere, non attribuatur alii principio in homine nisi intellectui possibili; sequitur quod nullus homo aliquid intelligat.]”

In this passage Aquinas entirely blocks the move that intellectual operations could be attributed to the human being as an instrument moved by the intellect itself. The operation of the principal agent is distinct from the operation of the instrument, so even if the human being could be the instrument of the intellect, its operations as an instrument would not be identical to the intellective operations of the intellect.

¹⁷ This particular objection seems strained since it seems much more plausible to endorse the Moved-Mover variant on which the human being is identified as whole comprised of body and intellective soul. Aquinas does, however, address the attribution of the intellective operations to the whole comprised of body and intellect (i.e., the third Moved-Mover variant). I discuss this in §6.5 in connection with Aquinas’ unity constraint.

6.3 Assumptions from Aquinas' Rejections

Aquinas' problems with the Averroist view and second Moved-Mover variant ultimately stem from the fact that according to both, the intellective power does not inhere in the individual human being, but exists apart from it, either moving the human being, or being moved by the human's imagined intentions. For Aquinas, however, no account that locates the understanding power outside of the human being has any hope of providing the requisite grounds for attributing intellectual operations to the individual. As we have seen in Chapters 3 and 5, for Aquinas, agents operate by means of formal principles in them. Every operation carried out by an agent is carried out by means of a form in that agent.¹⁸

In his discussion of Aquinas' critique of Averroes, Richard Taylor identifies this latter claim as the *principle of intrinsic formal cause*. He articulates the principle as *nothing operates except by means of some power which is formally in it*.¹⁹ Taylor rightly situates the principle at the center of Aquinas' attack on Averroism. Aquinas repeatedly objects to Averroes' view on the grounds that understanding requires a formal principle in the human being by which she knows (specifically, a principle which is in potency to intelligible forms) and insists that if a separate substance, rather than the human being, possesses that formal principle, then it, rather than the human being, will be the knower. In his paper Taylor suggests that the principle of intrinsic formal cause holds in the case of intellective cognition because understanding is an essential human activity. The *principle of intrinsic formal cause*, however, follows from Aquinas' *in-act* principle (discussed in Chapters 3 and 5), and as such applies to all operations, not just essential ones.²⁰

¹⁸ An agent may also carry out their operation using additional principles, an instrument for instance, but there must be at the very least a form in the agent by which it operates.

¹⁹ See Taylor (2009, 191).

²⁰ See §§3.4-5 and §§5.2-3 for discussion of the *in-act* principle.

Aquinas often infers the *principle of intrinsic cause* from the *in-act* principle.²¹ For instance, in the *Compendium Theologiae* he writes,

If, however, this human being understands, it is necessary that that by which it understands formally be his form, since nothing acts except insofar as it is in act. Therefore that by which an agent acts is its act, just as the heat by which the hot thing heats is its act.²²

And in *Summa Contra Gentiles* he writes,

Then, too, that by which a thing operates must be its form. For nothing acts except so far as it is in act; and nothing is in act except by its form. And that is why Aristotle proves that the soul is a form, from the fact that an animal lives and senses through its soul. Now, man understands, and this by his intellect alone; and therefore Aristotle, when inquiring into the principle by which we understand, explains to us the nature of the possible intellect. Consequently, the possible intellect must be united to us formally, and not merely by its object.²³

Because agents act by means of their actualities, the way that a thing exists determines what it can do. As we have seen, within Aquinas' hylomorphic ontology, forms account for a thing's actualities and so they serve as the principles by which the agent acts.²⁴ Accordingly, a creature can perform an operation only if it possesses the requisite power for operating. Only then is it actual in the relevant respect to operate.

For Averroes, however, the principle in potency to intelligible forms, or universal intentions, (i.e., the material intellect) exists apart from human knowers. It cannot be a formal principle that inheres in the corporeal human being, since this would compromise its role as a subject of universal intentions. As Aquinas reads him, therefore, Averroes locates the principle

²¹ Taylor does not identify or discuss the *in-act* principle or its connection to the *principle of intrinsic formal cause*.

²² CT 85 (translation mine; Leonine XLII, 109): "Si autem hic homo intelligit, oportet quod id quo formaliter intelligit, sit forma eius, quia nihil agit nisi secundum quod est actu. Illud ergo quo agit agens, est actus eius, sicut calor quo calidum calefacit, est actus eius."

²³ SCG II.59 [12] (Anderson (trans.), 180; Leonine XIII, 415): "Amplius. Id quo aliquid operatur, oportet esse formam eius: nihil enim agit nisi secundum quod est actu; actu autem non est aliquid nisi per id quod est forma eius; unde et Aristoteles probat animam esse formam, per hoc quod animal per animam vivit et sentit. Homo autem intelligit, et non nisi per intellectum: unde et Aristoteles, inquirens de principio quo intelligimus, tradit nobis naturam intellectus possibilis. Oportet igitur intellectum possibilem formaliter uniri nobis, et non solum per suum obiectum."

²⁴ See QDA a.12 co.

by which we understand outside of the individual human knower.²⁵ For Aquinas however, a human being that lacks a power of understanding formally inhering in her cannot be in act in the relevant sense to understand, and nothing operates except insofar as it is in act. So the human being, on such an account, does not understand.²⁶

Aquinas relies on a third related principle in his rejection of Averroes' view and the Moved-Mover view, namely, *whatever has the operative power is the operator*. Aquinas writes,

The subject of an operative power is that which is able to operate, since every accident denominates its proper subject. But the thing that is able to operate is the same as the thing that does operate. Hence, "what has the power" as a subject "is that to which the operation belongs," as the Philosopher likewise says at the beginning of *De Somno et Vigilia*.²⁷

Here Aquinas notes that the subject of an operative power to engage in some kind of operation is the subject of that operation when performed. That is, the subject of inherence of the power is the operator. Although here Aquinas takes this on the authority of Aristotle, it too follows from the *in-act* principle. In creatures, forms serve as operative powers because they render their subjects in act so as to operate. Thus, whatever serves as the subject of such

²⁵ Taylor (2009) argues that Averroes, unlike Aquinas, has the resources to account for how the intellectual powers could at once be separate and still intrinsic to the souls of individual human knowers and can thus provide a response to Aquinas' objection based on the *principle of intrinsic formal cause*.

²⁶ Black (1993b) argues that Aquinas assumes that the intellect itself is a seat of consciousness and cognition, and imposes this same presupposition on Averroes' material intellect. Aquinas thereby transforms the separate material intellect from a subject of inherence or existence of intelligibles into a subject of knowing, akin to the way that we experience ourselves as knowing subjects. Given the assumption that the intellect is a conscious subject, if it is also something separate from the human being, then it, rather than any individual human being, is the knowing subject. Yet for Averroes, the material intellect is likely a subject of existence for the universal intentions rather than a conscious knowing subject. Indeed Averroes himself distinguishes between the material intellect and other separate forms or intelligences, which may help to reinforce the notion that he does not think of the material intellect as simply another separate intellect but as something altogether different (see for instance, Averroes, *LCDA III.5* [396] and *LCDA III.5* [409-410]). I agree with Black that Aquinas does indeed view Averroes' material intellect as the knowing subject in the sense of a conscious subject. I take it that for Aquinas, this follows from the principle that the thing that has the power performs the operation. Since the act of knowing, like the act of sensing, involves consciousness or awareness (even if it may not involve consciousness of that consciousness, or awareness of one's awareness) the subject of inherence of the intellect will, for Aquinas, be a conscious subject of knowing.

²⁷ *ST I.77.5 co* (Freddoso (trans.), 57; Leonine V, 244-245): "Respondeo dicendum quod illud est subiectum operativae potentiae, quod est potens operari, omne enim accidens denominat proprium subiectum. Idem autem est quod potest operari, et quod operatur. Unde oportet quod eius sit potentia sicut subiecti, cuius est operatio; ut etiam philosophus dicit, in principio de somno et vigilia."

a form is that which is rendered in act by it. Accordingly, whatever serves as the subject is that which has the capacity to operate.

When we apply this principle to the case of intellectual cognition, we are left with the claim that whatever has the power of intellect is the subject of intellectual operations. The possible intellect is, for Aquinas, the operative power in potency to intelligible forms, and therefore in potency to understanding. Thus, whatever serves as the subject of inherence of the power will, properly speaking, be the knower. If the power in potency to intelligible forms is the separate material intellect, as for Averroes, or the intellectual substance moving the body, as for the Mover-Moved proponent, then that intellect itself will be the knower, not the human beings to whom it is united.²⁸ The *in-act* principle serves, therefore, as a central presupposition in Aquinas' thought that grounds and motivates his rejection of these positions.

Aquinas' position and his criticism of Averroes, in particular, depend on two closely related assumptions. First, that the power by which a human being is rendered in act with respect to intellectual operation is a potency for receiving intelligible form, and second, that this power is the possible or material intellect. Aquinas supports these by appealing to Aristotle's description of the possible intellect as the part of the soul by which we understand and to his characterization of the possible intellect as a potency for intelligible forms. Aquinas takes Aristotle's remarks to establish that the possible intellect is the power by which we understand and that it is a principle that renders us in potency to intelligible forms.

Thus, for Aquinas, no other union or connection to intelligible forms can account for our understanding, nor can the intellectual principle be anything other than a power in the individual human being by which we understand. Moreover Aquinas judges that the subject

²⁸ See *ST* I.76.1 co, *DUI* ch.2, *SCG* II.59, *InSent* II d.17 q.2 a.1 co.

of the knowing power, which is in potency to intelligible forms, is the only subject to whom intellectual operations can be legitimately attributed. In light of these presuppositions, neither the Averroist nor the Moved-Mover can, according to Aquinas, legitimately attribute individual acts of knowing to the human being. Both views locate that which is in potency to intelligible forms, i.e., the intellectual power by which we understand, outside of the human being. Accordingly, Aquinas concludes that on these views, the subject of intellectual operations is likewise outside of the human being, despite the fact that Averroes' material intellect does not seem to be either a power, or a knowing subject, in the sense that Aquinas has in mind.

Of course, if we were to privilege Averroes' framework and starting assumptions rather than Aquinas', a similar objection could be raised against Aquinas, namely, that his human being does not understand. For Averroes, if the material intellect were a power in the individual human being, it would violate Aristotle's stricture on the unmixed status of the intellect. Accordingly it would individuate the intelligible forms it receives, rendering them unintelligible. In this case, the human being would not understand because there would be nothing to understand. There would be no intelligibles. Given, however, Aquinas' presuppositions regarding the intellectual power and his account of creaturely operation stemming from his *in-act* principle and hylomorphic ontology, no view on which the intellectual power is separate in existence from the human being will be able to legitimately account for human rationality. The Moved-Mover variant and the Averroist are, by his lights, unable to answer the challenge.

6.4 Sensation and the Platonic Position

In addition to the Averroist and Moved-Mover views, Aquinas considers the view that the human being simply is the intellect or intellectual soul. On this view, which he attributes to

Plato, the body is like a garment inhabited and used by the soul but is not really part of the human being. Since, on this view, the human being is the soul, and the soul is the subject of the intellective power, there is no trouble accounting for human rationality. Nevertheless, Aquinas rejects the view on the grounds that it fails to account for the sensitive nature of the human being.

Aquinas' rejection of the Platonic position in *ST I.76.1* is swift, in part because he already takes himself to have refuted it in *ST I.75.4*. There Aquinas argues that the man is not his soul because humans are also sensitive, and sensation requires a body. Aquinas, following Aristotle, holds that sensation is a corporeal operation. Unlike intellective cognition, which is carried out in and by the soul itself, sense cognition is carried out in and by the body. No part of sensation, therefore, occurs in the soul alone.²⁹ So something utterly incorporeal cannot sense.

Aquinas argument for the corporeity of sensation appears in *ST I.75.3* where he considers whether the souls of brute animals are subsistent. There he writes,

Now Plato did distinguish intellective understanding from sensation, but he attributed both of them to an incorporeal principle, arguing that just as intellective understanding belongs to the soul in its own right, so too does sensing.

Aristotle, on the other hand, claimed that, among the works of the soul, only intellective understanding is exercised without a corporeal organ. By contrast, sensing and the resulting operations of the sentient soul clearly occur with bodily changes; for instance, in the act of seeing the pupil is changed by the species of color, and the same thing is clear with the other senses.

And so it is clear that the sentient soul does not have any proper operation of its own; instead, every operation of the sentient soul belongs to the conjoined entity.³⁰

²⁹ Aquinas admits that Plato believed that sensation occurred in the soul alone, and so by his own lights, the Platonic human being is both sensitive and rational (see *ST I.75.4 co*). However, Aquinas takes Aristotle to have decisively shown that sensation does not occur in the soul alone. Thus, while Plato may have upheld a theory consistent with the definition of the human being as a rational animal, his theory was inconsistent with the facts about sensation.

³⁰ *ST I.75.3 co* (Freddoso (trans.), 6-7; Leonine V, 199-200): "Plato autem distinxit inter intellectum et sensum; utrumque tamen attribuit principio incorporeo, ponens quod, sicut intelligere, ita et sentire convenit animae secundum seipsam. Et ex hoc sequebatur quod etiam animae brutorum animalium sint subsistentes. Sed Aristoteles

In this passage, Aquinas argues that every operation of the sentient soul occurs with a bodily change and so he concludes sensation can occur outside of the body.³¹ Since the soul has no operation apart from the body with respect to sensation, it has no *per se* operation of its own and is therefore, not subsistent. Aquinas appeals to this argument in his rejection of the Platonic alternative in *ST I.75.4*. However, his argument, as articulated here, seems rather weak. The fact that sensation occurs with a bodily change does not establish that the sensitive soul has no operation of its own, nor does it show that human beings must be partly corporeal to sense.

For instance, if we interpret Aquinas' claim that sensation occurs with a bodily change to amount to the claim that *every sensation is accompanied by a change in the body* it remains consistent with views on which humans are souls using bodies. Yet from the claim that sentient operations occur with bodily changes, Aquinas concludes in *ST I.75.3* that the sentient soul has no operation of its own in which the body does not share.³² This inference suggests that by 'occurs with a bodily change' Aquinas has in mind something stronger like 'consists in a bodily change.'

Indeed, Aquinas does seem to be committed to something like this stronger claim. In *ST I.77.4* he asks whether all the powers of the soul are in the soul alone as a subject, and writes,

... Nothing has sensation without a body, since the action of sensing cannot

posuit quod solum intelligere, inter opera animae, sine organo corporeo exercetur. Sentire vero, et consequentes operationes animae sensitivae, manifeste accidunt cum aliqua corporis immutatione; sicut in videndo immutatur pupilla per speciem coloris; et idem apparet in aliis. Et sic manifestum est quod anima sensitiva non habet aliquam operationem propriam per seipsam, sed omnis operatio sensitivae animae est coniuncti."

³¹ In general, Aquinas adopts Aristotle's arguments for the corporeity of sensation. See, for instance, *ST I.75.3 ad 2* and *InDA III.7* [687]. For our purposes, it is sufficient to note that Aquinas considers Aristotle's view on the corporeity of sensation to be correct.

³² In *ST I.75.2* Aquinas argues that intellectual operations are not carried out through a bodily organ. This he uses to show that the soul alone is the subject of intellectual operations. Here Aquinas uses the same principles to show that the sentient soul does not have any operation independent from the composite. Instead, every sensitive operation occurs in or through a corporeal organ, there is no aspect of sensation that occurs in the soul alone.

proceed from the soul except through a corporeal organ.³³

Here Aquinas states that sensation must proceed through a corporeal organ. This suggests that sensation itself takes place in a corporeal organ, not just that it is accompanied by a change in a corporeal organ. On this view, sensation requires a corporeal organ because it takes place in that organ. It cannot take place apart from the organ, nor is there any aspect of sensation that does not take place in the organ. When describing the role of the soul in sensation, Aquinas writes, “A soul is a principle of sensing, not as being the one that senses, but as that by which the one who senses does sense. Hence the sentient powers are not in the soul as in a subject, but are from the soul as from a principle.”³⁴ Here Aquinas describes the soul as that by which sensation occurs, not as the sensor itself. This is, of course, in contrast to the soul’s role with respect to intellectual cognition, where it is itself that which understands. Instead in sensation it is only a principle by which the sentient thing senses.

Given an account of sensation on which it occurs in bodily organs by means of (but not *by*) the soul, Aquinas uses our experience of ourselves as both knowers and sensors to reject the Platonic position. He writes,

Therefore, either (a) one must claim that Socrates has intellectual understanding by himself as a whole, as Plato posited when he claimed that a man is an intellectual soul, or (b) one must claim that the intellect is a part of Socrates. However, as was shown above (q. 75, a. 4), the first answer cannot hold up. For it is the very same man who perceives that he both understands and senses, and yet sensation does not exist without the body. Hence, the body must be a part of the man.³⁵

³³ *ST I.77.5 ad 3* (Freddoso (trans.), 20; Leonine V, 209): “Et sic nihil sentit sine corpore, quia actio sentiendi non potest procedere ab anima nisi per organum corporale.”

³⁴ *QDA a.19 ad 15* (Robb (trans.), 230; Marietti 9th rev. ed., vol.2, 354): “Ad decimumquintum dicendum quod anima est principium sentiendi, non sicut sentiens, sed sicut id quo sentiens sentit. Unde potentiae sensitivae non sunt in anima sicut in subiecto, sed sunt ab anima sicut a principio.”

³⁵ *ST I.76.1 co* (Freddoso (trans.), 22; Leonine V, 209): “Aut ergo oportet dicere quod Socrates intelligit secundum se totum, sicut Plato posuit, dicens hominem esse animam intellectivam, aut oportet dicere quod intellectus sit aliqua pars Socratis. Et primum quidem stare non potest, ut supra ostensum est, propter hoc quod ipse idem homo est qui percipit se et intelligere et sentire, sentire autem non est sine corpore, unde oportet corpus aliquam esse hominis partem.”

Here Aquinas argues that we each experience ourselves as a subject of both sensation and understanding.³⁶ Aquinas takes this as evidence that we are both sensitive and rational. But as we have seen from his discussion in *ST I.75.3*, sensation is only carried out in corporeal organs. According to Aquinas, therefore, the Platonic view on which the human being is simply her soul is not viable.

6.5 The Moved-Mover Position: Unity, Being, and Operation

Previously, we saw Aquinas' objections to the Moved-Mover variant that identified the human being with the sensitive body. In his final objection to the Moved-Mover view Aquinas returns to attack the variant on which the human being is the whole comprised of the intellect and body, each of which is an entity in its own right. He writes,

On the other hand, if (a) Socrates is a whole composed by the union of the intellect to the other things belonging to Socrates and if (b) the intellect is nonetheless united to the other things belonging to Socrates only as a mover, then it follows that Socrates is not a single thing absolutely speaking (*non sit unum simpliciter*) and hence is not an entity absolutely speaking. For an entity is a being in the same sense in which it has oneness [*sic enim aliquid est ens quomodo et unum*].³⁷

In this passage Aquinas argues that the human being is composed of intellect and other things belonging to Socrates, namely, his body parts, then Socrates is not unqualifiedly one. Instead, Socrates will be an aggregate being, something *unum secundum quid* rather than something *unum simpliciter*. Aquinas treats this as a decisive objection to the view. Given the connection between unity and existence, if something is an aggregate, then it is only accidentally united and accordingly, it is only an accidental being.

³⁶ See also *SCG II.57* [5] and [8].

³⁷ *ST I.76.1 co* (Freddoso (trans.), 22; Leonine V, 209): “Si vero Socrates est totum quod componitur ex unione intellectus ad reliqua quae sunt Socratis, et tamen intellectus non unitur aliis quae sunt Socratis nisi sicut motor; sequitur quod Socrates non sit unum simpliciter, et per consequens nec ens simpliciter; sic enim aliquid est ens, quomodo et unum.”

Aquinas' quick rejection of this view may seem somewhat surprising, particularly since this Moved-Mover advocate seems to be able to account for the introspective insight that human beings are both rational and sensitive. Since the human being is a composite of a corporeal substance and an intellectual one, she understands by means of her intellectual part and senses and nourishes herself by means of her bodily part. It is not immediately obvious why the failure to count as something truly one, or truly a being, ought to count as so marked a strike against the view.

Aquinas offers more detail in *De Unitate Intellectus* where he argues that the lack of true substantial unity precludes the attribution of any operations whatsoever to the human being. Aquinas writes,

But if you should say that Socrates is not some one thing absolutely, but one by the coming together of mover and moved, many incoherencies follow. First, indeed, that since anything is one in the manner in which it exists, it would follow that Socrates is not a being and does not belong in a species or genus; and further, that he would have no action, because only beings act. Hence we do not say that understanding the sailor is understanding the whole made up of sailor and boat, but of sailor alone; similarly, understanding would not be Socrates' activity, but only that of the intellect using the body of Socrates. The action of a part is the action of the whole only when the whole is one being. Anyone who says otherwise speaks improperly.³⁸

Here Aquinas assumes that the moved-mover relationship provides only accidental unity rather than absolute unity, again concluding that the composite view of the human being renders her an accidental being. If the human being is not truly a being, then they will not be a member of a species or a genus. While both parts of the human, as complete substances in

³⁸ *DUI* ch.3 (McInerny (trans.), 87; Leonine XLIII, 304): "Sed si tu dicas, quod Socrates non est unum quid simpliciter, sed unum quid aggregatione motoris et moti, sequuntur multa inconvenientia. Primo quidem, quia cum unumquodque sit similiter unum et ens, sequitur quod Socrates non sit aliquod ens, et quod non sit in specie nec in genere; et ulterius, quod non habeat aliquam actionem, quia actio non est nisi entis. Unde non dicimus quod intelligere nautae sit intelligere huius totius quod est nauta et navis, sed nautae tantum; et similiter intelligere non erit actus Socratis, sed intellectus tantum utentis corpore Socratis. In solo enim toto quod est aliquid unum et ens, actio partis est actio totius; et si quis aliter loquatur, improprie loquitur."

their own right, may each count as a member of different species and genera, the human being as a whole would not count.

Moreover, in this passage from *De Unitate Intellectus*, Aquinas argues that things that are not truly beings do not act. Only substances act, so if the human being is not a substance, then he will not be the subject of any acts whatsoever. His parts, as substances themselves, may carry out the operations of sensation and intellection, but the aggregate, the human being, is not, properly speaking, their subject. Aquinas maintains, therefore that the actions of a part can only be attributed to the whole when that whole is a substantial whole, something *unum simpliciter*. If the part is a complete substance in its own right, its operation, properly speaking belongs to it and not to some accidental whole of which it may also be a part.

Since only beings or substances act, any account on which the human being is an aggregate or accidental unity view prevents her from being the proper subject of any of the actions or operations carried out by her substantial parts.³⁹ So on such views we are forced to admit that while intellects and bodies may do things, human beings do not. Without substantial, unqualified unity there is no subject of the complete range of essential human operations. Thus any view that attempts to account for the rationality and animality of the human being by uniting them through contact of power or operational unity of some kind will ultimately fail to account for any essential human activity. It will fail to make it a *human* activity.

According to Aquinas, then, the only way to offer an account of the metaphysics of the human being that renders it the proper subject of the entire range of essential human operations (this includes rational, sensitive, and presumably, nutritive operations) is to offer

³⁹ This suggests that for Aquinas, armies, nation-states, and school boards are not, properly speaking, capable of acting or operating. Moreover, Aquinas' argument suggests that these aggregates cannot even be properly said to act in virtue of the action of one of their members. Substances can act with their whole selves, or in virtue of the action of one of their parts, but aggregates can neither act with their whole selves or in virtue of the action of one of their parts.

an account on which the human being is something truly and unqualifiedly one and on which this unified substance is the subject of the rational, sensitive, and nutritive powers. Only on such a view can the human being be the subject of the complete range of human essential operations and satisfy the definition of the human being—a definition that is underpinned by our own experience of ourselves as knowers and sensors.

6.6 Hylomorphism and Aquinas' *Desiderata*

At the end of the process of elimination in *ST I.76.1* Aquinas is left to conclude that only the hylomorphic account is viable. Only such an account meets the *desiderata* required for an account of human nature. Although Aquinas only explicitly rejects a handful of competing views in his argument, we can see based on his metaphysical framework that nothing short of a hylomorphic solution will suffice. In order to be rational and sensitive, the human being must be comprised of a corporeal part, which serves as the subject of the nutritive and sensitive powers, and an incorporeal part, which serves as the subject of the intellective and volitional powers. Moreover, these two subsistent parts must be united to form a single substance, something *unum simpliciter*, in order to license the attribution of the operations of both parts to the whole of which they are parts.

The only way for subsistent things to be united to form something unqualifiedly one is for them to share a substantial form. The soul as the substantial form of the human being, unifies itself to matter to form the human body, and thereby joins itself *qua* subsistent part to the subsistent human body to form something *unum simpliciter*. Since Aquinas denies the possibility of spiritual matter, this dual role of the soul as both subsistent intellect and as substantial form provides the only grounds for unqualified unity between the corporeal and incorporeal parts of the human being. The soul serves as the root of all the human being's essential powers and so the human being actualized by the soul includes the principles

through which all those powers are exercised, regardless of whether those principles are corporeal or incorporeal. Accordingly the human being, or some subsistent part of her, serves as the subject for each of her essential powers, and so the operations carried out by means of each power belong to her.

Aquinas argues in *ST I.76.1* that the Averroist, Platonic, and Moved-Mover views fail to render the human being sensitive, rational, or properly unified (and thereby neither rational nor sensitive). In contrast, the hylomorphic account can legitimately attribute the whole range of essential human operations to the individual since the nutritive, sensitive, and intellectual operations are all carried out by means of powers that find their source in the substantial form of the human being, namely, the soul. Thus, it upholds Aristotle's definition of human beings as rational animals in the category of substance and coheres with our experience of ourselves as subjects of both sensitive and intellectual cognition. As he takes himself to have provided a coherent account of the soul and its union with the body, Aquinas likely sees his position in need of no further argument.

Conclusion

Aquinas' argument by elimination reveals the constraints he places on an adequate account of human ontology. Any satisfactory account must provide metaphysical grounds for the rationality, animality, and substantial unity of the human being. The Averroist account and the first version of the Moved-Mover views fail to account for the rationality of the human being because the human being lacks a formal principle to render it in act with respect to the capacity for intellectual operation. This judgment, as we have seen, follows from Aquinas' commitment to the *in-act* principle. The Platonic position, in contrast, fails to account for the animality of the human being since it posits no corporeal part of the human being. Lastly, the final variant of the Moved-Mover views fails, in Aquinas' view, because it cannot account for

human unity and thus fails to posit a substantial subject with the capacity for the complete range of human activity. Given his criteria for unqualified unity, only the hylomorphic view Aquinas endorses can satisfy all three *desiderata*.

Conclusion

One of the main goals of this dissertation was to evaluate the extent to which the incorporeity, subsistence, and incorruptibility of the human soul threaten Aquinas' account of the unqualified unity of the human being. We began by considering his criteria for unqualified or substantial unity. In his view the various parts of a substance are unqualifiedly unified because they exist by means of a single substantial form, which bestows on them a single act of being. This account of unity holds for material and immaterial substances alike. In material substances substantial form accounts for the existence of the whole substance and thus of each of its parts. So it unifies the various incomplete subsistent parts into a complete whole.

Aquinas' account of the nature of intellectual cognition, and in particular the nature of the objects we understand, requires that the intellectual power by which we understand be free from matter. As a result, the soul alone must be the subject of intellectual understanding. This means that the soul must be a form not fully immersed in matter such that to the extent that it surpasses matter it can serve as the incorporeal subject of the intellectual powers. The incorporeity of the intellectual part of the human being is not, in itself, a threat to unity. It tells us that there is more to the human being than her body. Although as we saw in the final chapter, the human body is a necessary part of the human being, she must also have an incorporeal part to house the intellectual powers.

The soul's incorporeity necessarily gives rise to its subsistence. The incorporeal part of the human being must be the sort of thing that can carry out a *per se* operation. As we learned from the *in-act* principle, nothing acts except insofar as it is in act. To be in act, the soul must possess formal principles of operation, i.e., the intellectual powers required for intellectual cognition. To this end, the soul must be the sort of thing that can support accidents in its own right and not merely a formal principle *quo* in the human being. Thus the

soul must be an incorporeal subsistent part of the human being—a *hoc aliquid* in the weak sense. I have argued that this does not automatically render the rational soul capable of existing apart from the human being, but shows that the existence possessed by the soul is separable in the sense that it does not depend on a subject or on matter for inherent existence. In this respect, then, the soul is on a par with the various corporeal subsistent parts of the human being, as Aquinas maintains.

The rational soul is, therefore, both the substantial form of the human body and a subsistent part of the human being. This combination makes it incorruptible. It cannot be corrupted *per se* since it is essentially a principle of *esse* and cannot be separated from the act of being that follows upon it. It cannot be corrupted *per accidens* because it is itself a subject of *esse* that subsists in the act of being of which it is also the principle. So although the human body is corruptible on account of its matter, the soul continues to exist and even operate after the body is corrupted. I have argued that Aquinas is justified in maintaining that the disembodied soul is incomplete in a species, despite the fact that it can exist and operate apart from the body. The soul cannot be complete in the specific nature of the human being because it does not (and cannot) possess the complete range of essential human capacities for operation, some of which can only be carried out by means of corporeal organs. Moreover, the soul cannot be specifically complete in its own nature, because in its role as form it is the actuality of a nutritive, sensitive, and rational substance, not simply of a rational substance. It virtually contains powers that are meant to serve as the actuality of the sensitive and nutritive organs. Since it is incapable of actualizing matter in its separated state, it is unable to serve as the actuality of all that it ought to actualize and remains specifically incomplete. Only when it successfully serves as the actuality of a nutritive, sensitive, and rational substance does the result constitute something specifically complete and specifically human.

Thus we have seen that the rational soul must be the actuality of something partly corporeal and partly incorporeal. With respect to the intellective part of the human being, like a separate substance, the soul is both that which exists and that by which it exists. But the human soul is also the actuality of the body. In this regard, the soul organizes matter into a three dimensional, living, nutritive, and sensitive being. It is part of the body, as shape is a part of the statue. The soul is a subject of *esse* but through its formal role as the actuality of body it incorporates matter into its own act of being to constitute the living human body.

Aquinas' account of the metaphysical nature of the human soul is importantly different from that of all other material forms. Yet he consistently applies the criteria for unqualified unity to corporeal substances, incorporeal substances, and the partly corporeal, partly incorporeal human being. The corporeal and incorporeal subsistent parts of the human being subsist in the same act of being provided by the soul as form. He is, therefore, entitled to his claim that the human being is *unum simpliciter* and to his account of the rational soul as incorporeal, subsistent, and incorruptible.

A second goal of this dissertation was to examine Aquinas' arguments in favor of the hylomorphic union between body and rational soul. As we have seen, this hylomorphic union is essential to human unity. Aquinas offers two main arguments for the claim that the soul is the form of the body, namely, the Aristotelian argument and his argument by elimination. The first of these is often overlooked as a repetition of Aristotle's passage from *De Anima* II.2. I have argued that Aquinas develops the argument in significant ways that reflect his disagreement with Averroes and target the view that the rational soul or intellective power exists separately from the human being. Aquinas' explicit characterization of the form of the body as the principle by which we first understand, the intellective principle, and the intellect highlight his disagreement with Averroes' account of the rational soul as comprising separate

intellective principles. Moreover, his appeal to the *in-act* principle introduces the fundamental aspects of his account of creaturely operation that prohibit the kind of intellective principle Averroes posits. Aquinas argues that every operation must be carried out by means of a form in the operator. Such a form is required to render the agent appropriately in act and thereby provide it with the capacity for operation. He uses these considerations to affirm that the soul is the substantial form in the human body and to argue that the possible intellect is a power formally inhering in the human being and not a separate substance. His inclusion of the *in-act* principle as part of his argument for hylomorphism reveals the anti-Averroism implicit in his conclusion that the soul is the form of the body.

Furthermore, I have argued that the conclusion of Aquinas' Aristotelian argument in *Summa Theologiae* I.76.1 concerns the intellective soul and not the intellective power of the soul. The intellective soul is united to the body as its form, whereas the intellective powers, which flow from the soul, are not the act of body. Aquinas' tendency to use the term 'intellect' to pick out both the intellective soul and the intellective powers of the soul is likely a result of his opponents' terminology, as Bazan has suggested. It may also arise from the fact that the soul is the subject of the intellective powers and the *per se* operator with respect to their exercise, so it is fittingly called 'that by which we understand,' in virtue of its being in act through the intellective powers.

Lastly we have considered Aquinas' argument by elimination in which he objects to the Platonic, Averroist, and Moved-Mover views. I have argued that this argument is not simply an attempt to rule out competing views. Instead it reveals a set of *desiderata* concerning the rationality, animality, and unity of the human being that constrain any adequate account of human nature. His competitors fail to satisfy these *desiderata*, in Aquinas' view, because the ontological nature they ascribe to human beings cannot provide

the metaphysical underpinnings to render the human being both rational and an animal. Once we have Aquinas' account of creaturely operation and substantial unity on the table, we see that the only viable option is the hylomorphic account that he endorses.

Bibliography

Primary Texts

- Aquinas, T. (1882) *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis, Doctoris Angelici, opera omnia, iussu impensaue Leonis XIII P.M.edita*. Romae: Ex Typographia Polyglotta S.C. de Propaganda Fide.
- Aquinas, T. (1920) *The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas*. Second and Revised Edition. Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. London: Burns Oates and Washbourne Ltd.
- Aquinas, T. (1932) *On the power of God: (Quæstiones disputatæ de potentia Dei)*. Translated by L. Shapcote and Fathers of the English Dominican Province. London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, ltd.
- Aquinas, T. (1949) *On Spiritual Creatures: (De Spiritualibus Creaturis)*. Translated by M. C. FitzPatrick and J. J. Wellmuth. Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press.
- Aquinas, T. (1950) *In Duodecimos Libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Expositio*. Taurini: Marietti.
- Aquinas, T. (1953) *Quaestiones Disputatae*. 9th Revised Edition. Taurini: Marietti.
- Aquinas, T. (1955) *Sancti Thomae de Aquino Expositio Super Librum Boethii De Trinitate*. Decker, B. (ed.), Leiden: Brill.
- Aquinas, T. (1991a) *Summa Contra Gentiles Book Three: Providence I*. Translated by V. C. Bourke. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Aquinas, T. (1991b) *Summa Contra Gentiles Book Three: Providence II*. University of Notre Dame Press.
- Aquinas, T. (1991c) *Summa Contra Gentiles: Book One: God*. Translated by A. C. Pegis. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Aquinas, T. (1992) *Summa Contra Gentiles Book Two: Creation*. Translated by J. F. Anderson. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Aquinas, T. (1993) *Aquinas Against the Averroists: On There Being Only One Intellect*. Edited and translated by R. M. McNerny. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press.
- Aristotle (1993) *De Anima: Books II and III (with passages from Book I)*. Translated by D. W. Hamlyn. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press (Clarendon Aristotle Series).
- Aquinas, T. (1995) *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*. Translated by J. P. Rowan. Notre Dame, IN: Dumb Ox Books.
- Aquinas, T. (1999) *A Commentary on Aristotle's 'De anima.'* Translated by R. C. Pasnau. Yale University Press.
- Aquinas, T. (2010) *Treatise on Human Nature: The Complete Text (Summa Theologiae I, Questions 75-102)*. Translated by A. J. Freddoso. South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press.

Aristotle (1995) *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. Translated by J. Barnes. Princeton University Press.

Averroes (2009) *Long Commentary on the De Anima of Aristotle*. Translated by R. C. Taylor. Yale University Press.

Secondary Literature

Abel, D. C. (1995) 'Intellectual Substance as Form of the Body in Aquinas', *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, 69, pp. 227–236.

Adams, M. M. (1992) 'The Resurrection of the Body According to Three Medieval Aristotelians: Thomas Aquinas, John Duns Scotus, William Ockham', *Philosophical Topics*, 20(2), pp. 1–33.

Aertsen, J. (1988) *Nature and Creature: Thomas Aquinas's Way of Thought*. Boston: Brill.

Baltuta, E. (2013) 'Aquinas on Intellectual Cognition: The Case of Intelligible Species', *Philosophia*, 41(3), pp. 589–602.

Bazàn, B. C. (1997) 'The human soul : Form and substance ? Thomas Aquinas' critique of eclectic Aristotelianism', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen-âge*, 64, pp. 95–126.

Bazàn, B. C. (1981) 'Intellectum Speculativum : Averroes, Thomas Aquinas, and Siger of Brabant on the Intelligible Object', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 19(4), pp. 425–446.

Bazán, B. C. (1974) 'Le dialogue philosophique entre Siger de Brabant et Thomas d'Aquin. À propos d'un ouvrage récent de E. H. Wéber O.P.', *Revue Philosophique de Louvain*, 72(13), pp. 53–155.

Bazán, B. C. (2010) 'On angels and human beings : Did Thomas Aquinas succeed in demonstrating the existence of angels ?', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen-âge*, Tome 77(1), pp. 47–85.

Black, D. L. (1993a) 'Consciousness and self-knowledge in Aquinas's critique of Averroes', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 31(3), p. 349.

Black, D. L. (1993b) 'Models of Mind: Presuppositions of the Averroist and Thomistic Accounts of Intellection', *Psychology*, 31, pp. 23–59.

Black, D. L. (1999) 'Mental Existence in Thomas Aquinas and Avicenna', *Mediaeval Studies*, 61(-1), pp. 45–79.

Black, D.L. 2010. 'Intentionality in medieval Arabic philosophy.' *Quaestio*, 10, pp.65-81.

Blankenhorn, B. T. (2002) 'The Good as Self-diffusive in Thomas Aquinas', *Angelicum*, 79(4), pp. 803–837.

Bledsoe, J. P. (1973) 'Aquinas on the Soul', *Laval Théologique Et Philosophique*, 29(3), pp. 273–289.

- Brower, J. E. (2014) *Aquinas's Ontology of the Material World: Change, Hylomorphism, and Material Objects*. Oxford University Press.
- Brower, J. E. and Brower-Toland, S. (2008) 'Aquinas on Mental Representation: Concepts and Intentionality', *The Philosophical Review*, 117(2), pp. 193–243.
- Brown, C. (2005) *Aquinas and the Ship of Theseus: Solving Puzzles about Material Objects*. New York: Continuum.
- Brown, C. (2007) 'Aquinas and the Ship of Theseus', *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 81(4), p. 655.
- Brown, M. (2003) 'Aquinas and the Individuation of Human Persons Revisited', *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 43(2), pp. 167–185.
- Callus, D. A. (1961) 'The Origins of the Problem of the Unity of Form', *Thomist: a Speculative Quarterly Review*, 24(2), pp. 257–285.
- Carrasco, M. P. (2012) '¿Cuál es el objeto de nuestro conocimiento? Tomás de Aquino intérprete de Averroes', *Anales del Seminario de Historia de la Filosofía*, 29(1), pp. 55–63.
- Cohen (1982) 'St. Thomas Aquinas on the Immaterial Reception of Sensible Forms', *The Philosophical Review*, 91(2), pp. 193–209.
- Conn, C. (2012) 'Aquinas on Human Nature and the Possibility of Bodiless Existence', *New Blackfriars*, 93(1045), pp. 324–338.
- Conolly, B. F. (2007) 'Averroes, Thomas Aquinas and Giles of Rome on How This Man Understands', *Vivarium*, 45(1), pp. 69–92.
- Coulter, G. (1991) 'Aquinas On the Identity of Mind and Substantial Form', *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, 161–179.
- Cross, R. (1997) 'Is Aquinas's proof for the indestructibility of the soul successful?', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 5(1), pp. 1–20.
- Cross, R. (2002) 'Aquinas and the mind-body problem', in Haldane, J. (ed.) *Mind, Metaphysics, and Value in the Thomistic and Analytic Traditions*. South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, pp. 36–53.
- Dales, R. C. (1995) *The Problem of the Rational Soul in the Thirteenth Century*. Boston: Brill.
- Davidson, H. A. (1986) 'Averroes on the Material Intellect', *Viator*, 17, pp. 91–137.
- Dewan, L. O. (1996) 'St. Albert, St. Thomas, and Knowledge', *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 70(1), pp. 121–135.
- Dewan, L., O. P. (2006) *Form and Being: Studies in Thomistic Metaphysics*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press (Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy).

- Eberl (2004) 'Aquinas on the Nature of Human Beings', *The Review of Metaphysics*, 58(2), pp. 333–365.
- Elders, L. (1993) *The Metaphysics of Being of St. Thomas Aquinas: In a Historical Perspective*. Boston: Brill.
- Etzwiler, J. P. (1980) 'Man as Embodied Spirit', *New Scholasticism*, 54(3), pp. 358–377.
- Field, R. W. (1984) 'St. Thomas Aquinas on Properties and the Powers of the Soul', *Laval théologique et philosophique*, 40(2). 203–215.
- Fisher, K. A. (2017) 'Thomas Aquinas on hylomorphism and the in-act principle', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, doi: 10.1080/09608788.2017.1300571.
- Foster, R. D. (1991) 'Aquinas on the Immateriality of the Intellect', *The Thomist*, 55(3), pp. 415–438.
- Geach, P. T. (1954) 'Form and Existence', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 55, pp. 251–272.
- Haldane, J. (1992) 'Aquinas and the Active Intellect', *Philosophy*, 67(260), pp. 199–210.
- Haldane, J. (2008) 'The Metaphysics of Intellect(ion)', *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, 80, pp. 39–55.
- Haldane, J. (1983) 'Aquinas on Sense-Perception', *The Philosophical Review*, 92(2), pp. 233–239.
- Hamlyn, D. W. (1961) *Sensation and perception: a history of the philosophy of perception*. New York: Humanities Press.
- Hoffman, P. (1986) 'The Unity of Descartes's Man', *The Philosophical Review*, 95(3), pp. 339–370.
- Hoffman, P. (1990) 'St. Thomas Aquinas on the Halfway State of Sensible Being', *The Philosophical Review*, 99(1), pp. 73–92.
- Hughes, C. (1996) 'Matter and Individuation in Aquinas', *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 13(1), pp. 1–16.
- Hughes, C. (1997) 'Aquinas on Continuity and Identity', *Medieval Philosophy & Theology*, 6(1), pp. 93–108.
- Hughes, C. (1998) 'Matter and Actuality in Aquinas', *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, 52(204 (2)), pp. 269–286.
- Hyman, A. (1981) 'Aristotle's Theory of the Intellect and its Interpretation by Averroes.', in O'Meara, D. J. (ed.) *Studies in Aristotle*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press (Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy), pp. 161–191.
- Kenny, A. (1994) *Aquinas on Mind*. New Ed. New York: Routledge.
- King, P. (2000) 'The Problem of Individuation in the Middle Ages', *Theoria*, 66(2), pp. 159–184.

- Klima, G. (2002) 'Man= Body+ Soul: Aquinas's Arithmetic of Human Nature', in Davies, B. (ed.) *Thomas Aquinas: Contemporary Philosophical Perspectives*. Oxford University Press, pp. 257–274.
- Klima, G. (2007) 'Thomistic "Monism" vs. Cartesian "Dualism."' *Logical Analysis and History of Philosophy*, 10 (2007): 92-112.
- Klima, G. (2009) 'Aquinas on the Materiality of the Human Soul and the Immateriality of the Human Intellect', *Philosophical Investigations*, 32(2), pp. 163–182.
- Kretzmann, N. (1992) 'Aquinas's Philosophy of Mind', *Philosophical Topics*, 20(2), pp. 77–101.
- Kretzmann, N. (1993) 'Aquinas on Mind', in Kretzmann, N. and Stump, E. (eds) *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 128–159.
- Langley, S. (2001) 'Aquinas, Resurrection, and Material Continuity', *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, 75, pp. 135–147.
- Lee, J. (2006) 'The Intellect-Body Problem in Aquinas', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 88(3), pp. 239–260.
- Lee, P. (1981) 'St. Thomas and Avicenna on the Agent Intellect', *Thomist: a Speculative Quarterly Review*, 45(1), pp. 41–61.
- MacDonald, S. C. (1984) 'The Esse/Essentia Argument in Aquinas's De ente et essentia', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 22(2), pp. 157–172.
- Mahoney, E. P. (1994) 'Aquinas's Critique of Averroes' Doctrine of the Unity of the Intellect', *Thomas Aquinas and his Legacy*, pp. 83–106.
- McInerny, R. (1993) *Aquinas Against the Averroists: On There Being Only One Intellect*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press.
- Michael, E. (1992) 'Averroes and the Plurality of Forms', *Franciscan Studies*, 52(1), pp. 155–182.
- Miller, M. T. (1946) 'The Problem of Action in the Commentary of St. Thomas Aquinas on the Physics of Aristotle', *The Modern Schoolman*, 23(3), pp. 135–167.
- Moser, R. (2011) 'Thomas Aquinas, Esse Intentionale, and the Cognitive as Such', *The Review of Metaphysics*, 64(4), pp. 763–788.
- Nejeschleba, T. (2004) 'Thomas Aquinas and the Early Franciscan School on the Agent Intellect', *Verbum*, 6(1), pp. 67–78.
- Novak, J. (1987) 'Aquinas and the Incorruptibility of the Soul', *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 4(4), pp. 405–421.
- Owens (1974) 'Aquinas on Cognition as Existence', *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, 48, pp. 74–85.

- Owens, J. (1965) 'Quiddity and Real Distinction in St Thomas Aquinas', *Mediaeval Studies*, 27, pp. 1–22.
- Owens, J. (1987) 'Aquinas on the Inseparability of Soul From Existence', *The New Scholasticism*, 61(3), pp. 249–270.
- Owens, J. (1988) 'Thomas Aquinas: Dimensive Quantity as Individuating Principle', *Mediaeval Studies*, 50, pp. 279–310.
- Owens, J. (1991) 'Aristotle and Aquinas on Cognition', *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 21(sup1), pp. 103–123.
- Owens, J. (1994) 'Thomas Aquinas', in Gracia, J. (ed.) *Individuation and Scholasticism: The Later Middle Ages and the Counterreformation (1150–1650)*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press (SUNY Series In Philosophy), pp. 173–194.
- Panaccio, C. (2001) 'Aquinas on Intellectual Representation', in Perler, D. (ed.) *Ancient and Medieval Theories of Intentionality*. Boston: Brill, pp. 185–201.
- Pasnau, R. (1997) *Theories of cognition in the later Middle Ages*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Pasnau, R. (1998) 'Aquinas and the Content Fallacy', *The Modern Schoolman*, 75(4), pp. 293–314.
- Pasnau, R. (2002a) 'Commentary', in Aquinas, T., *Treatise on Human Nature: Summa Theologiae 1a 75-89*. Edited and translated by R. Pasnau. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, pp. 220–378.
- Pasnau, R. (2002b) *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature: A Philosophical Study of Summa Theologiae, 1a 75-89*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Pegis, A. (1940) 'In Umbra Intelligentiae', *The New Scholasticism*, 14(2), pp. 146–180.
- Pini, G. (2015) 'Two Models of Thinking: Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus on Occurrent Thoughts', in Klima, G. (ed.) *Intentionality, Cognition, and Mental Representation in Medieval Philosophy*. New York: Fordham University Press, pp. 81–103.
- Reith, H. R. (1958) *The Metaphysics of St. Thomas Aquinas*. Milwaukee : The Bruce Publishing Co.
- Roensch, F. J. (1964) *Early Thomistic School*. Dubuque, Iowa: Priory Press.
- Rota, M. (2004) 'Substance and Artifact in Thomas Aquinas', *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 21(3), pp. 241–259.
- Royce, J. E. (1960) 'St. Thomas and the Definition of Active Potency', *New Scholasticism*, 34(4), pp. 431–437.
- Sharpe, K. W. (2010) 'Thomas Aquinas and Nonreductive Physicalism', *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, 79, pp. 217–227.

- Stump, E. (1995) 'Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism and Materialism Without Reductionism', *Faith and Philosophy*, 12(4), pp. 505–531.
- Stump, E. (2005) *Aquinas*. New edition. New York: Routledge.
- Stump, E. (2006) 'Resurrection, Reassembly, and Reconstitution: Aquinas on the Soul', in Niederberger, B. and Runggaldier, E. (eds) *Die menschliche Seele: Brauchen wir den Dualismus?* Ontos Verlag. Frankfurt – London: ontos verlag, 151–172.
- Stump, E. (2011) 'Resurrection and the Separated Soul', in Davies, B. and Stump, E. (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*. Oxford University Press.
- Taylor, R. (2004) 'Separate Material Intellect in Averroes' Mature Philosophy', in *Words, Texts and Concepts Cruising the Mediterranean Sea*. Dudley, MA: Peeters Publishers, pp. 289–309.
- Taylor, R. C. (1998) 'Averroes on Psychology and the Principles of Metaphysics', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 36(4), pp. 507–523.
- Templeton, K. (2008) *Avicenna, Aquinas and the Active Intellect*. *Journal of Islamic Philosophy*, 3 : 40-67.
- Toner, P. (2009) 'Personhood and Death in St. Thomas Aquinas', *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 26(2), pp. 121–138.
- Toner, P. (2010) 'St. Thomas Aquinas on Death and the Separated Soul', *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 91(4), pp. 587–599.
- Van Dyke, C. (2007) 'Human identity, immanent causal relations, and the principle of non-repeatability: Thomas Aquinas on the bodily resurrection', *Religious Studies*, 43(4), pp. 373–394.
- Van Dyke, C. (2009) 'Not Properly a Person: The Rational Soul and "Thomistic Substance Dualism"', *Faith and Philosophy*, 26(2), pp. 186–204.
- Weisheipl, J. A. (1974) *Friar Thomas D'aquino: His Life, Thought, and Work*. New York: Doubleday.
- White, K. (1995) 'Individuation in Aquinas's Super Boetium De Trinitate, Q.4', *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 69(4), pp. 543–556.
- Wilder, P. A. (1987) 'St. Thomas and The Real Distinction of the Potencies of the Soul from its Substance', *L'anima nell'antropologia di S. Tommaso d'Aquino: atti del Congresso della Societa internazionale S. Tommaso d'Aquino*, pp. 431–54.
- Wippel, J. F. (1984) *Metaphysical Themes in Thomas Aquinas*. Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press.
- Wippel, J. F. (2000a) *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being*. Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press (Monographs of the Society for Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy, no. 1).

- Wippel, J. F. (2000b) 'Thomas Aquinas on Our Knowledge of God and the Axiom that Every Agent Produces Something Like Itself', *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, 74, pp. 81–101.
- Wippel, J. F. (2007) *Metaphysical themes in Thomas Aquinas II*. Rev. ed. Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press (Studies in philosophy and the history of philosophy, v. 47).

Vita

Kendall Ann Fisher

Place of Birth: Saint Paul, Minnesota, USA

Date of Birth: June 8th, 1988

2017 PhD in Philosophy, Syracuse University, New York, USA

2010 B.A. in Philosophy, Calvin College, Michigan, USA

2006 Graduated from Highland Park Senior High, Minnesota, USA

2016-2017 Tutor, Philosophy Department, University of Manchester

2012-2016 Instructor, Philosophy Department, Syracuse University

2010-2012 Teaching Assistant, Philosophy Department, Syracuse University

2017 'Aquinas on Hylomorphism and the *In-Act* Principle,' *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, DOI: 10.1080/09608788.2017.1300571.