

**A TRANSLATION OF THE *QUAESTIO DISPUTATA*  
*DE SPIRITUALIBUS CREATURIS* OF ST THOMAS  
AQUINAS, WITH ACCOMPANYING NOTES**

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## ABSTRACT

### 1. Scope of the work

This research project involves two components. The first is a translation from Latin into English of St Thomas Aquinas's *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis*. This is an important, though largely neglected, work of St Thomas dating from 1267-68, dealing with a range of issues relating to the two categories of created spirits recognised by Thomas, viz. angels and human souls. The perspective of the Angelic Doctor is principally, though not exclusively, that of philosophy rather than of theology. What is found in the disputed question is the development of a number of arguments, and the consequent taking up of a number of positions, that are the immediate source of what St Thomas has to say about angels and the human soul in the first part (*prima pars*) of his *Summa Theologiae* - a part which was completed by 1268. What he has to say about the Averroistic view that there is only one receptive intellect, and only one agent intellect, for all human beings (see Articles 9 and 10 of the disputed question) prepared the way for his crucially important polemical treatise of 1270, the *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas*.

The project provides a complete translation of the *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis* which extends across eleven 'articles' addressing selected questions concerning angels and/or human souls, viz. matter/form composition, modes of union with (or separation from) matter, specific differences between angels, receptive intellect and agent intellect in human beings, and the distinction between the soul and its powers. Pages vi-vii of the *Introduction* to the project discuss the way in which the translation of the text of St Thomas has been approached. To cite one sentence: "An attempt has been made at all times to use a style of translation that is pleasantly readable, non-jarring, and non-pedantic" - but one that is subject to total fidelity to expressing the philosophical meaning of St Thomas.

The second component of the project is eleven sets of notes (one hundred and seven pages in all), each set of which belongs to one or other of the eleven articles making up the text of St Thomas as translated. There is a degree of cross-referencing between some of the notes belonging to particular articles. The notes are of varying length and are concerned to facilitate an understanding of what the Angelic Doctor has to say in his *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis*.

Most of the notes fall into one or other of the following categories: biographical (providing information about a number of persons whose names appear in Thomas's text), historical (giving information about institutions and events connected with the time, or life, of St Thomas), exegetical (explaining why a particular English translation of Thomas's Latin has been used, or illustrating a point in the text by citations from other works of the Saint, or on occasion taking issue with some feature of the critical Latin text of Leo Keeler, S.J., on which the translation has been based), and 'philosophical extension' notes (seeking to amplify what St Thomas has been arguing in the disputed question on created spirits by considering related issues in other works of his, or by further exploration of a concept or notion used in the text but not dwelt on by Thomas).

## 2 Aim of the work

The aim of the project has been to make available an accurate, and attractive, English translation from thirteenth century Latin of an important work of Thomas Aquinas, and to support this activity with accompanying sets of notes. The achievement of appropriate scholarly standards has been a pervasive intention in all that has been undertaken.

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## INTRODUCTION

Ad officium boni translatoris pertinet ut... serviat sententiam, mutet autem modum loquendi secundum proprietatem linguae in quam transfert. Apparet enim quod si ea quae litteraliter in latino dicuntur vulgariter exponantur, indecens erit expositio si semper verbum ex verbo sumatur; multo igitur magis quando ea quae in una lingua dicuntur transferuntur in aliam ita quod verbum sumatur ex verbo, non est mirum si aliqua dubietas relinquatur.

(It belongs to the task of a good translator to retain the meaning while changing the manner of expression to accord with the character of the language into which he or she is translating. Indeed, it's plain that, if what's written in Latin is put into the vernacular word for word, an inappropriate version is the result. So, when what's expressed in one language is translated word for word into another, it's hardly to be wondered if there remains some uncertainty about meaning.)

(St Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Errores Graecorum*, pars prima, prologus)

### 1. Nature of this work

#### 1.1 The text of St Thomas: Structure and Content

The primary component of this work is a translation from Latin into English of the *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis* (*Disputed question on created spirits*) of St Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274).

The Latin text of this writing of St Thomas contains eleven questions or 'articles' which, with one exception, address specific issues relating to one or other of the two acknowledged classes of created spirits, viz. angels ('separated substances') and human

souls. Articles 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, and 11, deal with issues relating to the human soul. Articles 5, 6, 7, and 8 raise questions concerning the angels. Article 1 engages with the question of matter/form composition which bears on both classes of created spirits.

Throughout his *Disputed question on created spirits* St Thomas is working principally as a philosopher, though as one who is sensitive to teachings that come from what he accepts as a source - Christian belief - independent of the findings of human reason. For St Thomas, moreover, Christian belief gives access to truths - including some truths that altogether surpass the unaided capacity of the human reason (e.g. those relating to the mystery of the Trinity) - that will never be in final and irreconcilable conflict with the valid findings of human reason. That is to say, by and large the concerns and arguments of the *Disputed question on created spirits* are those of the kind of systematic rational inquiry that is philosophy, but which are being engaged in by someone who accepts as true the doctrines of Christian revelation communicated to people by the Church. So we find, for example, when St Thomas is opposing (in article 9) the position of Averroes who argues for the unicity of the receptive intellect in human beings, that he notes "This position is contrary to the faith: it does away with the rewards and punishments of a future life." Yet he immediately affirms that "What has to be shown through the true principles of philosophy (per vera principia philosophiae) is that this position is impossible on its own terms." And this is precisely what he goes on to do by deploying three philosophical arguments against the position of Averroes.

The content, then, of Thomas's *Disputed question on created spirits* is unashamedly philosophical. Were he to have been pressed on this point, and told that he ought to have been more concerned in such a work with theological issues oriented to Christian belief (and practice), his reply would surely have been along the lines of his "Dicendum quod studium philosophiae secundum se est licitum et laudabile propter veritatem quam philosophi perceperunt (It has to be said that the study of philosophy is in itself legitimate and deserving of praise because of the truth that philosophers have discerned)." (*Summa Theologiae*, 2a-2ae, question 167, article 1, ad 3).

## 1.2 Notes accompanying the translated text

The secondary component of this work is eleven sets of notes, each set belonging to an individual Article. There is some degree of cross-referencing between notes belonging to particular Articles. The notes themselves are of various lengths and have the broad aim

of assisting with understanding what the Angelic Doctor has to say in his *Disputed question on created spirits*.

Most of the notes fall into one or other of the following categories:

a) Biographical

These are notes that supply, usually very briefly, information concerning a person whose name has occurred in the text of St Thomas. They cover such things as year of birth and of death, major writings, and philosophical (or theological) orientation. Some of these biographical notes go on to indicate important outcomes of the work of the person concerned. An example of this is the note on Averroes (1126-1198) whose influence was strongly felt in the ‘Averroism’ that was a force in much European philosophical teaching and writing from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries (see note 2, Article 2).

b) Historical

Some of these are notes providing information about institutions or events connected with the time of St Thomas, e.g. about the ‘quaestio disputata’ as an academic activity in the medieval university or house of study (studium). Some are notes concerned only to ‘place’ a particular person or work, while others again are brief accounts of certain scientific views that had been received from earlier sources and were still important in the medieval period, e.g. the doctrine of the four fundamental elements (earth, water, air, fire), and astronomical considerations regarding the ‘heavenly bodies’ (corpora caelestia).

c) Exegetical

Some of these are notes concerned to explain why a particular English translation of Thomas’s Latin has been adopted, e.g. why “to think” rather than “to understand” has been adopted to translate the Latin infinitive “intelligere” (with corresponding English translations of grammatically finite Latin forms), or the phrase “the-presentative-form-of-what-is-thinkable” to translate Thomas’s “species intelligibilis”.

Some exegetical notes endeavour to illustrate a point Thomas is making in the text of the *Disputed question on created spirits* by providing relevant citations from other works of his.

A few of the exegetical notes take issue with some or other feature (most often a minor feature) of the Latin text - the excellent critical edition prepared by Leo Keeler, S.J. - which seems open to question. Occasionally a reference of Keeler which uses the Bekker system of notation to identify a passage in the text of Aristotle is found to be questionable.

d) Philosophical extensions

From time to time notes are used to extend or amplify what St Thomas has been arguing in the text of his *Disputed question on created spirits*. These extensions or amplifications may take the form of introducing citations (in Latin, with English translation provided) from other works of Thomas in order to consider points that are additional to what he has been directly concerned with in the disputed question, e.g. to consider *knowledge* in the angels, which is an issue that is additional to considering, as Thomas does in the text (Article 8), the specific differences between angels.

At other times the extension or amplification bears on some concept or notion, e.g. on the concept of 'substance' (substantia), or of 'cogitative power' (vis cogitativa), which is in use in Thomas's discussion in the disputed question, but not dwelt on by him. In such cases, the concept in question may be explored through citations from other works of the Angelic Doctor, and from the writings of recent Thomists, e.g. Joseph Gredt.

## 2. The Text of St Thomas

Throughout this work the critical edition of the *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis* prepared by Leo Keeler, S.J., has been employed. This edition, widely praised in Thomistic circles, was first published under the aegis of the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome, in 1937, and subsequently reprinted in 1946 and 1959. In the absence of an edition of this work published by the Leonine Commission, textual comparisons have been made with the edition of the Latin text published in volume 2, pp.367-415, of Marietti's two-volume *Quaestiones disputatae Sancti Thomae Aquinatis* (P. Bazzi et al, editors, 1965).

In his *Friar Thomas D'Aquino: His Life, Thought, and Works* (second edition 1983), James Weisheipl, O.P., persuasively contends that the questions or issues gathered together under the title *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis* were disputed in 1267-1268

when St Thomas was in Italy (*op. cit.*, p.364). Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., agrees with this, but adds the detail that these questions were disputed in Rome “most probably between November 1267 and September 1268” (*St Thomas Aquinas, volume 1: The Person and His Work*, pp.335-336). The eleven questions involved would have formed part of Thomas’s work with students at the Dominican studium of Santa Sabina in Rome.

The bibliographical researches of Weisheipl and Torrell have effectively resolved what little doubt remained about the dating of the *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis* within the *oeuvre* of St Thomas. There is also powerful recent support for their position to be found in the magisterial ‘Catalogue of St Thomas’ Works’ by I. T. Eschmann, O.P., included as a lengthy appendix to Etienne Gilson’s *The Christian Philosophy of St Thomas Aquinas* (1956; reprinted 1994).

### **3. Disputed Questions**

In the medieval university (and, *mutatis mutandis*, in a Dominican house of study or ‘studium’), a master (magister) lectured students by reading, and commenting on, a text (typically, in the faculty of theology the text would be a book from the Bible or a book of the Sentences of Peter Lombard [refer note 11, Article 3, *infra*]). Not surprisingly, lectures readily gave rise to questions that called for more time, and a wider context, for their exposition and resolution. For this reason - and also to test the knowledge and skills of both masters and students - the practice of holding formal disputations was developed.

Disputations - ‘quaestiones disputatae’ - were of two kinds: ‘ordinary’ and ‘solemn’. In the ‘ordinary’ disputations, the question to be debated was specified by the master and announced beforehand. During the first session of the disputation - the actual *debate*, held on the first day of this academic activity - a *bacchalaureus respondens*, previously appointed by the presiding master, would be expected to engage with objections to the thesis that the master was to defend. These would be objections raised from the floor by members of the participating audience of students and, often enough, of other masters whose lectures had been suspended to facilitate their, and their students, participation in the disputation. The respondent bachelor was required to deal with the objections then and there in the presence of the master who was presiding. Objections and replies were recorded by a scribe or scribes.

The second session of the disputation (held the following day, or as soon as possible

after that day) was the occasion for the presiding master to deliver his ‘determinatio’ - his argued resolution of the question at issue. Following this ‘determinatio’, the master systematically answered the objections to his thesis that had been put forward by members of the audience, and engaged with by the *respondens*, at the first session.

While ‘ordinary’ disputations were reasonably frequent occurrences in the university year (and St Thomas appears to be outstanding in the number of disputations he engaged in), the ‘solemn’ disputations were held only twice a year, one in Advent and one in Lent. The principal difference in format between the ‘ordinary’ and the ‘solemn’ disputations was that, in a ‘solemn’ disputation, the question to be considered was not proposed by the master in advance of the disputation itself. The question was raised *extempore* on any topic whatever, and by any student or master who happened to be present. It was a disputation “de quolibet ad voluntatem cuiuslibet” - about anything, at anyone’s choice. These are also (understandably) known as ‘quodlibetal disputations’. Obviously they could be perilous activities for masters to undertake. (The evidence points to St Thomas’s having undertaken at least a dozen ‘disputationes quodlibetales’.)

- For details about the subsequent editing and publishing of the text of a disputation, refer note 16, Article 6, *infra*.

#### **4. The Translation**

In his excellent *A Summa of the Summa*, p.19, Professor Peter Kreeft of Boston College vigorously affirms that his book of “essential philosophical passages of St Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa Theologica*” is one that “uses the old, *literal* Dominican translation [English Dominican Fathers, 1920]...rather than the hubristic paraphrases of some subsequent non-literal translators who succumb to the itch to insert their own interpretative mind and style between the author and the reader” (Kreeft’s italics). Professor Kreeft adds that he “hope(s) the modern reader is more charmed than annoyed at the old-fashioned formal literalness of the translation and at the old-fashioned punctuation” (*ibid.*).

There are a few - very few - occasions when I have “succumb(ed) to the itch” denounced by Peter Kreeft, and have attempted to give an interpretation of the meaning of St Thomas’s words rather than to provide a version of them close to the Latin in the course of translating the *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis*. Two such occasions are

mentioned above in section 1.2 c). (I have, however, kept in mind St Thomas's own uneasiness about a translation in which "semper verbum ex verbo sumatur" - a word for word version [refer the citation from his prologue to the *Contra Errores Graecorum*, top of page 1] ). The preferred translation of the disputed question has remained close to the Latin virtually throughout, and has been reasonably literal, though not slavishly word for word. An attempt has been made at all times to use a style of translation that is pleasantly readable, non-jarring, and non-pedantic. Latin technical terms such as "materia", "forma", "accidens", "actus", "potentialitas", "esse", etc., have been treated with the great respect due to them by using obvious English derivatives to translate them, e.g., "matter" or "potentiality", or by a carefully restrained rendering into equivalent English, e.g. "actualising principle" (for "actus") or "non-essential feature" (for "accidens").

I can think of no better way of describing what my translation of the Angelic Doctor's text was concerned to do than by invoking a recent statement of that masterful translator of Thomas, Timothy McDermott: "Subject to the absolute requirement of faithfulness to Thomas's philosophical meaning, I have, by preferring contemporary turns of phrase to more traditional translations, tried to enable a thoughtful communication with Thomas" (*Aquinas: Selected Philosophical Writings*, p.xvi).

## **5. Bibliography**

All works cited, mentioned, or drawn on in any way, in the translation of Thomas's *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis*, or in writing the accompanying notes, are indicated in the bibliography at the end of the work, where publication details are given.

The first issue to be considered is this: **Is created spiritual substance (1) composed of matter and form?**

It seems that it is:

1. In chapter 2 of his book *De Trinitate (On the Trinity)* [PL 64, 1250D] (2), Boethius says that what's form only can't be the subject of qualities. Yet a created spiritual substance is the subject of knowledge, power, and grace. So it's not form only. But neither is it matter only since, in that case, it would be nothing but potentiality, so devoid of any activity. It follows that any created spiritual substance is a composite of matter and form.
2. Again, any created form at all is limited and bounded. But form's limitation is due to matter. So any created form at all is form in matter and, accordingly, no created substance will be form without matter.
3. Moreover, the reason why things can change (*principium mutabilitatis*) is matter - a point made by Aristotle in book 2 of his *Metaphysics* [994b 26] (3) in reminding us that "Of necessity matter must be thought of in anything subject to change." So, since created spiritual substance is open to change (only God is changeless by nature), every created spiritual substance has component matter.
4. Further, Augustine affirms in book 12 of his *Confessions* that God made the matter that is common to things visible and invisible. Invisible things, however, are the spiritual substances. So spiritual substance includes matter.
5. Again, Aristotle notes in book 8 of his *Metaphysics* [1045a 36] that, in any instance of substance without matter, you at once have a unitary reality and no other cause is needed for it to be real and one. Yet everything created has a cause of its being and unity. The consequence? Nothing created is substance-without-matter, and every created *spiritual* substance includes matter as well as form.
6. Further, in question 23 of his *De quaestionibus veteris et novi Testamenti (On questions of the Old and New Testaments)* [PL 35, 2229], Augustine (4) mentions that Adam's body was formed prior to his soul's being infused into it. After all, it's necessary first to have a dwelling before there can be anyone living in it, and soul is compared to body as dweller to dwelling. But a dweller exists in his or her own right (*est per se subsistens*); so, consequently, must the soul, and much more so an angel. Now a substance existing in its own right doesn't seem to be form only. So no created spiritual substance is form only: it's a composite of matter and form.
7. Again, it's obvious that a soul is receptive of features contrary to one another (*susceptiva contrariorum*). But receptivity of this sort is distinctive of substances that are composite. So a soul is a composite substance - and an angel on the same basis.

8. Moreover, form is that by which something exists. Whatever, then, is composed of the 'by which' (quo) and the 'what' (quod) exists, involves matter as well as form. But every created spiritual substance is composed of the 'by which' and the 'what' exists - Boethius pointed this out in his *De hebdomadibus* (*On seven day cycles*) [PL 64, 1311] (5). Accordingly, every created spiritual substance is a composite of matter and form.

9. Again, community is twofold. One mode of it is found on the divine level, where the divine essence is common to the trinity of Persons; the other on the created level as often as a universal feature is common to the things of which it's predicated. Now the special thing about the first mode of community is this: what differentiates the Persons sharing a common nature is identical with the common nature itself that makes them one. The relation of paternity, for example, by which the Father and the Son are differentiated, is one with the very nature common to them both.

But when we come to a universal feature common to many things, it's necessary for what distinguishes the things included under this feature to be other than the common feature itself. It follows that, in every created thing contained under some common genus, there has to be composition involving both what's common (quod commune est) and what sets limits to what's common (per quod commune ipsum restringitur). Yet created spiritual substance belongs to a genus. So there has to be in created spiritual substance composition of common nature and what limits common nature [to a particular thing]. This points to matter/form composition in created spiritual substance.

10. Moreover, form giving rise to a genus can't exist except in the intellect or in matter. Now a created spiritual substance - an angel, say - is found in a genus. So the form giving rise to that genus is in the intellect only or in matter. But if an angel were without matter, it wouldn't exist *in* matter - in which case it would exist in the intellect only. On the supposition, then, that no one was thinking about a particular angel, it would follow that the angel in question had ceased to exist. This is scarcely plausible. So one's bound to say, it seems, that created spiritual substance includes matter as well as form.

11. Besides, if a created spiritual substance were form only, it would follow that one spiritual substance would be immediately present to another. For, if one angel thinks about another, this is *either* through the essence or nature of the angel being thought about - in which case it will be necessary for the very substance of that angel to be present in the intellect of the angel thinking about it; *or* it is through an idea, with the same result if the idea through which one angel is thought about by another doesn't differ from the very substance of the angel thought about. And it just doesn't appear how it *could* differ if angelic substance is devoid of matter, as the idea of it certainly is. Now it's unacceptable that one angel be present through its very substance in another: only the Trinity enters the rational mind that way. Accordingly, the premise from which this conclusion flows, viz. that created spiritual substance is devoid of matter, can't be entertained.

12. Moreover, in commenting on book 11 of [Aristotle's] *Metaphysics*, Averroes says

that, if there were a box lacking matter, it would be identical with a box existing in the mind. And then we've got the very problem we've just looked at.

13. Again, Augustine points out in book 7 of his *Super Genesim ad litteram* (*Commentary on Genesis*) that, just as flesh had material from which it was made, namely earth, so perhaps it was possible, even before that nature called 'soul' was fashioned, to have some sort of matter in its own way 'spiritual', though not yet a soul. So the soul, it seems, is made up of matter and form - and an angel would be on the same footing.

14. Further, in book 2, chapters 3 and 12, of the treatise *De fide orthodoxa* (*On correct belief*) [PG 94, 867 and 919], Damascene (6) affirms that "Only God is by nature non-material and incorporeal." So this just doesn't apply to any created spiritual substance.

15. Again, every substance enclosed within limits set by the sort of thing it is has being (esse) that is limited and confined. Now confinement within limits set by the sort of thing it is, is a feature of every created substance. Every created substance, then, has being that is limited and confined. Yet whatever is confined is confined by something. So, in every created substance, there's something that does the confining and something that's confined - a situation calling for matter and form. Every created spiritual substance, then, has a matter/form structure.

16. Moreover, nothing is both active and receptive from the same point of view (secundum idem); rather, each thing is active in virtue of form and receptive in virtue of matter. Yet a created spiritual substance, e.g. an angel, is active when it illuminates intellectually an angel of a lower order, and receptive when illuminated by an angel of a higher order. Likewise, in the soul we find mind that's active and mind that's receptive (intellectus agens et possibilis). We're bound, then, to concede matter/form composition both in angels and in souls.

17. Besides, whatever exists is either actuality only, or potentiality only, or a combination of the two. Yet no created spiritual substance is actuality only - God alone is this - nor is it potentiality only. So it's a mix of potentiality and actuality. And this amounts to saying that it's composed of matter and form.

18. Again, Plato in the *Timaeus* tells of the supreme God addressing created deities and saying to them: "My will is stronger than the components bound together in you (maior nexu vestro)" - words drawn on by Augustine in book 13 of his *De civitate Dei* (*The City of God*). But these created deities are surely angels. So in angels there are 'components bound together', which means *composition*.

19. Further, in beings that can be numbered off, and are essentially different, there's matter; matter, after all, is the principle of numerical distinction. Yet created spiritual substances can be numbered off, and differ in essence. So matter belongs to them.

20. Moreover, nothing is affected by what's corporeal unless matter belongs to it. Yet

created spiritual substances are affected by something corporeal, namely fire, as Augustine insists in book 21 of the *De civitate Dei* (*The City of God*). It follows that created spiritual substances have matter in their make up.

21. Further, in his book *De unitate et uno* (*Concerning oneness and the one*) [PL 63, 1076-77], Boethius is quite explicit: an angel is composed of matter and form.

22. Besides, Boethius states in his *De hebdomadibus* (*On seven day cycles*) [PL 64 1311] (7) that what is (id quod est) can always have something further (aliquid aliud) added in to it. But be-ing itself (ipsum esse) can't have anything at all added in to it. And we can make these general points about everything abstract and concrete. Take a human being, for example: you can find something added to *humanness*, such as whiteness or something of the sort. Yet, in *humanness* itself there's no room for anything except what belongs to the very notion of *humanness*. So, were spiritual substances nothing but forms (formae abstractae), there wouldn't be anything in them not belonging to their specific natures. But, when any feature belonging to a thing's specific nature is taken away, the thing perishes. Now, since every spiritual substance is imperishable, nothing belonging to a created spiritual substance can be lost, and such a substance will be absolutely changeless - a conclusion quite unacceptable.

23. Moreover, everything that belongs in a category shares in the principles of that category. Created spiritual substance belongs in the category of *substance*. But the principles of this category are matter and form. Boethius makes this clear when, in commenting on Aristotle's *Categories* [PL 64, 184], he remarks that Aristotle, after setting aside the 'extremes' of matter and form, deals with their meeting point, viz. the composite (agit de medio, scil. de composito). In this way Aristotle gives it to be understood that *substance* - the category he's dealing with - is composed of matter and form. So matter/form composition extends to created spiritual substance.

24. Besides, whatever belongs to a category includes two notes: genus and characteristic difference. But 'characteristic difference' is derived from form and 'genus' from matter, as Aristotle argues in book 8 of the *Metaphysics* [1043a 19; 1043b 30]. Since spiritual substance belongs to a category, we've evidence it's composed of matter and form.

25. Again, what's first in any category is the source of whatever subsequently belongs to that category - rather as the First Actuality accounts for every actualised being. So, by parity of reasoning, everything in any way in potentiality traces this back to the primary potentiality that's potentiality and nothing else, namely first matter (materia prima). But, given that only God is actuality and nothing else (actus purus), some sort of potentiality must be ascribed to created spiritual substances. Accordingly, any created spiritual substance has this from matter - a situation requiring that matter be part of it. It must, then, be structured along matter/form lines.

### **But against that position:**

1. Pseudo-Dionysius (8) says about angels in chapter 4 of his *De divinis nominibus* (*On*

*Divine Names*) that they are “incorporeal and free of matter (imateriales)”.

- You may, of course, object that they are described as “free of matter” in the sense that they don’t have matter subject to quantity and substantial change. But...

2. On the contrary, Dionysius himself says just before this that angels are “clear of every kind of matter (ab universa materia sunt mundi).”

3. Again, according to Aristotle in book 4 of the *Physics* [211a 12], place is invoked only to account for movement and, similarly, matter is invoked only to account for change. So it’s on the basis that things undergo change that we look to their having matter in them. Consequently, things able to be produced and to perish (generabilia et corruptibilia) have matter affecting their very being (ad esse); while things locally mobile have matter relative to ‘whereabouts’ (ad ubi). But spiritual substances aren’t changeable with respect to their very being (non sunt transmutabiles secundum esse). So there’s no demand for matter in them that belongs to their being - nor, consequently, for matter/form composition.

4. Moreover, Hugh of Saint Victor (9), dealing with Pseudo-Dionysius in his commentary *Super angelicam hierarchiam (On the celestial hierarchy)* [PL 175, 1010B] notes that, in spiritual substances, what gives life (quod vivificat) is the same as what is given life (quod vivificatur). But what gives life is form, and what is given life is matter. It’s form, after all, that gives being (esse) to matter and, for living things, *to be alive is to be* (vivere autem viventibus est esse). So strike out any difference between matter and form as far as angels are concerned.

5. Further, both Avicenna (10) [*Metaphysics*, bk 9, chap.4] and Algazel (11) [*Incoherence of the Philosophers*, bk 1, treatise 4, chap. 2] are clear: separated substances - they’re called ‘spiritual substances’ - are absolutely free of matter (omnino a materia denudatae).

6. Moreover, in book 3 of his *De anima (On the soul)* [431b 29], Aristotle points out that a stone isn’t found in the soul but the idea of a stone - a state of affairs due to the soul’s simpleness in that there’s no hint of anything material in it. The soul, therefore, is not composed of matter and form.

7. Besides, in the *Liber de causis* [of Proclus] it’s affirmed that a [separated] intelligence is a substance that can’t be broken up. But whatever is composite can be broken up. No [separated] intelligence, then, is composite.

8. Moreover, Aristotle notes in book 3 of his *De anima (On the soul)* [430a 3] that, in things devoid of matter, what thinks is the same as what is thought (idem est intelligens et quod intelligitur) But what is thought is a ‘thinkable’ form or nature altogether free of matter. Therefore the substance doing the thinking is devoid of matter as well.

9. Besides, in his *De Trinitate* [book 9, chapter 4], Augustine says that the soul thinks by

the whole of itself. But it doesn't think by using matter. So matter's no part of the soul at all.

10. Moreover, in his *De fide orthodoxa (On correct belief)* [PG 94 919]. Damascene contends that the soul is incomposite. There's no question, then, of its having any matter/form make-up.

11. Further, rational soul comes closer to the first and most simple Reality - to God - than does animal soul. Yet animal soul isn't composed of matter and form. So there's even less reason for rational soul to be composed in this way.

12. Besides, angelic substance comes closer to the First Being, itself non-composite, than does material form. Material form, however, isn't composed of matter and form. Neither, then, is angelic substance.

13. Moreover, taken comparatively, non-essential form (*forma accidentalis*) falls short of the rank of substance. Yet, in the Sacrament of the altar, God brings it about that non-essential forms subsist without matter. *A fortiori*, then, does He bring it about that some forms in the category *substance* subsist without matter - the lot, surely, of spiritual substances.

14. Again, in book 12 of the *Confessions*, Augustine declares: "You have made two things, Lord: one close to Yourself", i.e. angelic substance, "the other close to nothingness", namely matter. So there's no matter in angels: it's set over against them.

### **Response:**

Regarding the question we're looking at, it must be said that opinions differ. Certain thinkers are of the view that created spiritual substance is composed of matter and form. Others flatly deny this. So, to avoid ambiguity at the outset in investigating where the truth lies, we'd better consider what's meant by the term "matter".

It's clear that potentiality and actuality divide up the real between them. It's also clear that every category has its allocation of potentiality and actuality. Still, what's commonly referred to as 'first matter' (*materia prima*) is what belongs to the category of *substance* as a particular potentiality (*potentia quaedam*), and is understood as distinct from every specific nature and form, and even from being just the lack of these features (*etiam praeter privationem*). It is, however, receptive of forms and of their coming and going. Augustine sets all this out in book 12 of the *Confessions*, and in his *Super Genesim ad litteram (Commentary on Genesis)* [chapters 14 and 15]. Aristotle does so, as well, in book 7 of the *Metaphysics* [1029a 20] (12).

When this meaning is given to the term "matter" - and it's the proper and customary sense of the term - it's impossible that 'matter' be found in spiritual substances. Although in one and the same thing which at one time is in actuality, at another in potentiality, potentiality may be prior in time to actuality, nonetheless actuality is by

nature (naturaliter) prior to potentiality. Now what's prior in this sense doesn't depend on what's later: it's the other way round. So there's to be found a First Actuality free of any trace of potentiality (13). Conversely, reality holds no instance of potentiality not perfected through some actualising factor (per aliquem actum); and, on this account, first matter is always under form of some sort. Now it's by the first and unreservedly perfect Actuality, which has in itself the absolute fullness of ontological excellence, that is caused the actual be-ing (esse actu) found in everything else that is. And this follows a certain order.

It's plain: no caused actuality enjoys the fullness of ontological excellence; rather, compared with the First Actuality, any and every caused actuality can't but be imperfect. However, to the extent to which some or other actual being is ontologically more excellent, to that extent does it approximate to God. But, as Pseudo-Dionysius makes clear in chapter 4 of his *Caelestis hierarchia* (*Celestial Hierarchy*), across the whole sweep of created realities it's spiritual substances that most closely approximate to God. And there is maximum approximation to the perfection of the First Actuality when they are contrasted with lower-order created beings as the perfect with the imperfect and as actuality with potentiality. In no way at all, then, does the rationale behind the order or scheme of things require spiritual substances to have first matter in their very being, given that first matter is of all things the most imperfect. Instead, these substances quite transcend the whole order of matter and anything at all that's material.

This conclusion is also apparent if one considers the distinctive activity of spiritual substances. For what marks off spiritual substances is their being intellectual agents. Now the potentiality of each single thing strictly correlates with the actualisation belonging to it; for the characteristic actualisation of a thing calls for a correspondingly characteristic potentiality. But the actualisation of any intellectual substance as such is the thinkable object as present in the intellect (*intelligibile prout est in intellectu*). So, in spiritual substances, there must be potentiality proportional to taking in the form of what is thinkable. Now this isn't the potentiality associated with first matter; for first matter takes on a form by way of confining it to an individual existent, whereas the form of a thinkable object is present in the intellect minus that sort of confinement. This is so since intellect knows each single one of its thinkable objects according as its form is present in the intellect; and, for this reason, intellect knows the thinkable object principally in terms of its common or universal nature. Therefore the form of the thinkable object is present in the intellect in terms of its commonality (*secundum rationem suae communitatis*). So an intellectual substance is not receptive of form after the fashion of first matter, but rather in a way that's quite the opposite of this. Accordingly, it's obvious that, as far as spiritual substances are concerned, first matter - lacking, as it does, every specific form - is no part of what they are.

But if one were to call 'matter' and 'form' any two factors related to each other as potentiality and actuality, there might (to avoid any bickering over words) be no objection to saying that there are matter and form in spiritual substances. For notice that, in created spiritual substance, there are indeed two factors, one of which is compared to the other as potentiality to actuality. To explain: it is clear that the First Being - God -

is actuality without limit as having in itself the entire fullness of being, not abridged to any generic or specific kind or nature. Of necessity, then, the very be-ing (esse) of this Being is not be-ing realised in a particular nature that's not identically its own be-ing; for, on this basis, be-ing would be limited by and to this nature. So we say that God is identically his very be-ing, while declining to say this of anything else at all; for, just as it's impossible to understand how there could be more than one separated whiteness (if whiteness were to subsist in separation from every subject and recipient, it would be one only), so likewise is it impossible that there be more than one subsistent activity of be-ing. Now, since it's not identically its own be-ing, each thing that is consequent on the First Being has be-ing received in some principle through which this be-ing is limited (per quod ipsum esse contrahitur). Accordingly, in every created being, the *nature* of the thing that participates in be-ing is one component, and the *be-ing participated in* is another. Now, since any reality at all takes on some resemblance to the First Actuality insofar as it takes on be-ing, it can't but be the case that participated be-ing (esse) in each thing is contrasted with the nature participating in it as actuality with potentiality (14). Consequently, in physical substances, [first] matter does not of itself participate in be-ing; it does this through form. It's form, after all, when taken on by matter that makes matter actually *be* - as soul does for body.

So consider that, in things that are composite, actuality and potentiality are twofold. Firstly, matter is potentiality in respect of form, and form is its actualising principle. Secondly, the nature constituted by matter and form is potentiality in respect of be-ing itself (respectu ipsius esse) insofar as it's receptive of be-ing. Now, take away matter as a foundational element. Even if there remains a form of a determinate nature, subsistent in its own right apart from matter, it will still be contrasted with its be-ing (esse) as potentiality with what actualises it. (I'm not, of course, suggesting it's *separable* from what actualises it: the actualising principle here can't but accompany it.)

It's in this way that the nature of a spiritual substance - a nature not composed of matter and form - is a potentiality in respect of its be-ing. So, in a spiritual substance there's composition of potentiality and actuality and, consequently, of 'matter' and 'form' if every instance of potentiality is called matter, and every instance of actuality is called form. But this is to fly in the face of standard usage of these terms.

**So:**

to 1: The idea of *form* is set over against the idea of *subject*. Every form considered as such is an actualising factor or actuality, whereas every subject is contrasted with what it's the subject of as potentiality with what actualises it. So, if there's form that is actuality pure and simple - the divine essence is the case here - there's no way in which it can function as a subject. And this is the 'form' that Boethius was talking about. If, on the other hand, there's form that is actuality under one aspect and potentiality under another, it's only in function of this latter aspect that it will be a subject. Now, although spiritual substances are forms subsisting in their own right, they're nonetheless potentialities *qua* having be-ing (esse) that is finite and bounded. But note that, since intellect is open to knowing everything about everything (cognoscitivus omnium

secundum sui rationem), and since will is drawn to the good across an unrestricted range (*amativa universalis boni*), there remains always in the intellect and will of created spiritual substance potentiality relative to what's outside it. So anyone who considers the issue carefully will conclude that spiritual substances are found to be subjects, though only of qualities that pertain to intellect and will.

to 2: Setting limits to form comes about in two ways. The first is when a specific form is limited to an individual [within a species], and limitation of this sort is due to matter. The second is when a generic form is limited to the nature of some or other species. Limitation of this sort is not due to matter but to form's being taken more determinately, and from this the differentiating factor (*differentia*) is drawn; for it is a differentiating factor that, added to genus, contracts the latter to a species. And this is the sort of limitation found in spiritual substances according as they're forms, each one of which is a determinate species.

to 3: Changeableness is not found in spiritual substances on the score of their very being (*secundum earum esse*) but on the score of their having intellect and will. And this sort of changeableness is due not to matter but to potentiality within intellect and will.

to 4: Augustine doesn't intend to assert that things visible and invisible share the same matter: he says only that two sorts of formlessness are to be understood relative to heaven and earth - themselves described as the first things created - in that *heaven* is understood to be spiritual substance as yet formless, and *earth* to be the material of bodily realities, and considered as in itself formless since lacking any specific feature. So earth is also called "empty and void" (or "unsightly and disordered" according to another text), whereas heaven is not called "empty and void". This makes it plain that matter, which lacks any specific feature, isn't any part of the substance of angels. Rather, the formlessness of a spiritual substance refers to its not yet being turned toward the Word by which it is illuminated - a condition belonging to its intellectual potential. So [Augustine's] "matter that's common to what is visible and invisible" names both realms according as each is formless in its own way.

to 5: In the passage mentioned, Aristotle is speaking not of agent cause but of formal cause. For a thing made up of matter and form is not on the spot (*statim*) a being which is a unitary reality (*ens et unum*); rather, matter is being in potentiality that becomes being in actuality through the advent of form which, for it, is the [formal] cause of being. But form doesn't have being through another form. So, if any form is subsistent, it's at once a being which is a unitary reality, with no formal cause of *its* being. What it does have, however, is an [agent] cause imparting being to it, though this is not a cause *changing* it in the sense of bringing pre-existent potentiality to a state of actuality.

to 6: Although the soul is subsistent in its own right, it doesn't follow that it's a matter/form composite. This is so since to subsist in its own right is quite consistent with being a form free of matter. The idea is that, since matter has being through form and not the other way round, there's nothing to stop a particular form subsisting in its own right minus matter, though there's no question of matter doing the same minus form.

to 7: To be receptive of features contrary to one another belongs to substance existing in some way in potentiality, regardless of its being composed of matter and form or of its being non-composite. Note, too, that substance in spiritual realities is receptive of contrary features only in respect of intellect and will, and according as these powers are in potentiality, as is clear from what we've said.

to 8: Being composed of the 'what' (quod) exists and the 'by which' (quo) it exists, isn't the same as being composed of matter and form. Of course, form may be described as *that by which* something exists, yet it would be inappropriate to describe matter as *what* exists - its being only potentiality, left to itself, rules this out. Rather, *what* exists is that which subsists in being: in the case of bodily substances, the matter/form composite; in the case of bodiless substances, the form on its own. *That by which* it truly exists, however, is participated be-ing itself (ipsum esse participatum), since each single thing is only to the extent to which it shares in be-ing itself. And this is the sense in which Boethius uses these expressions in his *De hebdomadibus* (*On seven day cycles*) when he declares that, in everything else except the First Being, *what* is and its *be-ing* are not to be confused.

to 9: Something may be included under a common note in either of two ways: in one as an individual under a species, in the other as a species under a genus. Now, whenever you find many individuals under a common species, the distinction of these many individuals from one another is due to the matter actually individuating them - individual matter that as such lies outside the nature of the species. (This would hold even were they to be directly created). However, when you have many species under a common genus, there's no call for the forms that distinguish these species one from another to be different in reality (secundum rem) from whatever form is common to the genus: it is through one and the same form, after all, that this individual thing is placed in the genus *substance* and in the genus *body* and so on right down to the most specifically detailed species (ad specialissimam speciem). A different reading that gave only the status *substance* to an individual thing thanks to a particular form, would result of necessity in other supervening forms - forms whose role is to place the individual thing in subsequent genera and species - having the status of non-essential or incidental forms.

An argument to show this: incidental form differs from substantial form in that substantial form gives rise to a thing's being a *thing in its own right* (hoc aliquid), whereas incidental form affects something already constituted as a thing in its own right. So, if the first form - the one placing something in a genus - gives rise to a thing's being an individual thing in its own right, all other forms would belong to an individual thing already subsistent in its own right and would, accordingly, be incidental forms. A consequence of this account would be that the coming of subsequent forms that place a thing in its most specifically detailed (or even in an intermediate) species would not be instances of [substantial] generation, nor would loss of these forms result in a thing's perishing *tout court*, but only in a qualified sense. After all, generation is change reaching to the very being of a thing (ad esse rei); so a thing is said without qualification to be 'generated' when it's brought into being *unreservedly* (simpliciter), not from what's

already in actuality but from what's potentiality only. If, on the other hand, something is brought about relative to what's already existent, no being is generated in an absolute sense, only this [mode of] being; and the same reasoning holds of a thing's perishing.

It should be said, then, that the forms of things are arranged in an order, and that one adds to another in excellence. Aristotle is clear about this in book 8 of the *Metaphysics* [1043b 33] when he says that the definitions and species of things resemble numbers, amongst which the species are multiplied just by adding the number 'one'. An inductive approach also supports this view by focusing on the step-by-step multiplication of species of things in terms of the perfect and the less perfect.

In what has been argued we have grounds for rejecting the position of Avicenna (15) set out in his book *Fons vitae (The Source of life)*. His position is this: primary matter, considered to be altogether without form, initially takes on the form of substance. With this form presupposed, there is received in some part of matter a further form over and above the form of substance which gives rise to *body*. This process continues right through to the ultimate species. In that part in which *bodily* form is not received, incorporeal substance is to be found, the matter of which is not the subject of quantity; some call this 'spiritual matter'. For Avicenna, matter already actualised by the form of substance, and also the subject of quantity and other incidental features, is the key to an understanding of *incorporeal* substances.

But it just isn't the case that one individual thing is a body lacking life and another a body that's alive because the body that's alive has a *special* form underlying which is the substantial form of *body*. Rather, this individual thing is alive because it has a more perfect form (*habet formam perfectiorem*) in virtue of which it is able to subsist as a body and *also* to be alive; the other has a less perfect form in virtue of which it subsists as a body but falls short of being alive.

to 10: When matter is involved in the very idea of a genus, the form giving rise to that genus can't exist outside the mind except in matter - for example, the form of plant or of metal. But the genus *substance* is not such that matter is involved in the very idea of it; otherwise it wouldn't reach beyond the physical but be restricted to it. So the form giving rise to this genus is not matter-dependent for its very being but can also be found apart from matter.

to 11: The idea in the intellect of one angel thinking about another differs from the angel thought about not as something abstracted from matter and material conditions but as 'being thought of' differs from 'being really existent in nature' - somewhat as the form of colour in the eye differs from the [same] colour in a wall.

to 12: If there were a box without matter subsisting in its own right it would be thinking about itself, since freedom from matter is the source of intellectual activity. On the same showing, a box without matter wouldn't differ from a box able to be thought about. (16)

to 13: Augustine introduces this argument as a speculative query. This is clear from his

going on to reject the position put forward.

to 14: God alone is described as “non-material and incorporeal” in the sense that, contrasted with divine simplicity, all other things can be thought of as though they were physical bodies - and this even though they’re essentially incorporeal and non-material.

to 15: The be-ing (esse) of a created spiritual substance is confined and limited not by matter but by its being received, and shared, in a determinate specific nature, as we’ve argued.

to 16: A created spiritual substance is active and receptive not on the basis of form and matter but on the basis of its actuality and potentiality.

to 17: Created spiritual substance is neither actuality only nor potentiality only, but combines potentiality with actuality - and this doesn’t equate with matter/form composition, as we’ve shown.

to 18: In the passage mentioned, the lower-order deities Plato speaks about aren’t angels but heavenly bodies.

to 19: Matter is the principle of numerical distinction between things within the same species, but not of the distinction between species themselves. Angels aren’t multiplied numerically within the same species. There is a multitude of many subsistent specific natures. (17)

to 20: Spiritual substances don’t suffer from corporeal fire by way of undergoing material change from it, only by way of their wills being bonded to it, as Augustine says [*De civitate Dei (The City of God)*, book 21, chapter 10]. So it’s not necessary for matter to be part of them.

to 21: The book *De unitate et uno (Concerning oneness and the one)* is not by Boethius, as the style of writing shows.

to 22: A separated form *qua* actualised can’t have anything further added to it, only *qua* being in potentiality. It’s on this basis that spiritual substances, to the extent to which they’re in potentiality in respect of intellect and will, take on non-essential features.

to 23: Boethius’s intention isn’t to claim that ‘being composed of matter and form’ belongs to what we mean by *substance*; substance, after all, is a genus engaging the competence of the metaphysician, not of the philosopher of nature. What he intends to say is that, since form and matter do not belong to the genus *substance* as species under it, it’s only the substance composed of them that’s placed in the genus as [some or other] species under it.

to 24: In connection with things composed of matter and form, the notion of *genus* is drawn from matter, and the notion of *characteristic difference (differentia)* from form.

Here, however, ‘matter’ is not to be understood as first matter (*materia prima*) but as what, through form, takes on some sort of imperfect and ‘material’ mode of being in contrast to a more specific mode of being - as, say, ‘being sentient’ is imperfect and material when contrasted with ‘being human’. Nonetheless, these two modes of being are not due to different forms but to one and the same form which imparts to a person not only ‘being sentient’ but also ‘being human’. On the other hand, the soul or form of a different kind of animal imparts to it only ‘being sentient’. Note, however, that the common feature *being sentient* is not numerically, only conceptually, one, because it’s not from one and the same form that a person is an instance of ‘being sentient’ and a donkey is, as well. (18)

Accordingly, remove the idea of ‘matter’ from spiritual substances and the notes of *genus* and *characteristic difference* still remain - not because of matter and form, but because we discern in a spiritual substance *both* what is common to it and to less perfect substances, *and* what is distinctively its own.

to 25: The more actuality something has, the greater its perfection; the more potentiality something has, the greater it’s *imperfection*. Now the imperfect takes its origin from the perfect, not the other way round (19). It’s not required, then, for anything in any way at all in potentiality to derive this from the pure potentiality that’s first matter. This is a point on which Avicenna seems to have gone astray in his book *Fons vitae* (*The source of life*) when he accepts that everything that’s in potentiality or is a subject has this in some way from first matter.

## NOTES

1. The phrase “spiritual substance” as used here by St Thomas refers to both the ‘separated substances’ (or Angels) and to the human substantial form or soul. In the case of the human soul, Thomas assumes in the text that it is intrinsically independent of matter, i.e. ‘spiritual’ in the strong sense of the term, but argues at some length for this position in, e.g., the *Summa contra Gentiles*, book 2, chapters 79-81, the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, qu.75, articles.2 and 6, the *Quaestio Disputata de Anima*, article14.

St Thomas here takes for granted the validity of the notion of ‘substance’. In fact, he spends little time in any of his writings endeavouring to offer an explicit defence of the reality of substance as the crucial component of the world of our direct experience, and of the world of the ‘separated substances’. He would have regarded such a defence as largely redundant.

The sort of debates that have taken place around the idea of ‘substance’ since the time of John Locke (1632 - 1704) and David Hume (1711 - 1776) - with ‘substance’ understood to be either an inert, unchangeable, essentially unknowable substratum supporting qualities (Locke), or a ‘collection’ of simple ideas, based on sense ‘impressions’ united

by imagination, with a name assigned them for recalling the collection, and with no counterpart at all in the physical world (Hume) - would have struck Thomas as quite wrong-headed and bizarre.

For him, “...illud autem quod primo intellectus concipit quasi notissimum et in quo conceptiones omnes resolvit est ens, ut Avicenna dicit in principio suae *Metaphysicae*” (“what the intellect first grasps as best known, and into which it resolves all its ideas, is being, as Avicenna states at the outset of his *Metaphysics*”) (*Quaestiones disputatae de veritate (Disputed questions on truth)* question 1, article 1, response). Thomas is saying that human knowing or awareness bears first and foremost on that-which-exists, on beings. In grasping that-which-exists, the mind is at once aware both of what-exists-in-its-own-right - of ‘substances’ - and of what exists only *dependently on* what-exists-in-its-own-right - of non-substantial features. Cats, trees, and stones, would qualify as instances of what-exists-in-its-own-right, of substances, which have *in se/per se* existence; while shapes, colours, movements, pains, would exemplify what-exists-only-dependently-on what exists in its own right. The latter have only *in alio/in subiecto* existence.

An important statement about our knowledge of ‘substance’ may be cited from Thomas’s commentary on book 7 (study [lectio] 1, no.1247 sqq.) of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*:

Quoddam ens significat “quid est et hoc aliquid”, idest substantiam: ut per “quid” intelligatur essentia substantiae, per “hoc aliquid” suppositum, ad quae duo omnes modi substantiae reducuntur, ut in quinto est habitum. Illud vero significat qualitatem vel quantitatem, aut aliquid aliorum praedicamentorum. Et cum ens tot modis dicatur, palam est quod inter omnia entia, primum est quod quid est, idest ens quod significat substantiam. ... Probat propositum... tali ratione: quod est per se et simpliciter in unoquoque genere, est prius eo quod est per aliud et secundum quid. Sed substantia est ens simpliciter et per seipsam: omnia autem alia genera a substantia sunt entia secundum quid et per substantiam: ergo substantia est prima inter alia entia

(Taken one way, “being” denotes ‘what-a-thing-is (quid est) and this-something (hoc aliquid)’; that is, it denotes *substance*. In this case, by the phrase “what-a-thing-is” is meant a substance’s essential nature (essentia substantiae); and by the phrase “this-something” is meant a complete substantial being (suppositum). All modes of ‘being a substance’ can be reduced to these two, as book 5 [of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*; ch.8] showed. Taken another way, however, “being” denotes quality or quantity, or something belonging to the other categories.

Now, although being may be ascribed in a range of ways (tot modis dicatur), it’s obvious that, amongst all beings, primacy goes to that-

which-a-thing-is, i.e. to being as *substance*...[Aristotle] proves the point...with reasoning of this sort: what exists on its own terms and absolutely (per se et simpliciter) in any class of things has priority over what exists dependently and relatively (per aliud et secundum quid). But *substance* is being *absolutely and on its own terms*, whereas all other kinds of being except substance are being only relatively and due to substance (secundum quid et per substantiam). So substance is first when compared to all other modes of being.)

There is a refreshingly vigorous realism about the account of ‘substance’ provided by St Thomas, who draws heavily on Aristotle in articulating this account. Locke’s concept of substance as some sort of inert, unchangeable, essentially unknowable substratum seems remote from the facts, and Hume’s notion of substance as a subjective ‘collection’ of ideas based on sense ‘impressions’, and without any counterpart in reality, even more remote.

St Thomas nowhere says that we somehow start off discovering only sense-perceptible features and then go on to *infer* the reality of something upholding these features. Rather, for him, there is a natural and immediate ‘openness’ of distinctively human consciousness to the ‘quid est et hoc aliquid’ - the ‘what-a-thing-is and this-something’ - of the realities with which we are continually engaged. In this sentio-conceptual engagement, we are dealing with objects disclosing themselves to us as things-in-themselves existing in their own right (*in se/per se* things) and, simultaneously, as things intimately combined with, and sustaining, features whose whole being is to-be-in those things as in their subjects (*in alio/in subiecto* features).

For Thomas, substances are strong “centres of descriptive gravity” (to borrow a striking phrase from Richard Rorty’s *Truth and Progress*, p.105), and meet the central requirement of “out-there-in-itself-hood”, as Timothy Suttor put it in an appendix (p.253) to his translation of the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, questions 75-83 (Blackfriars edition). And, for Thomas, the universe portrayed in the scheme of his metaphysics is, above all, a dynamic one. This is so because its “centres of descriptive gravity”, i.e. its substances, are ceaselessly exercising the most basic of all activities - the activity of *be-ing* (referred to in Thomas’s Latin by the terms “esse” and “actus essendi”) - and are restlessly mobile under the impress of causes, the workings of which affect the whole sweep of finite existence.

- In connection with the Thomistic analysis of *be-ing* as an *activity*, refer note 3 of article 11 *infra*.

Resonances of the Thomistic portrayal of a dynamic universe in a dynamic philosophy are well caught in section 97 of the encyclical letter *Fides et Ratio* (Faith and Reason) of Pope John Paul II:

Intra metaphysicae christianae traditionis prospectum philosophia essendi est philosophia actuosa seu dinamica quae ipsis in suis ontologicis, causalibus et communicativis structuris praebet veritatem. Impetum suum ac perennem impulsus in eo reperit quod actu ipso 'essendi' sustentatur, unde plena et generalis permittitur ad solidam rerum universitatem patefactio, omnibus excessis terminis ut Ille qui rebus omnibus consummationem tribuit attingatur.

(*Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, volume XC1, January 7th 1999, No.1; p.81)

(Set within the Christian metaphysical tradition, the philosophy of being is a dynamic philosophy which views reality in its ontological, causal and communicative structures. It is strong and enduring because it is based upon the very act of being itself, which allows a full and comprehensive openness to reality as a whole, surpassing every limit in order to reach the One who brings all things to fulfilment. [translation from Australian edition, published November 1998, p.134] )

In a nice counterpoise to the subjectivism of a David Hume, *Fides et Ratio* comments in section 44 that

Quoniam indubitanter ad veritatem animum attendebat, revera obiectivum eius sensum agnoscere scivit. Eius vere est philosophia essendi et non apparenti dumtaxat.

(*Op. cit.*, p.40)

(Looking unreservedly to truth, the realism of Thomas could recognise the objectivity of truth and produce not merely a philosophy of 'what seems to be' but a philosophy of 'what is'. [translation details as above; pp.69-70] )

2. The reference is to volume, page, and section in Jacques Paul Migne's classic *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina* (Paris, 221 volumes, 1844-64). 'PL' is the abbreviation of the title used by Leo Keeler S.J. for all references to the Latin volumes edited by Migne. 'PG' is used by Keeler in connection with the corresponding *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca* (Paris, 162 volumes, 1857-66). Keeler's mode of referring to Migne's edition of the great ecclesiastical writers - an edition commencing in the Latin series with the early Fathers and concluding with Innocent 111, Pope from 1198 to 1216, and running from the early Fathers to the year 1439 in the Greek series - is consistently used throughout his critical edition of St Thomas's text *Quaestio Disputata de Spiritualibus Creaturis*. It is followed in this translation of the critical edition of the text.

- For Boethius, whose work *De Trinitate* is referred to in Objection 1, see note 2, article

8 *infra*.

3. In the *Quaestio Disputata de Spiritualibus Creaturis* St Thomas identifies passages from Aristotle to which he refers, or which he cites, simply by naming the relevant work and (often) adding a reference to the relevant book within the work, e.g. ‘book 3 of the *Metaphysics*’. Leo Keeler supplies more detailed identification by use of the Bekker notation in square brackets after St Thomas’s identification of the passage from Aristotle, although the Bekker notation is often preceded by reference to a chapter in the work of Aristotle being considered by Thomas. In the translation I have repeated the references provided by St Thomas, and then added in brackets - after the title in English (also in brackets) of Aristotle’s work, if helpful - *only* the relevant Bekker notation.

In this notation the first arabic numeral, e.g. 3, or set of arabic numerals, e.g. 431, refers to the page in the sequentially numbered pages of the Bekker edition of the *opera omnia* of Aristotle; the letter a or b refers to the column on the page (each page of the original Bekker edition had two columns); the second arabic numeral or set of arabic numerals refers to the line in column a or b, e.g.17.

It may be added that Immanuel Bekker (1785-1871) produced his edition of Aristotle’s texts under the aegis of the Prussian Academy, and published it in Berlin in five volumes between 1831 and 1870.

4. The general opinion of scholars is that the work cited by St Thomas is not by Augustine. Scholars sharing this opinion believe that the work *De quaestionibus veteris et novi Testamenti* was a compilation by a number of scholars writing at different times. A careful study of this matter may be found in volume 1, col.2308, of the *Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique*. Volume 1 contains a long, and extremely valuable, entry on Augustine.

5. This work of Boethius, traditionally called the *De hebdomadibus*, is entitled by Boethius: “Quomodo substantiae in eo quod sint bonae sint cum non sint substantialia bona.” (“How substances are good to the extent to which they *are*, although they are not substantial goods.”) The passage referred to by St Thomas is the second of the nine ‘rules’ according to which Boethius develops his ideas on the topic of the *De hebdomadibus*. Boethius states the rule as follows: “Diversum est esse et id quod est; ipsum enim esse nondum est, at vero quod est accepta essendi forma est atque consistit.” (“Existing is not to be confused with that which exists. For *existing* doesn’t exist, whereas *that which* does has taken on a form or mode of being by which it exists and endures.”)

6. ‘Damascene’ is John of Damascus (c.655-c.750), a long-lived Saint who was declared a Doctor of the Church by Leo X111 in 1890. He was an eminent Greek theologian whose major work was the *Pege gnoseos* (*Fount of Wisdom*). This work contains three parts, the first of which is a philosophical treatise indebted, in the main, to Aristotle; the second deals with heresies; and the third part is the ‘*De fide orthodoxa*’ (*On true belief*). The entry on John of Damascus in the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* notes

that “The ‘De Fide Orthodoxa’ is a comprehensive presentation of the teaching of the Greek Fathers on the main Christian doctrines, esp. the Trinity, Creation, and the Incarnation; the Sacraments, Mariology, images, and other subjects are also treated, but less systematically.”

In demonstrating the existence and uniqueness of God in the first part of the *Pege gnoseos*, Damascene makes use of metaphysical arguments based on the contingency of finite beings, and on the presence of order in the universe.

7. Refer note 5 *supra*.

8. Pseudo-Dionysius (the name is the usual contraction of “Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite”) was a Christian Neoplatonist writing in the late fifth or early sixth century. He employed the literary device of presenting himself as Dionysius the Areopagite who, as reported in the chapter 17, verse 34, of the *Acts of the Apostles*, was an Athenian converted to the Christian religion by the preaching of St Paul in Athens.

Pseudo-Dionysius drew on the conceptual resources of Neoplatonism to assist in setting out the philosophical parameters of a world view that was essentially Christian. Three themes dominated the intellectual explorations of Pseudo-Dionysius: the utter transcendence of the universe’s First Cause; divine causality as immediately operative in the world; and the whole of reality as ontologically ordered, starting with the Trinity at the summit of reality, working down through three ‘hierarchies’ of angels (each with three ‘orders’), and finishing with material realities disclosed to us through our sense perceptions.

Pseudo-Dionysius never tired of declaring that none of our images or symbols or concepts could ever be properly affirmed of the triune God. Our knowledge of God is a “darkness that is beyond understanding”; and we owe to him the notion of ‘apophatike theologia’ - ‘negative theology’ in the sense of involving a denial that any of our mental expressions can be adequately affirmed of God. This corrective to our thinking about God can be seen as connected with the eventual development of a doctrine of ‘analogy’ in Western theological reflection.

9. Hugh of St Victor (1096-1142) was one of the leading twelfth century scholars of the Abbey of St Victor, which had been built outside the walls of Paris in 1113, and placed under the jurisdiction of the Augustinian Canons. Hugh wrote extensively on the liberal arts (“Learn everything; you will see afterwards that nothing is superfluous.”), theology, and meditation. In connection with doctrinal mysteries, e.g., the Trinity and the Incarnation, which are part of the content of revelation, he noted that such objects of belief are “supra rationem” (above the capacity of reason), but are nonetheless “secundum rationem” (consonant with reason), and not “contra rationem” (in opposition to reason).

Hugh developed an ‘interior’ argument for the existence of God, starting from the inescapable fact of self-consciousness and concluding to the reality of a transcendent self-

conscious Cause. He also developed an ‘exterior’ argument starting from the changeableness and contingency of the world of finite things external to our minds.

10. Avicenna (980-1037) - “Avicenna” is the Latinised form of the Arabic name “Ibn Sina” - was a major contributor to Islamic philosophical exploration. He lived in Persia, wrote sometimes in Persian sometimes in Arabic, and presented his own interpretations of Aristotle that were influenced by Neoplatonic thought. His principal writing, the *Kitab Al-Shifa (Book of Healing [of the mind])* paraphrased, and commented on, much of Aristotle’s work.

Avicenna argued to the existence of God as a Necessary Being from the contingency of the realities that make up the universe. Be-ing and essence were identical in this unique Being who was ‘necesse esse’, but distinct in everything else. A complex system of ‘emanations’, based on causal dependencies, connected the Necessary Being with the caused things of the sense-perceptible world.

Translation into Latin of parts of the *Kitab Al-Shifa* in the twelfth century brought Christian thinkers then and later into contact with Avicenna’s work, and they were much influenced by him in their metaphysical theories. The first three books of St Thomas’s *Summa contra Gentiles* draw often on Avicenna. In relation to this *Summa*, James Weisheipl, OP, comments in his *Friar Thomas D’Aquino* that “Avicenna’s influence is particularly evident in chapters 22, 25, and 26 of Book 1, where Thomas discusses the absolute simplicity of God, who is *necesse esse*. The metaphysical apogee of Thomas’s natural theology is found in chapter 22, where he argues that *esse* and essence are identical in God. This chapter adheres almost verbatim to Avicenna’s *Metaphysics* V111, 4, but Avicenna’s name is never mentioned in it” (p.133).

11. Algazel (or al-Ghazali) (1058-1111) was an Islamic philosopher and theologian who initially composed a sort of ‘summa’ of philosophy based mainly on the work of Avicenna, but who subsequently launched a strong attack on the claims of philosophy to give people access to the truth about the world, human life and God. This attack, published as the *Tahafut al-Falasifah (The Incoherence of the Philosophers)*, drew attention to what Algazel took to be inconsistencies in philosophical thinking, e.g. between Aristotle’s doctrine that the world was eternal (upheld by Avicenna), and the view that the world was created by God (also upheld by Avicenna), or between causal necessities that held within the world and the possibility of miracles.

Ibn Rushd (Averroes) (1126-1198), Islamic philosopher and judge, effectively took issue with this work of Algazel in his *Tahafut al-Tahafut (The Incoherence of the Incoherence)*, published c.1180.

12. Refer also *Metaphysics*, book 7, 1029a 24-5: “The ultimate substratum is of itself neither a particular thing nor of a particular quantity nor otherwise positively characterised; nor yet is it the negations of these, for negations also will belong to it only by accident.” (W.D.Ross translation; in *The Works of Aristotle*, volume 1, p.551).

13. Note the related profound point of Aristotle in the *De Anima* (431a 1-4): “Actual knowledge is identical with its object: potential knowledge in the individual is in time prior to actual knowledge but in the universe it has no priority even in time; for all things that come into being arise from what actually is.” (J.A.Smith translation, *op.cit.*, note 12 *supra*; p.663)

In chapter 4 of an early work (probably c.1252-54) *De Principiis Naturae* (*On the Principles of Nature*) Thomas remarked: “But though unachieved potential precedes actual achievement in things that are generated - seeing that each such thing is first unachieved and then achieved, first potential then actual - nevertheless, simply speaking, achieved actuality comes first, for the actual actualises the potential and the achieved brings the unachieved to achievement.” (Timothy McDermott’s translation in his *Aquinas: Selected Philosophical Writings*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1993, p.75.)

14. Refer note 3, article 11 *infra*.

15. Avicbron (or Avencebrol) (c.1021-c.1058) was the name by which the Spanish Jewish philosopher and poet, Solomon Ben Yehuda Ibn Gabirol, was known to medieval thinkers in the Latin west. Ibn Gabirol was one of the major contributors to Jewish culture in eleventh century Spain, at that time under an enlightened, tolerant, Islamic rule that facilitated the flourishing of Islamic, Jewish, and Christian thought and imagination.

Ibn Gabirol wrote much secular and religious poetry in both Hebrew and Arabic, and his major philosophical work was the *Mekor Hayyim*, written in Arabic and translated into Latin in the twelfth century under the title *Fons Vitae* (*The Source of Life*). This Latin translation was put into Hebrew in the thirteenth century by the Jewish writer Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera. Over the centuries Ibn Gabirol’s authorship of the *Mekor Hayyim* was lost from view, and only re-established in the middle of the nineteenth century by the distinguished French Jewish scholar Salomon Munk. Munk translated substantial sections of Ibn Falaquera’s Hebrew version into French, and published Hebrew and French versions on facing pages in 1859 in his *Melanges de philosophie juive et arabe*.

The *Mekor Hayyim* or *Fons Vitae* presents a Neoplatonic account of reality, not uninfluenced by the logic and metaphysics of Aristotle. According to this account, at the peak of reality is a personal, creative God whose attribute of Will is the metaphysical counterpart of the divine Logos or Word that features in the philosophy of the Jewish Hellenist, Philo of Alexandria (c.15 BC-c.50 AD). The divine Will is the cause of the World-Soul which is composed of matter and form - understood as ‘*materia universalis*’ and ‘*forma universalis*’ - and which is the medium or instrument of the divine Will’s production of all created spiritual and material realities.

For Ibn Gabirol, all created things, including spirits, involve matter/form composition. Of itself matter is not corporeal but becomes so only by taking on a special form - the ‘*forma corporeitatis*’ - that makes of substance *material* substance. Every created thing has diverse levels or grades of perfection, e.g. in the case of a person: being substantial, material, alive, sentient, and rational, with each level of perfection being due to a distinct

substantial form.

The teaching of Ibn Gabirol - Avicbron (Avicebrol) - on the matter/form or 'hylomorphic' composition of absolutely *all* created substances (the ground of their being marked off from God), and his teaching on the plurality of substantial forms in them, had considerable influence on many thinkers within the Augustinian-Franciscan School in the thirteenth century. This influence can typically be seen in the writings of Thomas's great Franciscan contemporary, St Bonaventure (c.1217-1274). (Refer note 15, article 3 *infra*.)

In his *Later Medieval Philosophy (1150-1350)*, the Cambridge medievalist John Marenbon makes the interesting remark that "For many a Christian thinker the *Fons Vitae* (rather like Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophiae*) seemed to show that it was possible to argue philosophically, making no use of revelation, and yet to arrive at a theory fully in accord with the faith" (p.63). This follows Marenbon's earlier comment that "Avicebrol is even more scrupulous in eliminating traces of the particular dogmas of Judaism from his book than Avicenna in keeping the tenets of Islam from his interpretation of Aristotle" (*ibid.*).

16. Refer note 12, article 8, and note 5, article 9, both *infra*.

St Thomas offers a valuable reflection on the implications of a 'box without matter' when discussing, in the *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, question 75, article 6, whether the substantial form of bread remains after the words of consecration have been pronounced during the celebration of the Eucharist:

Si forma substantialis panis remaneret, aut remaneret in materia, aut a materia separata. Primum autem esse non potest. Quia, si remaneret in materia panis, tunc tota substantia panis remaneret: quod est contra praedicta (a.2). In alia autem materia remanere non potest: quia propria forma non est nisi in propria materia.  
- Si autem remaneret a materia separata, iam esset forma intelligibilis actu, et etiam intellectus: nam omnes formae a materia separatae sunt tales.

(If the substantial form of the bread were to remain, either it would remain in matter or separated from matter. The first alternative can't be the case because, were [the substantial form] to remain in the matter of the bread, then the whole substance of the bread would remain - which contradicts what has already been argued [in article 2, which showed that the substance of the bread doesn't remain *post consecrationem*]. Nor can [the substantial form] remain in some other matter, since a thing's own form exists only in the thing's own matter.

If, on the other alternative, [the substantial form] remained, separated from matter, it would be *an-actually-thinkable-form*, and

have an *intellect* as well; for all forms separated from matter are like this.)

For St Thomas, this latter alternative is, of course, a *reductio ad absurdum*. Since the substantial form of bread is non-living, there is simply no question of its having an *intellect* and being capable of the living activity of thought.

Peter Geach surprisingly misinterprets the above passage from the *Summa Theologiae* in his commentary on it in his essay on ‘Aquinas’ in the book *Three Philosophers*:

[Aquinas] tells us that if there could be the substantial form of a loaf of bread existing apart from the bread, it would exist as a form that was *thought of*, and that (since this thought would occur apart from anything else in which it inhered) this individualized form would exist in *its own thought of itself*. The *esse* of the form would thus be *naturale* and *intentionale* at once. (p.99. Geach’s italics)

It is simply to get things the wrong way round to say, as Geach does, that the “individualized form” of the bread would “exist in its own thought of itself”. Rather, the “thought of itself” would exist in the individualized form of the bread, and the *esse* of this form would be *naturale* only, and not “*naturale* and *intentionale* at once”. The *esse intentionale* would be associated with the *intellectus* that, according to Thomas, *loc. cit.*, would be a property of the substantial form separated from matter.

In the metaphysics of St Thomas, a form that existed in its own thought of itself, whose *esse* was therefore simultaneously *naturale* and *intentionale*, would be a form in which *intelligere* (the activity of thinking) would be identical with *esse* (the activity of be-ing). Such a form would be, in the language of Thomas, ‘actus purus’, i.e. actuality only and, on the Thomistic principle that actuality left to itself is unlimited (*actus de se est illimitatus*), would be infinite *simpliciter*, and identical with God. (The arguments developed by St Thomas in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, question 14, article 4 [to show that the activity of thinking - *intelligere* - in God is one with the divine substance], and question 54, article 2 [to show that an angel’s thinking - *intelligere* - can’t be one with an angel’s *esse*] should be consulted.)

Interestingly, for Aristotle, as for St Thomas, only one being could be existing in its own thought of itself, viz the First Mover (God) whose “thinking is the thinking of thinking (*estin he noesis noeseos noesis*)” (*Metaphysics*, book 12, 1074 b 34).

Geach goes on (*ibid.*) to conclude: “But the embodied soul of a man (sic) can be a thinking subject; and so, Aquinas thinks, it can also exist apart from matter with an *esse* at once *naturale* and *intentionale* - in its own thought of itself.” This is a line of argument totally at odds with Thomas’s account of the capacity of the human soul for disembodied existence. (Refer *Summa contra Gentiles*, book 2, chapters 79-81; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, question 75, articles 2 and 6.)

17. Article 8 *infra* - "Are All the Angels Specifically Different from One Another? - is an extended defence by St Thomas of the position that the multitude of angels is a multitude of intellectual natures, each one a species in its own right.

18. Sections 2 and 5 of Thomas's monograph *De ente et essentia* (*On being and essence*) develop at some length the ideas found in the first paragraph of his reply to objection 24.

19. For some elaboration of this principle, refer note 3 of article 6 *infra*.

The second issue to be considered is this: **Is a spiritual substance able to be united to a body?**

It seems not:

1. Dionysius indicates in the first chapter of his *De divinis nominibus (Divine Names)* that what's incorporeal can't be confined by what's corporeal. Yet every form is confined by matter since it's matter's actualisation. So spiritual or incorporeal substance can't be the form of a body.

2. Again, according to Aristotle in his *De somno et vigilia (On sleep and sleeplessness)* [454a 8], "Action correlates with active power." But the distinctive action of spiritual substance is to think (intelligere) - an action that can't be a body's action since thinking doesn't call for a bodily organ, as Aristotle establishes in book 3 of the *De anima (On the soul)* [429a 25]. So no intellectual power can be the form of a body, nor can the spiritual substance in which this sort of power is grounded be the form of a body.

3. Again, what is taken on by something subsequent to its full existence is taken on as non-essential. Now spiritual substance has full existence in its own right. A body taken on by it, then, is taken on as non-essential. There's no chance, then, of a spiritual substance's being united to body as body's substantial form.

- But [the respondent] has commented that soul *qua* spiritual substance has full existence in its own right, whereas soul *qua* animating principle is united to body as form. Now this won't do because...

4. A soul by its very nature is a spiritual substance; so, either it's body's form according to its very nature or in terms of something added to its nature. If the latter - and given that whatever is added to a thing over and above its nature is non-essential to it - it follows that soul through something non-essential is united to body. So a human being would lack essential unity - a position to be rejected. Accordingly, a soul is united to a body in terms of its very nature *qua* spiritual substance.

5. Moreover, form doesn't exist for matter but matter for form. So a soul is not united to a body for the body's benefit - it's more that a body is united to a soul for the soul's benefit, if the soul is the body's form. Yet a soul isn't in need of a body to gain any benefit, since it can both *be* and *be thinking* without the body. Soul, then, is not united to body as form.

6. Besides, the union of matter and form is something natural. Not so the soul's union with a body. This is something miraculous, as claimed in the book *De spiritu et anima (On spirit and soul)* [PL 40, 790] (1): "It abounds in miracle that things so diverse and asunder were able to be joined." So the soul is not united to a body as form.

7. Moreover, in his work *De caelo* (*On the heavens*) [288b 14], Aristotle says that “any weakening of something is not nature’s intention”. So a thing that weakens something else is not naturally united to it. But union with the body weakens the soul both in respect of being - body, after all, encumbers soul as stated in *De spiritu et anima* (*On spirit and soul*) - and in respect of activity since, as the same book says, soul can’t be self-knowing unless it disentangles itself from all bodily links. So soul/body union is not something natural - the same conclusion as before.

8. Further, Averroes (2) says in his commentary on book 8 of [Aristotle’s] *Metaphysics* that, when the potential is made actual, this is not because something is added. Yet soul’s being united to body involves the adding of something from the outside, since the soul is created by God and caused to enter the body. So the soul isn’t the actualisation or form of the body.

9. Again, form is drawn out from the potentiality of matter. But a spiritual substance can’t possibly be drawn out from the potentiality of bodily matter. So spiritual substance can’t be united to body as its form.

10. Further, there’s greater symmetry between spirit and spirit than between spirit and body. But one spirit can’t be another spirit’s form. Nor, plainly, can a spiritual substance be the form of a body.

11. Again, Augustine affirms in his *De libero arbitrio* (*On free choice*) [book 3, chapter 11] that soul and angel are “equal in nature but unequal in function”. But no angel can be the form of a body; so neither can a soul.

12. Besides, in his book *De duobus naturis* (*On the two natures <of Christ>*), Boethius states that “A nature is what fashions each thing in terms of characteristic difference.” But the characteristic difference of a soul and an angel is the same, namely rational mind. So the same sort of nature is found in each - and the same conclusion as before.

13. Further, the soul is related in the same way to the whole body and to its parts - it is, indeed, entire in the whole and entire in any part at all. But spiritual substance - because it is intellect - is “the actualisation of no part of the body”, as Aristotle affirms in book 3 of the *De anima* (*On the soul*) [413a 7]. This entails that it’s not the form or actualisation of the whole body, either.

14. Again, a natural form existing in a body doesn’t operate outside that body. Yet the soul existing in a body *can* operate outside it. Witness what was said at the Council of Ancyra concerning women who regarded themselves as visiting the goddess Diana by night. What they believed to be a bodily experience (se in corpore pati) was something their souls undertook, in this way indicating activity by each one’s soul outside her body. There’s no chance, then, that a spiritual

substance is united to a body as its natural form.

15. Moreover, note that the book *De articulis fidei* (*On the articles of faith*) (3) makes the claim that “neither form without matter nor matter without form functions as a subject.” Yet the body is the subject of some non-essential traits, so it’s not matter without form. Therefore, if a spiritual substance were taken on by it as *form*, the upshot would be two forms in one and the same body - an impossibility.

16. Further, the perishable and the imperishable differ generically, and nothing can be said univocally of them. Aristotle in book 10 of the *Metaphysics* [1058b 28], and Averroes in his commentary on that text, make this clear. So the perishable and the imperishable differ more than do two contrary species under the one genus. Yet Boethius says that one of two contraries doesn’t assist the other to exist. Imperishable spiritual substance, then, doesn’t assist the perishable body to exist. So it isn’t the body’s form, since the role of form is to give existence to matter (*cum forma det esse materiae*).

17. Again, whatever’s united to something else through a non-essential feature isn’t united to it as form. Now intellect is united to body through the use of images (*per phantasma*) - a feature not of the essence of intellect, as Averroes notes in commenting on book 3 of Aristotle’s *De anima* (*On the soul*). So spiritual substance, being intellect, is not united to body as form.

18. Besides, being a spiritual substance involves having intellect. Having intellect involves being disengaged from matter, since exemption from matter is the source of a thing’s having intellect. It follows that no spiritual substance exists as form embedded in matter; nor, on this account, is it able to be united to a body as its form.

19. Again, matter and form together make one. So, if a spiritual substance is united to a body as its form, these two must make one. But then thinkable forms (*formae intelligibiles*) taken in by intellect will be taken in by bodily matter - an impossibility since forms so received are only *potentially* thinkable. It is not, then, for spiritual substance to be united to body as form.

**But against that position** is what Dionysius says in chapter 4 of his *De divinis nominibus* (*Divine Names*), namely, that the soul is an intellectual substance having unfailing life. But the soul is the body’s form - a point clarified by Aristotle’s definition of soul in book 2 of his *De anima* (*On the soul*) [412b 5]. So *some* spiritual or intellectual substance at any rate is united to body as form.

### **Response:**

The difficulty of this question arises out of a spiritual substance’s being the sort of thing that subsists in its own right, whereas it belongs to form to exist in

something else - in matter - of which it is the actualisation and fulfilment (actus et perfectio). It seems, then, to go against the very notion of 'spiritual substance' that it be the form of a body. For this reason, Gregory of Nyssa (4) in his book *De anima (On the soul)* [PG 45, 199] asserted that Aristotle had taken the view that the soul was not subsistent in its own right, and that it perished when the body perished because of its being the entelechy, that is, the actualisation or fulfilment of the physical body.

Now, it's evident to anyone who carefully considers the issue that there's no getting round the need to have a spiritual substance as the human body's form. For it's manifest that it belongs to this individual human being - to Socrates, say, or Plato - *to think* (intelligere) (5). No activity belongs to a thing, however, except in virtue of some form, whether substantial or non-substantial, existing in it, since nothing acts or is active except in virtue of its *being already actualised* (secundum quod est actu). But each thing is actualised through some form, whether substantial or non-substantial, since form just *is* [something's] actualisation, as fire is *actually* fire through 'fireness' (per igneitate), and *actually* hot through heat (per calorem). So there's no avoiding the requirement that the principle of this activity which is 'to think' be present as form within each human being. Yet the principle of this activity isn't some form the be-ing (esse) of which is dependent on the body, and bound up with, or 'immersed' in, matter, because this activity isn't carried out by the body, as Aristotle proves in book 3 of the *De anima (On the soul)* [429a & b]. Accordingly, the principle of this activity engages in activity in which the body's matter doesn't share. Now a definite ratio holds between each thing's activity and its being - which requires that the be-ing of that principle surpass the range of the body's matter and not depend on it. But this belongs distinctively to spiritual substance. So, connect up the points just made, and one has to affirm that the human body's form is a spiritual substance.

However, certain philosophers, quite willing to grant that *to think* (intelligere) is the activity of a spiritual substance, have gone on to deny that any spiritual substance is united to the body as its form. One of them - Averroes - maintained that the receptive intellect (intellectus possibilis) (6) was separate from the body with respect to its be-ing. He saw, however, that, short of there being some sort of union of receptive intellect with *this* particular person, receptive intellect's action could not belong to this particular person; for, when you have two substances altogether disconnected, one's being active or at work says nothing about the other's being active or at work. So he asserted that the intellect, which he declared to be altogether separate from the body *vis-a-vis* its be-ing, was, nonetheless, made continuous with *this* human being through the play of images (per phantasmata). His reason was that the presentative form of the thinkable object (species intelligibilis) (7) - itself the actualisation of the receptive intellect - is grounded in the images from which it is abstracted. So the presentative form of the thinkable object has a twofold existence: one in the receptive intellect whose form it is, the other in the images from which it is abstracted. Now images are in *this* human being, given that the capacity to form them (virtus imaginativa) is a

capacity residing in the body, that is, one employing a bodily structure. So the presentative form of the thinkable object is a sort of middle point where receptive intellect and *this* particular human being are linked up.

But this proposed continuity in no way suffices to establish that it's *this* individual human being who thinks. As Aristotle notes in book 3 of the *De anima* (*On the soul*) [431a 13], images are compared to receptive intellect as colour to seeing. On this showing, the presentative form of the thinkable object (species intelligibilis) abstracted from images is found in the receptive intellect as the presentative form of colour (species coloris) is found in the sense of sight. On the other hand, the presentative form of the thinkable object is found in the images as the presentative form of colour is found in the colour of the wall (8). But the fact that the presentative form of something visible, which is the form of [the act of] seeing, is based on the colour in the wall doesn't mean that sight is linked to the wall as to something *seeing* but as to something *seen* - the wall doesn't *see*, but is *seen*, in this scenario. The point is that the presence in the wall of a form (colour), whose likeness is present in a cognitive power, does not turn the wall into a being that knows (non...hoc facit cognoscentem); for this outcome, a cognitive power itself must be present in it.

Nor, accordingly, will *this* human being be actually thinking (intelligens) due to images being present in him or her, the likeness of which - the presentative form of the thinkable object - is present in the receptive intellect. From this what follows is that these images are 'thought' by the receptive intellect. What is required is that the receptive intellect itself, which is the power or capacity to think, be present as form or actualisation *in this human being* to bring it about that *this human being* should think.

Moreover, [Averroes' theory] fails even in its idea of continuity. The presentative form of the thinkable object is united to receptive intellect only *qua* abstracted from images; for only in this way can its content be *actually* thought. As still present within the play of imagery, this content is only *potentially* thought. This tends to show more the separation of receptive intellect from images than continuity since, if A can't be united to B unless A is first detached from C, then B and C must be completely separate.

With this opinion rejected as impossible, we should consider whether Plato was more successful in showing that *this* human being thinks, without his having to maintain that a spiritual substance was united to body as its form. Gregory of Nyssa (9) reports Plato to have claimed that an intellectual substance called the soul was united to the body through a sort of non-material contact - a situation to be understood along the lines of a moving or agent cause, even though incorporeal, 'touching' what is moved or acted upon. Aristotle is getting at this in book 1 of his *De generatione et corruptione* (*On coming into being and ceasing to be*) [323a 28] when he says that some things touch but are not touched because they act but are not acted upon. Accordingly Plato, as Gregory reports, used to

say that a person is not something made up of soul and body but is a soul using a body, so that the soul is understood to be in a body rather as a sailor is in a boat - a point Aristotle noted in book 2 of the *De anima (On the soul)* [413a 8]. And so *this* human being thinks (intelligit) insofar as *this* human being is *the spiritual substance itself* which is the soul, the distinctive activity of which is to think, without, however, this substance's existing as the body's form.

One argument suffices for disproving this account - the one Aristotle uses to meet it head on in book 2 of the *De Anima On the soul)* [412a, throughout] (10): if the soul were not united to the body as form, it would follow that the body and its parts did not have their specific mode of being through the soul. But this is manifestly not the case since, when the soul departs, one speaks of the eye or of flesh and bone "only equivocally as [one would speak of] the *eye* of a painted figure or of a statue." (11) So it's evident that the soul is the form and the 'essential whatness of this body' (quod quid erat esse huius corporis); that is to say, that from which this body derives its specific nature. Just how this can come about should be looked at.

Notice from the start that the more ontologically excellent (perfectior) any form is, the more it surpasses physical matter - a fact obvious to anyone scanning the diverse classes of forms. The form of a simple element has only the sort of operation brought about through those active and passive qualities which are [nothing more than] dispositions of physical matter. The form of a mineral, however, has some activity that goes beyond these active and passive qualities, taking on its nature from the influence of a heavenly body, as we see when lodestone attracts iron and sapphire heals an abscess (12). Beyond this lies the activity of the vegetal soul, served indeed by active and passive qualities that are organic. But, above the potential of qualities of this sort, lies this soul's achievement of its distinctive effect of nourishing, of growing [the organism] up to pre-set limits, and of accomplishing other things of this sort. The sentient soul is even higher up the scale with an activity totally beyond the reach of the active and passive qualities, though these are necessarily called into play in the composition of the bodily structures through which sentient activities such as seeing, hearing, desiring, and so on, are exercised.

The most perfect of forms, however - the human soul, that is - which is the very peak of all natural forms, has an activity altogether surpassing matter which is not brought about through any bodily structure - I mean *to think* (intelligere) (13). Now, given the symmetry between a thing's being and its activity - we've mentioned this before - due to a thing's engaging in activity only to the extent of its *being*, there's no escaping the fact that the be-ing (esse) of the human soul transcends bodily matter, isn't totally confined by it, but is nonetheless in some way affected by it. So, to the extent to which it transcends the being of bodily matter, and is able of itself to subsist and to act, the human soul is a spiritual substance. On the other hand, to the extent to which it's affected by matter, and communicates its own be-ing to matter, it's the form of a body. It's affected by

bodily matter, however, on the basis that the highest level of what's lower relates to the lowest level of what's higher, as Dionysius shows in chapter 7 of his *De divinis nominibus* (*Divine Names*). Accordingly, the human soul, which is the lowest level in the series of spiritual substances, can communicate its be-ing (esse) to the human body - the highest level [of bodies] - so that soul and body become one just as form and matter do. Of course, were spiritual substance to be composed of matter and form, it would be impossible for it to be body's form, given that it's essential to matter not to be *in* something else but to be itself the first subject (14).

**So:**

to 1: Although a spiritual substance is not confined by a body, it's nonetheless affected by it, as we've said.

to 2: *To think* (intelligere) is an activity of the human soul according as this soul transcends the scope of physical matter; so such an activity isn't brought about by some bodily structure. What can be said, of course, is that the composite itself - the human being, that is - *thinks*, insofar as the soul, which is the composite's formal or actualising component, has this distinctive activity; rather as the activity of any part at all is attributed to the whole. It's the individual person, after all, who sees due to eyes, walks due to feet and, in similar fashion, thinks due to soul.

to 3: The soul subsists in its own right insofar as its *be-ing* doesn't depend on the body but surpasses physical matter. Nevertheless, it takes on a body to share this be-ing (ad esse huius communionem), in this way giving rise to one be-ing (unum esse) for both soul and body which is the be-ing of the human person. On the other hand, if the body were united to the soul on the basis of a different sort of be-ing (secundum aliud esse), the [body/soul] union would be non-essential.

to 4: The soul by what's essential to it (secundum suam essentiam) is the body's form, not by dint of some added factor. To the extent to which it's affected by body, it is form. To the extent to which it transcends the scope of body, it warrants the epithet 'spirit' or 'spiritual substance'.

to 5: No part separated from the whole enjoys its natural perfection or completion. So the soul, since it is part of human nature, doesn't enjoy its natural perfection unless united to a body. Here's the evidence: it's in virtue of what the soul is that there flow from it certain powers which aren't actualisations of bodily structures, due to the soul's surpassing the scope of what's bodily; yet, at the same time, there flow from it powers which *are* the actualisations of bodily structures, due to its being affected by physical matter. Nor does anything have its natural perfection or completion unless there's brought into actuality what's contained only virtually within it. Accordingly, the soul, empowered though it is to exist and to think in separation from the body, falls short of its natural perfection when so separated, as Augustine indicates in book 12 of his *Super Genesim ad litteram*

(*Commentary on Genesis*).

to 6: In the text cited, the term “miracle” is not used to refer to what’s set over against the workings of nature, but to designate even natural happenings themselves as ‘miracles’ in that they issue from the unfathomable power of God. It’s in this sense that Augustine, in his *Super Ioannem (On John)*, declares it more miraculous for God to produce from a few seeds a vast array of crops sufficient to feed the whole human race than for Him to have fed five thousand people with five loaves of bread.

to 7: When a thing is weakened by some feature unrelated to the thing’s nature, we’re not dealing with a natural condition. However, it’s a commonplace for some feature to belong to the nature of a thing in spite of the fact that there results in a thing of that kind a weakening or defectiveness. The fact that an animal’s nature is a combination of diverse materials that results in death and decay for it is a case in point. In like fashion, it’s natural for the soul to need the play of imagery for its thinking, though the upshot is its being diminished in intellectual power compared to higher substances. When it’s said that the soul is ‘weighed down’ by the body, this isn’t due to the body’s nature but rather to its liability to perish as chapter 9 [verse 15] of the Book of Wisdom puts it: “The perishable body presses down the soul.” And the point about the soul’s disentangling itself from all bodily links if it is to be self-knowing relates only to its disengaging from them as from objects, since the soul is understood when [conceptually] distanced from what is bodily. There’s no question here of disengagement in terms of being. Quite the opposite: when certain bodily structures are damaged the soul can’t be straightforwardly conscious of itself or of anything else, e.g. when the brain is injured. (15)

to 8: The more excellent any form is, the greater the requirement that it be produced by a more powerful agent. Since, then, the human soul is at the very peak of all forms, it must be produced by the most powerful of all agents, namely God; and this will be in a fashion different from that in which other forms are produced by whatever agents you like. For other forms don’t have be-ing in their own right: be-ing isn’t theirs but, thanks to them, *things* have be-ing. So the coming about of such forms is a question of matter or subject being brought from potentiality to actuality - what’s meant by a form’s being drawn out (*educi*) from the potentiality of matter, without the addition of anything from the outside. But the human soul has be-ing in its own right; so it belongs properly to it to come into being, and for the body to be drawn into the be-ing of the soul (*ad esse eius*). For this reason the soul is said to come about from the outside, and isn’t drawn out from the potentiality of matter. This provides a reply to the ninth Objection as well.

to 10: Symmetry of nature implies that one spirit is more like another spirit than like a body. But symmetry of proportion as called for between form and matter makes a spirit connect more with a body than with another spirit. Two spirits are

two full actualities, after all, whereas body and soul stand to each other as potentiality to actuality.

to 11: Angel and soul are equal on the score of *generic* nature in that each is an intellectual substance. On the score of *specific* nature, however, an angel is higher, as Dionysius shows in chapter 4 of his *Caelestis Hierarchia (Celestial Hierarchy)*.

to 12: Taken in a strict sense the term “rational” points to the characteristic difference of ‘soul’, not of ‘angel’. Dionysius uses the term “intellectual” for the latter since an angel knows the truth not discursively but intuitively, which is *to understand* (intelligere) in the strict sense of that term. The term “rational” may be taken broadly, of course, but then it should be noted that it doesn’t pick out any final characteristic difference. Division of ‘rational’ into various characteristic differences is called for, on the basis of there being various grades of intellectual knowing.

to 13: The intellect isn’t regarded as the actualisation of any part of the body to the extent to which it’s a power that doesn’t use a bodily structure. The soul’s very substance, however, is united to the body as its form, as we’ve argued.

to 14: The journeyings attributed to the women mentioned are said [by the Council] to take place *in* the soul, with no suggestion that the spirit, i.e. the substantial soul, is at work outside the body. The reason is that visions of the sort referred to are formed in the spirit, i.e. in the imaginative power of the soul.

to 15: Strictly speaking, matter minus form can’t be a subject since a subject properly so called is something that’s actualised. That a living body is something actualised, and able to be a subject, arises from no other form than its soul. This will be shown later. [Article 3].

to 16: The perishable and the imperishable aren’t akin in respect of genus, when one considers their nature. This dissimilarity springs from a diverse mode of being, and a diverse factor of potentiality, in each case. But they can be akin in respect of genus *as a logical category*, for this is taken in terms of conceptual meanings only. So ‘soul’, though imperishable, isn’t in any [logical] genus other than ‘body’ because, as a component of human nature, being in a genus or a species - or being a person or a fully-fledged substance - belongs not to it but to the *composite*. Nor can it be called *itself a thing* (hoc aliquid) (16) if by this is meant a fully-fledged substance or a person or an individual thing found in a genus or species. On the other hand, if the phrase “itself a thing” is used of whatever is able to subsist in its own right, then the soul is *itself a thing*.

to 17: Averroes’ position on this matter has already been rejected as impossible.

to 18: It belongs to the idea of *intellectual substance* that it be free of matter on

which its being is dependent, as on something totally hemming it in. So nothing prevents the soul from being both an intellectual substance and the form or actualising principle of the body, as argued above.

to 19: The human soul and body make one substance in such a way that the soul transcends the scope of the body. And, to the extent to which the soul transcends the body, *intellective* power is attributed to it. There's no demand, then, that the presentative forms of what's thinkable (species intelligibiles) be received in bodily matter.

### NOTES

1. The author of *De spiritu et anima* (*On spirit and soul*) was a Cistercian monk, Alcher of Clairvaux, who was thought to have died c.1165. In article 12 [reply to the first objection] of his *Quaestio disputata de anima* (*Disputed question on the soul*), St Thomas rejected the view that St Augustine was the author of *De spiritu et anima*. He also set little store by the book as is clear from elsewhere in the passage just referred to: "Dicendum quod liber iste *De spiritu et anima* non est Augustini, sed dicitur cuiusdam Cisterciensis fuisse; nec est multum curandum de his quae in eo dicuntur." ("It has to be said that Augustine didn't write the book *On spirit and soul*; it's said that some Cistercian did. At all events, little attention need be given to what is said in it.")

2. Averroes (1126-1198) - the name is the Latinised form of the Arabic "Ibn Rushd" - was Islam's greatest medieval Aristotelian philosopher. Importantly, his professional career also unfolded in the law courts of Seville and Cordova where he was an eminent 'qadi' (judge). In his writings he also contributed to jurisprudence and medicine.

For the medieval Schoolmen, Averroes was simply 'The Commentator' - with the accent on the definite article. He produced three commentaries (one short, one of medium length, and one long) on each of the following major works of Aristotle: *Posterior Analytics*, *De caelo*, *Metaphysics*, *Physics*, and *De anima*. He used the opportunity of commenting on Aristotle to remove much of the Neoplatonic exegesis that had, over several centuries, been intruding into Islamic Aristotelianism.

For Averroes, God is the Prime Mover utterly distinct from the world, which is itself eternal, but over which the Prime Mover exercises no providential care. While the heavenly bodies are separate Intelligences, only one intellect exists for all human beings, i.e. for the entire human race, with each individual capable of intellective life only in virtue of his or her participating in its unitary reality. This doctrine of 'monopsychism', which Averroes claimed to find in Aristotle, entailed

the denial of personal immortality for individual human beings. In order to accommodate his teaching on God and intellect within the doctrinal framework of the *Koran*, Averroes maintained that this sacred text had often to be interpreted figuratively or symbolically, although a literal interpretation was required when presenting the teachings of the *Koran* to Islamic believers at large.

The influence of Averroes on Latin medieval thought was widespread, and felt most strongly in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Paris from about 1260 when Siger of Brabant became a Regent Master in the Faculty. Siger produced influential commentaries on Aristotle, and took an apparently strict Aristotelian stand on issues raised in formal academic disputations, all of which - commentaries and academic debates - owed very much to Averroes. This was particularly the case in relation to questions about the eternity of the world and the unity of the intellect in human beings, with the implications for personal immortality, and rewards/punishments in a future life, of Averroistic answers to the latter question.

Church authorities were alarmed by the activities of Siger, and the Bishop of Paris, Etienne Tempier, condemned in 1270 a list of thirteen errors contained in his works. St Thomas's magisterial polemic *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas* (*On the unity of the intellect: against the Averroists*), also 1270, provided a rebuttal of Averroistic teaching about the intellect principally directed against Siger.

Theological critics were not slow to condemn the Canon from the Cathedral of St Paul, Liege, for allegedly holding that propositions could be accepted as true in *philosophy* although, in *theology*, the truth was held to reside in the rejection of these same propositions - the doctrine of the 'double truth'. At all events, it appears that Siger actually defended the position that, when philosophy was in conflict with the Catholic faith, the truth was to be found in the teachings of the faith.

Averroism was officially banished from the University of Paris by Bishop Tempier's fresh condemnation of Averroistic propositions in March, 1277, but it had returned by the first decades of the next century. Leadership of this return was vested in John of Jandun (died c.1328), who was pleased to describe himself as the "ape of Averroes" (see A. Maurer, *Medieval Philosophy*, p.338). Averroism remained a powerful intellectual force in the universities of northern Italy until well into the sixteenth century.

3. The Dominican editors of the Marietti edition of the *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis* (in volume 1, pp.367-415, of the two volume edition of the *Quaestiones Disputatae* of St Thomas first published in Turin 1953) inform us in a footnote, p.374, that "Auctor huius operis (viz. *De articulis fidei*) est Alanus De Insulis, O.Cist., (ob.1202) qui multa praeclara scripsit. Cfr Grabmann *Storia della Teologia cattolica*, Milano, 1937, p.54." ("The author of this work, namely *On*

*the articles of faith*, is Alan of the Islands, a monk of the Cistercian order who died in 1202. Cf. Grabmann's *History of Catholic Theology*, Milan, 1937, p.54").

I have not been able to find anything further on 'Alan of the Islands'. Even the massive *Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique* proved barren. Nor have I been able so far to gain access to the *Storia della Teologia cattolica* of the great medievalist, Martin Grabmann (1875-1949).

4. The text *De anima (On the soul)* referred to here by St Thomas is a Latin translation of chapters 2 and 3 of the work *Peri Phuseos Anthropou (On human nature)* of the late fourth century Christian philosopher, Nemesius, Bishop of Emesa in Syria. Nemesius attempted to produce a philosophical doctrine of the soul that was based on Plato and accorded well with Christian teaching. In the middle ages the *De anima* was widely believed to be the work of St Gregory of Nyssa, and J.P. Migne included it amongst Gregory's works in the *Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Graeca*.

5. In this translation, the Latin infinitive "*intelligere*" is generally, though not always, put into English as "to think" rather than as "to understand". Correspondingly, the various finite Latin forms, e.g. "*intelligit*", "*intelligat*", "*intelligunt*", etc., have usually, though not without exception, been given the English forms "thinks", "may think", etc. The English "think" with its array of 'add ons', e.g. prepositions such as "of" and "about", adverbs such as "how" and "where", a conjunction such as "that", gives something of the flexibility and range envisaged by St Thomas in his use of "*intelligere*" and of various finite forms of the verb. The translation used helps to avoid such oddities as turning "...supposito quod nullus intelligeret angelum..." (article 1, objection10) into "...with it assumed that no one was *understanding* an angel..." instead of into "...with it assumed that no one was *thinking about* an angel...".

In a paper "*What Do We Think With?*" (published in his *God and the Soul*), the British philosopher Peter Geach is terse:

"The doctrine of acts of understanding is quite wrongly attributed to the medieval scholastics. Though in ordinary Latin '*intelligere*' means 'understand', medieval Latin is often a standard rendering of Aristotle's Greek, and '*intelligere*' is Aristotle's '*noein*' which is Greek for 'to think of' not for 'to understand'. '*Homo actu intelligens lapidem*' in Aquinas's Latin thus means 'a man actually thinking of a stone', not 'understanding a stone' (whatever that is), nor even 'understanding the word "*lapis*" '....I suspect that a misconstruction of this medieval jargon may have led, historically, to the postulation of 'acts of understanding'" (p.31).

6. It suffices to note at this stage that the entire philosophical tradition that took

its rise from Aristotle (384-322 BC) distinguishes between two intellectual powers of the human soul - called by Aristotle '*vous poietikos*' and '*vous dunatos*'. In common with other Schoolmen, St Thomas refers to them respectively as '*intellectus agens*' and '*intellectus possibilis*'. Although called '*vous*' or '*intellectus*', the *vous poietikos* or *intellectus agens* - the 'agent intellect' - is so called only because of the contributory role that it plays in relation to the formal activity of intellectual *knowing* which is the work of the *vous dunatos* or *intellectus possibilis* - the 'receptive intellect'. This contributory role consists in abstracting from matter and material conditions the intelligible content latent in the play of internal images (which are themselves derived from sense experience) - Thomas calls them *phantasmata* - and making this content present to the receptive intellect by means of a '*species intelligibilis*', i.e. the presentative form of a thinkable object (*infra*, no.7). The vital response of *receptive intellect* to its taking in of the presentative form is its *idea of or actual thought about* the object made present to it in an appropriately non-material way.

These ideas will be discussed in more detail later in connection with article 9: Is receptive intellect one in all human beings?, and article 10: Is there one agent intellect for all human beings?

7. The Latin expression "*species intelligibilis*" is an awkward one to translate into reasonable English. Nor is textual understanding promoted merely by transliterating it as "*intelligible species*". What I have most often done in this translation is to render the Latin word "*species*" as "*presentative form*", a phrase borrowed from Gerald B. Phelan's excellent English translation of the fourth French edition of Jacques Maritain's *Distinguer pour unir ou Les degres du savoir* (English translation: *The Degrees of Knowledge*; refer in particular pp.115-116.). The Latin "*species intelligibilis*" becomes in English "*the presentative form of the thinkable object*". The substitution of seven English words for the precision of Thomas's two Latin words is regrettable, but I remain persuaded that this English version of "*species intelligibilis*" succeeds in conveying accurately the conceptual richness of what is intended in the Latin phrase.

8. I have preferred here "...in colore parietis" of the Marietti edition (refer note 3 *supra*) to Leo Keeler's "...in corpore parietis" which seems to jar somewhat with the movement of Thomas's argument.

9. Cf. note 4 *supra*.

10. I have amended Keeler's reference to this work of Aristotle. It contains what appears to be a typographical error. The reference should be to 412a, not 312a, in the Bekker numbering of Aristotle's text. It should be noted that the reference ought also to extend to 412b and 413a of Aristotle's text in order to cover his argument adequately.

11. Keeler's use of inverted commas in his edition may reflect the fact that

Thomas has at this point introduced a fairly free translation - presumably not his own - of Aristotle's text at 412b 22.

12. St Thomas deals lucidly and succinctly with the topic of the heavenly bodies - the '*corpora caelestia*' - in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, question 115, articles 3-6. It should be noted that the '*corpora caelestia*' attract the attention of St Thomas from the time of an early writing such as his *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum* (Paris, 1252-56) through to his commentaries on Aristotle, e.g. the *Sententia super Peri hermenias* (Paris, 1270-71) and the *Sententia super Metaphysicam* (Paris and Naples, 1269-72).

While the topic of the heavenly bodies does not, unfortunately, get a great deal of attention from scholars these days - Oliva Blanchette's *The Perfection of the Universe according to Aquinas*, and Thomas Litt's *Les Corps Celestes dans l'Univers de Saint Thomas D'Aquin*, are noteworthy exceptions - Thomas's carefully nuanced discussion of the ways in which the heavenly bodies bring about, or in certain cases only influence, things and events in the '*corpora inferiora*', i.e. the material realities (including human bodies) that make up the sublunary world, deserves serious reading.

13. With typical conciseness and lucidity - almost a few 'throw-away' sentences - Thomas elsewhere declares: "Intelligere autem non potest esse actus corporis, nec alicuius virtutis corporeae: quia omne corpus determinatur ad hic et nunc." ["To think, however, can't be the activity of a body, nor of any bodily power: because everything bodily is restricted to the here and now."] (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, question 50, article 1, Response). The implications of this declaration are profound.

14. At this point St Thomas briefly returns to the topic of article 1, viz. Is spiritual substance composed of matter and form?, in connection with the spiritual substance that is the human soul. The brief argument he deploys here he develops slightly and re-deploys three years later in the single article of question 8 of *Quodlibet 3* which he disputed in Paris, very probably at Easter 1270.

15. What St Thomas is affirming in these final four lines is an *extrinsic* dependence of the soul or mind on relevant organic structures and their functionings. The dependence in question is a dependence in terms of the *sense-based content* of what is thought about, which is obtained through the workings of these structures - the brain and the rest of the central nervous system - with their reliance on a range of receptor organs. The Thomist philosopher Jacques Maritain (1882-1973) lucidly elaborates the point in the following passage:

"Doubtless (the intellect) depends upon the body, upon the conditions of the brain. Its activity can be disturbed or hindered by a physical disorder, by an outburst of anger, by a drink or a narcotic. But this dependence is an *extrinsic* one. It exists because our intelligence cannot

act without the joint activity of the memory and the imagination, of the internal senses and external senses, all of which are organic powers residing in some material organ, in some special part of the body. As for the intellect itself, it is not *intrinsically* dependent on the body since its activity is immaterial; the human intellect does not reside in any special part of the body. It is not contained by the body, but rather contains it. It uses the brain, since the organs of the internal senses are in the brain; yet the brain is not an organ of the intelligence; there is no part of the organism whose act is intellectual operation. The intellect has no organ.

Finally, since intellectual power is spiritual, or purely immaterial in itself, its *first substantial root*, the subsisting principle from which this power proceeds and which acts through its instrumentality, is also spiritual.”

(*The Range of Reason*, p.56)

St Thomas would have welcomed recent developments in such areas as neurophysiology, functional neuroimaging, and clinical practice in commissurotomy because of their capacity, *inter alia*, to provide valuable detail in support of his general comment that “When certain bodily structures are damaged the soul can’t be straightforwardly conscious of itself or of anything else, e.g. when the brain is injured” (article 2, reply to Objection 7). He would also have welcomed the findings of a researcher such as the American neuropsychologist Stephen Kosslyn, whose experimental work has indicated that imagery is not a single mental process but one involving at least four “subabilities”: image generation, image maintenance, image scanning, and image transformation (*Neuropsychologia* 33 (1995), 1485-1510; discussed in Springer and Deutsch, *Left Brain-Right Brain: Perspectives from Cognitive Neuroscience*, p.197). The conclusions reached by Kosslyn would appear to St Thomas to importantly amplify his idea that “It’s natural for the soul to need the *play of imagery* for its thinking (quod [anima] indigeat phantasmatis ad intelligendum)...” (article 2, reply to Objection 7).

While readily conceding the *intrinsic* dependence of sensation and sense imagery on the structures and functions of receptor organs and the central nervous system, and the *extrinsic* dependence of the intellect and thought on all of these factors, St Thomas would have remained perfectly clear that “Intelligere autem non potest esse actus corporis, nec alicuius virtutis corporeae: quia omne corpus determinatur ad hic et nunc.” [“To think, however, can’t be the activity of a body, nor of any bodily power: because everything bodily is restricted to the here and now.”] (*Summa theologiae*, 1a, question 50, article 1, Response).

St Thomas may even have invited Kosslyn, Springer, and Deutsch to sample for themselves a little of the *metaphysics* of mind by pondering a short passage such as the following:

Huius incorruptibilitatis signum accipi potest ex eius

intellectuali operatione: quia enim unumquodque operatur secundum quod est actu, operatio rei indicat modum esse ipsius. Species autem et ratio operationis ex obiecto comprehenditur. Obiectum autem intelligibile, cum sit supra tempus, est sempiternum. Unde omnis substantia intellectualis est incorruptibilis secundum suam naturam.

(*loc. cit.*, article 5)

(An indication of the imperishability [of an intellectual substance] can be gathered from its intellectual activity. After all, anything engages in activity only to the extent to which it's in actuality, so a thing's activity reveals its mode or manner of being actual. Now the kind and rationale of any activity are established from the activity's object. But the object of thinking endures forever as being above and beyond time [since the natures or quiddities of things - the proper objects of intellect's grasp - are above and beyond matter and change]. Every intellectual substance, then, is imperishable in terms of its own nature.)

16. I here adopt Timothy McDermott's excellent rendering of the Latin "*hoc aliquid*". (Refer McDermott's *Aquinas - Selected Philosophical Writings*, pp.184-191 *passim*.)

The third issue to be considered is this: **Is the spiritual substance that is the human soul united to the body through an intermediary?**

It seems that it is:

1. In chapter 13 of the *Caelestis hierarchia (Heavenly Hierarchy)* Dionysius asserts that what's highest is joined to what's lowest through intermediaries. But between the spiritual soul and the body are the intermediaries of vegetal and sentient souls. So the spiritual substance which is the rational soul is joined up with body through the vegetal and sentient souls as intermediaries.

2. Further, Aristotle mentions in book 2 of the *De anima (On the soul)* [412b 5] that the soul is "the actualising principle of an organic body potentially having life activity within it." (1). But an organic physical body potentially having life activity is contrasted with soul as matter with form. Yet a physical body's being organic comes about through a substantial form. Therefore a substantial form - whatever sort it turns out to be - precedes in matter the spiritual substance which is the rational soul; and, by the same reasoning, do other forms - the sentient and vegetal souls - consequent upon the first one.

3. Again, although matter's not a genus, nor form a characteristic difference (differentia) - neither genus nor differentiating characteristic is said of the individual composite - nonetheless both genus and characteristic difference are said of the species. However, as Aristotle points out in book 8 of the *Metaphysics* [1043a 19; 1043b 30], the notion of *genus* is taken from matter and the notion of *characteristic difference* from form. Now, in the case of the human being, the genus is *animal*, which is taken from the person's sentient nature, whilst the characteristic difference is *rational* which is taken from the person's rational soul. So sentient nature bears to rational soul the relationship matter bears to form. But sentient nature is brought about by sentient soul. Therefore sentient soul naturally precedes rational soul and so, on the same basis, do all other forms.

4. Besides, as Aristotle proves in book 8 of the *Physics* [254b 22] (2), everything that's self-moving has two parts, one of which does the moving while the other is moved. Now a human being - indeed, any animal at all - is self-moving, and the part that does the moving is the soul. But the part that's moved can't be first matter on its own (*materia nuda*) but must be a body, since whatever is moved is a body, as book 6 of the *Physics* [chapters 4 and 10, *passim*] brings out. A body is so, however, through some or other [substantial] form. Accordingly, some form is in matter ahead of the soul - and we're back with our earlier conclusion.

5. Further, in the *De fide orthodoxa (Concerning correct belief)* [PG 94, 1006]. Damascene (3) notes that the simplicity of the divine essence is so great that not even the divine Word can be united to flesh except by a soul as intermediary. So the gap (*distantia*) between what's simple and what's composite blocks some things from being joined up without an intermediary. Yet, when 'being simple' and 'being composite' are reckoned with, rational soul and human body are worlds apart. So they've just got to be united through an intermediary.

6. Moreover, Augustine comments in chapter 14 of the book *De spiritu et anima* (Concerning spirit and soul) [PL 40, 789] (4) that “soul, being truly spirit, and flesh, being truly body, are smoothly and appropriately joined at their extremities, i.e. in the soul’s imaginative power, which is not bodily but resembles what’s bodily, and in the body’s capacity for sensual drive (sensualitate corporis) which approaches spirit in that, without soul, it can’t come about.” So the soul is linked to the body, then, through a pair of intermediaries: imaginative power and sensual drive.

7. Besides, in the same book it’s stated that “Since the soul is incorporeal, it controls the body through the body’s more refined constituents, i.e. through fire and air.” But the soul controls the body on the same principle as it is united to it; for, when the elements by which it controls the body wane, the soul itself abandons the body, as Augustine says in book 7 of his *Super Genesim ad litteram* (Commentary on Genesis). Soul is united to body, then, through an intermediary.

8. Again, things that differ in the highest degree aren’t connected except through an intermediary. Now the perishable and the imperishable (corruptibile et incorruptibile) differ about as much as any two things can differ, as Aristotle claims in book 10 of the *Metaphysics* [1058b 28]. So the human soul - something imperishable - isn’t united to the body - something perishable - unless through an intermediary.

9. Moreover, in the book *De differentia spiritus et animae* (Concerning the difference between spirit and soul), a particular philosopher (5) states that soul is united to body by means of spirit. So it’s united to body through an intermediary.

10. Again, things essentially diverse aren’t brought together unless there’s an intermediary. There has to be something that makes them one, as Aristotle shows clearly in book 8 of the *Metaphysics* [1045a 8]. But the soul and the body are essentially diverse. So they can’t be united except through an intermediary.

11. Moreover, the soul is united to the body in view of its being perfected through a union of this kind. Form, after all, doesn’t exist for matter’s sake, but matter for the sake of form. Now the soul is perfected through this union with the body principally with respect to image-based thinking (intelligere phantasticum) insofar as the soul thinks by abstracting content from the play of images. So it’s united to body through images - themselves neither essentially body nor essentially soul. So the soul is united to the body through an intermediary.

12. Again, even prior to the appearance of rational soul, the body has taken on a form in the mother’s womb. Yet this is not to say that, on rational soul’s appearance, this form ceases to be: it doesn’t collapse into nothingness, nor does it return to goodness-knows-what. So there’s a form already existent in matter ahead of the rational soul.

13. Besides, vital activities appear in the embryo prior to the rational soul’s coming, as Aristotle makes clear in book 2 of his *De generatione animalium* (On the generation of animals) [736b 12]. But vital activities are due to the presence of a soul. So another soul

already exists in the body prior to the rational soul's appearance. It seems, then, that the rational soul's being united to a body calls for a further soul as intermediary.

14. Moreover, since "abstraction doesn't involve falsity", as is noted in book 2 of Aristotle's *Physics* [193b 35], it's necessary that 'body' as considered by mathematicians exist in some way. So, since it's not separated from what's sense-perceptible, it follows that it's found amongst sense-perceptible things. But to be a body at all calls for form giving rise to bodiliness (*forma corporeitatis*). Accordingly, at least form-giving-rise-to-bodiliness is first acknowledged of the human body - a sense-perceptible thing - ahead of the human soul.

15. Further, book 7 of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* [1036a 26] affirms that every definition has components, and the components of a definition relate to forms. So, in anything definable, there must be more than one form. Therefore, since 'human being' is definable, one should allocate more than one form to the human person. Some form, then, pre-exists the rational soul.

16. Moreover, nothing hands on what it doesn't have. But the rational soul is non-bodily - it just doesn't have 'bodiliness'. There's no chance, then, of its imparting bodiliness to the human being. So it's unavoidable that a human being has this feature from some other form.

17. Again, Averroes (6), commenting on book 1 of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, declares that first matter takes on less specific, before more specific, forms; for example, the form of 'body' before the form of 'living body', and so on. So, with the human soul being both the ultimate and most specific form, it's obvious that it presupposes less specific forms in matter.

18. Besides, in the first chapter of his book *De substantia orbis (Concerning earth's substance)*, Averroes says that dimensions are there in matter before the forms of the elements. But dimensions are non-substantial features (*accidentia*), and presuppose some or other substantial form in matter - otherwise, non-substantial being would precede substantial being. So another substantial form is found in matter ahead of the form of a simple element - and way ahead of the rational soul.

19. Again, Aristotle indicates in his book *De generatione et corruptione (On generation and perishing)* [331a] (7) that air is more easily changed into fire than is water, due to its alignment with fire in one quality, namely heat. So, when fire is made from air, it's necessary that specifically the same heat remains since, if fire's heat and air's heat differed in kind, there'd be eight prime qualities, not four only, given that the same account holds good of the other qualities, any one of which is found in two of the elements (8). On the other hand, if it were said that the heat remained the same in kind but differed numerically, it would be no easier to change air into fire than to change water into fire since fire's form would have to overcome two qualities in air, as it has to do in water (9). It remains, then, that the heat is numerically the same. But this can't be so unless there already exists a substantial form which remains the same in both cases, and conserves one subject of heat; for a non-substantial feature (*accidens*) can't be

numerically one unless its subject remains [numerically] one. We've must say, then, that a substantial form is required in matter prior to the form of a simple body or element - and we haven't even got to the rational soul.

20. Moreover, first matter, left to itself, is equally open to all forms. So, if some forms and dispositions don't already exist in it ahead of others, setting it up for *this* or for *that* form, then *this* form will no more be taken on by it than *that* form.

21. Matter's union with form calls for the potential that enables it to underlie form. But you can't equate that potential with the nature of matter - such a move would entail matter's matching God vis-a-vis simplicity, given that God just *is* his potential. An intermediary, then, must be slipped in between matter and the soul - or any other form, if it comes to that.

**But against that position:**

1. In the book *De ecclesiasticis dogmatibus (On Church doctrines)* [PL 42, 1216] (10): "We don't say there are two souls in the human being...one sentient that enlivens the body...the other spiritual that furnishes reason." On this premise it's argued as follows: As 'human being' is in the genus *animal*, so likewise is 'human being' in the [wider] genera *living thing*, *body*, and *substance*. Yet it's through one and the same form - the soul - that a human being is human and sentient, as the authority just cited shows. By the same reasoning, it's through one and the same form that 'human being' is placed in all the wider genera - and there's no call for some form to be already existent in matter ahead of the soul.

2. Moreover, there's a greater gap between God and the soul than between the soul and the body. Yet, in the mystery of the Incarnation, the Word was united to a soul without intermediary. Even more so, then, can the soul be united to the body without intermediary.

3. Besides, the intermediary has to share in the extremes it unites. But one and the same feature can't be part body and part spirit. So nothing can function as intermediary between soul and body.

4. Again, Peter Lombard notes in book 2, distinction 1, of his *Sententiae (Books of the Sentences)* (11) that the soul's union with the body is an image of the joyous union in which the blissful soul is joined with God. But this joining calls for no intermediary. Nor, likewise, does the soul/body union.

5. Further, in book 1 of his *De anima (On the soul)* [411b 7], Aristotle points out that the body doesn't enclose the soul: rather, it's the soul that encloses the body. Commenting on that passage, Averroes notes that the soul is the cause of the body's being a continuum. Yet the body's being a continuum depends on substantial form, through which the body *is* a body (12). So the rational soul itself is the form in the human being through which the [human] body *is* a body.

6. Besides, the rational soul is more wide-ranging and potent than the form of a simple element. But it's from its form that a simple element or body derives whatever belongs to it in its very substance. Even more so, then, does the human body get all it is from the soul. And you can cross out pre-existent forms or intermediaries.

**Response:**

The true answer to this question depends to some extent on [the answer given to] the previous question [article 2]. For, granted that the rational soul is united to the body *only* through 'virtual contact' as its mover, as some have proposed, nothing stands in the way of saying that there are many intermediaries between soul and body - a situation holding even more between soul and first matter. On the other hand, if it's held that the soul is united to the body as its form, then it must be said that it's united to body without intermediary. For every form, whether substantial or non-substantial, becomes one with its matter or subject: each single thing is one, after all, precisely according as it is *being*. Moreover, each single thing is being in actuality (*ens actu*) through form, whether with respect to substantial being or to non-substantial being. Accordingly, every form is the very 'being actual' (*actus*) [of something] and, consequently, the principle of the oneness by which something is one. So, just as it shouldn't be said that there's something else functioning as intermediary by which matter has *be-ing* (*esse*) through its form, so also it shouldn't be said that there's something else functioning as intermediary uniting form to its matter or its subject. Therefore, according as soul is body's form, there can't be any intermediary between the soul and the body. But, according as the soul functions as mover (*motor*), there need be no objection to affirming many intermediaries; for it's clear that the soul through the heart moves other bodily members and also, through connatural energy (*per spiritum*), moves the whole body. (13)

But then doubt remains regarding the proper subject of the soul, which is contrasted with the soul as matter with form. There are two opinions about this. Certain thinkers say that there are many substantial forms in the same individual thing in a one-underlying-the-other relationship. On this account, first matter is not the immediate subject of the final substantial form but becomes its subject through intermediary forms, and this in such a way that matter itself, according as it already exists under a form, is the proximate subject of the next form, and so on in succession through to the ultimate form. In consequence, the proximate subject of rational soul is the-body-as-actualised-by- sentient-soul, and the rational soul is united to this as form.

A different view is that, in one individual thing, there's only one substantial form. On this account, one must say that, through the substantial form which is the human soul, this individual thing derives not only its 'being *human*' but its being *sentient*, its being *alive*, and its being a *body*, a *substance*, and a *being* (full stop!). And so no other substantial form precedes the human soul in this human being; nor, consequently, does any non-substantial form. If one did, we'd have to say that first matter is initially actualised not by a substantial form but by a non-substantial one - something beyond the bounds of possibility, given the necessity that anything non-substantial be grounded in substance. (14)

The difference between these two accounts arises from the fact that a number of thinkers, searching for the truth about the nature of things (*ad inquirendam veritatem de natura rerum*), took as their starting point abstract objects - a strategy typical of the Platonists. Others started from the realities disclosed in sense experience. This was the distinguishing feature of the philosophy of Aristotle, as noted by Simplicius (15) in his commentary *Super praedicamenta (On the categories)*.

The Platonists concentrated on a certain order of genera and species, such that what is more general can always be understood without reference to what is less general, as 'human being' without reference to *this* human being, 'sentient being' without reference to 'human being', and so on. They thought also that whatever exists abstractly in the intellect exists abstractly in reality; otherwise, it seemed to them, the intellect when abstracting played false or was useless, if there were no abstract reality corresponding to it (16). For this reason, these people even believed that mathematical objects had real existence apart from sense-perceptible things because they were understandable without them. They went on to postulate 'human being' in abstraction from *these* human beings, and so on up to being and the one and the Good - the last postulated as reality's highest excellence. They were of the view that the less general always has greater specific detail than the more general does, that the nature of the more general is shared in by the less general, and that the sharer is related as material or receptive subject to what is shared in. Accordingly, they claimed that, amongst abstract realities, the more general something is, the more form-like (*formalius*) it is.

Yet there were other thinkers, venturing down the same path, who took the opposite view, viz. that the more universal a form is, the more material it is. This is the position of Avicenna in his *Fons vitae (The source of life)*. He postulated primary matter (17) devoid of *all* form which he called 'universal matter'. He said that this was common to both spiritual and bodily entities, and that it took on a universal form - the form of *substance*. He claimed that part of this matter existing under the form of substance took on the form of *bodiliness* (*forma corporeitatis*), while the rest of it - the part relating to spiritual substances - remained free of this sort of form. He went on to declare that, in [bodily] matter, form underlay form successively (*deinceps*) according to an order of genera and species, right through to the last and most detailed of species.

Now, although it seems at odds with the previous view, this position in fact accords with it and is a sequel of it. The Platonists said that the more universal and form-like a cause is, the more its perfection is drawn down into something individual. So they affirmed as the effect of the primary abstract reality, which is the Good (18), primary matter, so that to the highest cause would correspond the very first subject. They then proposed an order-in-succession of abstract causes and forms shared by matter, with the idea that, just as the more universal abstract cause was more like form (*formalius*), so the more universal shared form was more like [primary] matter (*materialior*).

But, according to the true philosophical principles adopted by Aristotle, this position [i.e. of many forms in an individual substance] is impossible. First, because no individual substance would be absolutely one: something absolutely one isn't made up of two actualities but of potentiality and actuality, insofar as what's in potentiality is brought

into actuality. So ‘a person who is white’ isn’t absolutely one being, whereas ‘a two-footed animal’ *is* absolutely one being because ‘that-which-is-animal’ *is* ‘that-which-is-two-footed’. If, however, a person were *animal* and *two-footed* separately (seorsum), there wouldn’t be *one* being but *more than one*, as Aristotle argues in books 3 and 8 of the *Metaphysics* [999b 25; 1045a 16]. It’s obvious, then, that, if substantial forms were to be found multiplied in an individual substance, that individual substance wouldn’t be one, absolutely speaking, but only in a qualified sense, like ‘a person who is white’.

Second, because the nature of a non-essential feature consists in this: that it be *in* a subject when, by “subject” is meant some being in actuality and not in potentiality only. (It’s on this basis that substantial form is not *in a subject*, but *in matter*). So, for any form at all, whenever there’s found some being in any way in actuality underlying it, that form is non-essential. It’s clear, however, that any *substantial* form whatsoever makes something *be* in actuality, and [essentially] constitutes it. It follows that only the first form which matter takes on is *substantial*, with all forms coming after it being non-essential. And this isn’t cancelled out by what some say, namely that the first form is in potentiality to the next (19). After all, the contrast between *every* subject and its non-essential features is that between potentiality and actuality. Put it this way: a form imparting to a body capacity for life activity is more perfective [of matter] than a form not doing this. If, then, a form not imparting life to a body makes of it a subject (facit ipsum esse subiectum), even more so does the form of a body potentially having life activity make of it a subject. But, given what’s been said, the human soul would be a form *in a subject* - the very definition of something *non-essential*.

Third, because it would follow that taking on the final form would not be an instance of something’s-being-produced (generatio) *simpliciter*, but in a qualified sense only. Why? Since something’s-being-produced is change from non-being to being, only *that* is being produced *simpliciter* which becomes being in an absolute sense from what was non-being in an absolute sense (de non ente simpliciter). But what already exists as a being in actuality can’t come about *unreservedly*, but can come about as being *this* (ens hoc) - as being white, say, or being large - which is to come about *in a qualified sense* (secundum quid). So, since a prior [substantial] form taken on by matter would impart being-in-actuality (faciat esse actu), any subsequent form would not impart being *unreservedly* (esse simpliciter), such as being a person or a donkey or a plant, only being *this*; so there won’t be something being produced *simpliciter*. (20) This was why all earlier philosophers who declared that basic material reality was something already actualised - fire, or air, or water, or something neutral in between - said that something’s-being-produced was nothing more than ‘alteration’. Aristotle resolved the uncertainty attaching to their view by showing that matter is in potentiality only, and is the subject of something’s-being-produced and something’s-being-destroyed in an absolute sense. And, since matter is never without *a* [substantial] form, for this reason its taking on one form involves losing another - and the other way round.

Accordingly, we say that, in *this* human being, there’s no other substantial form than the rational soul and that, through this soul, a person is not only *human* being but *sentient* being, *living* being, *bodily* being, *substantial* being, and *being* (full stop!). Look at it this way: form is the likeness in matter of the agent cause (similitudo agentis in materia)

(21). But we find in active working powers that, the more excellent some power is, the more objects it grasps in a unitary way, e.g. the one power that is the unifying central sense (*sensus communis*) grasps all sense-perceptible features the special senses take in as separate powers. Now, it belongs to a more excellent agent cause to bring about a more excellent form. And a more excellent form is one that achieves in one go all that less perfect forms do in several - and more besides. Consider: if non-living body's form imparts to matter *being* (*esse*) and *being a body*, plant form will impart this and, in addition, *being alive*; sentient soul all this and, in addition, *sensory awareness*; rational soul all this and, in addition, *rational consciousness*. In this fashion are the forms of natural things found to differ on a scale of comparative excellence (*secundum perfectum et magis perfectum*) - something obvious to anyone scanning all the genera and species of natural things. For this reason species are compared to numbers, as noted in book 8 of the *Metaphysics* (1043b 33), which are varied through the addition and subtraction of 'one' (22). So Aristotle also says in book 2 of the *De anima* (*On the soul*) [414b 31] that the vegetal is in the sentient and the sentient in the intellective, as the three-sided is in the four-sided and the four-sided in the five-sided; for the five-sided virtually contains the four-sided - it has this, and more besides. Don't, however, run away with the idea that what's five-sided has separately (*seorsum*) what's distinctive of the four-sided and distinctive of the five-sided, as though there were *two* shapes. In similar fashion, the intellective soul virtually contains the sentient soul, because it possesses all this soul has, and more besides - yet there's no question of there being *two* souls. On the other hand, if it were claimed that the intellective soul was essentially separated from the sentient soul in the human person, no reason could be given for the union of intellective soul with body, since no distinctive activity of the intellective soul takes place through a bodily part or structure.

**So:**

to 1: The witness of Dionysius here is to be understood as bearing on agent causes, not formal causes.

to 2: Since form at the highest level imparts everything that less perfect forms impart - and more besides - matter, when actualised by it to the level of perfection to which matter is actualised by less perfect forms, is regarded as appropriate for the perfection that more perfect form adds over and above other forms. But this must not be construed as an essential distinction between forms, only as a distinction between conceptual meanings. So matter itself, then, understood as actualised to the level of bodily being capable of life activity, is the proper subject of the rational soul.

to 3: Although 'human being' genuinely involves 'sentient being', nonetheless the distinction between the nature of the *sentient* and the nature of the *human* is not in terms of a real diversity of forms, as though through one form something was sentient and, through an additional form, the same thing was human: the distinction is one of conceptual meanings (*secundum rationes intelligibiles*). The point is this: according as 'body' is construed as actualised by soul to the level of sentient being, to this degree is it contrasted with its ultimate actualisation by rational soul taken as such, as the *material* is contrasted with the *formal* (*ut materiale ad formale*). And, since "genus" and "species"

are terms standing for certain conceptual relations only, a *real* distinction between forms is not required for a distinction between them - a conceptual one will do.

to 4: Soul moves body through knowing and desiring. In an animal, however, sensory and appetitive powers employ determinate bodily structures; so an animal's movement begins from the bodily structure that is the heart according to Aristotle [*De generatione animalium*, book 2, chapter 6]. Indeed, one part of an animal does the moving and another is moved in the sense that the part that does the moving is taken to be the first instrument of the soul as appetitive, and the rest of the body is what is moved. Now, because in a human being will and intellect do the moving, and they aren't actualisations of any bodily structures, the mover is the soul itself *qua* intellectual, and the moved is the body *qua* actualised into bodily being by that soul.

to 5: In the incarnation of the Word, the rational soul is posited as intermediary between the Word and flesh, not from necessity but fittingness. Accordingly, the rational soul's separation from flesh at Christ's death saw the Word united to flesh without intermediary. (23)

to 6: The book named is not by Augustine, has little authenticity and, in the passage cited, is quite wrongheaded. Both features - imaginative power and sensual drive - belong to the soul. Nevertheless, sensual drive is said to be referred to the flesh inasmuch as it is desire of things pertaining to the body; imaginative power to the soul inasmuch as the soul is the locale of bodily likenesses minus bodies (*similitudines corporum sine corporibus*). These things are said to be intermediaries between soul and flesh, then, not according as soul is body's form, but according as it is [body's] mover.

to 7: Controlling the body belongs to the soul *qua* source of movement (motor), not *qua* form. And, although the factors by which the soul controls the body are necessary for the soul's being in the body, as the proper dispositions of this sort of matter, nonetheless it doesn't follow that the concept of 'control' is the same as the concept of 'union as form'. Just as soul as source of movement, and soul as form, are substantially the same but conceptually different, so also are the things necessary for union as form, and for control, the same, although the conceptual aspects differ.

to 8: Soul's differing from body as the imperishable from the perishable doesn't take away its being body's form, as what has already been said makes clear [article 2, 'to 16']. It follows, then, that it is united to body without intermediary.

to 9: Soul is said to be united to body by means of spirit when soul is taken as the source of motion, since the first thing moved by soul in the body is spirit [connatural energy], as Aristotle remarks in the book *De causa motus animalium* (*On the cause of animal motion*) [703a 10]. However, that work is not of great authority. (24)

to 10: If any two things are essentially diverse in such a way that each of the two has a nature complete in its species, they can't be united short of some intermediary connecting and uniting them. But body and soul are not like this since each is by nature a *part* of 'human being', and they are contrasted with one another as matter with form, the union

of which is without intermediary, as has been established.

to 11: The soul's union with the body is in view of its fulfilment not only with respect to image-based thinking but also with respect to the nature of the species, as well as to other activities which it carries out through the body. However, even granting that soul were united to body solely on account of image-based thinking, it would not follow that this union took place by means of images. For soul's union with body for thinking's sake (propter intelligere) is such that soul gives rise to a *person* who thinks. And this would not be the case were union to be based solely on images, as was shown above. [Article 2, Response.]

to 12: The body, before being enlivened, has a form; but that form doesn't remain with the appearance of the soul. This is because the soul's appearance is through a sort of generation, and the generation of one thing entails the perishing of another - when, e.g., the form of fire is taken on by the matter of air, the form of air ceases actually to be in that matter and remains only in potentiality. Nor should it be said that it's the form that comes about or is destroyed, because 'coming about' and 'being destroyed' belong to *what exists* - which isn't the form, since the form is that *by which* something exists. So only the composite whole is said to come about, in that it's brought from potentiality to actuality.

to 13: In the embryo certain life activities appear. Some people have asserted that activities of this kind spring from the mother's soul. This is quite impossible, since it belongs to the nature of life activities that they are from the soul as a principle *intrinsic to the thing that's active*. Others have said that there is present from the outset a vegetal soul; and that same soul, when it's more perfect, becomes sentient soul and, finally, intellective soul through the action of an external agent - God. But this is impossible: first, because it would follow that substantial form admitted of a more and a less, and that generation was a *continuous* change; second, because it would entail that rational soul was perishable, since vegetal and sentient souls are perishable, and vegetal and sentient substance is being posited as the basis (fundamentum) of rational soul. Nor should it be said that there are three souls in one human being - we've shown that already. It remains to be said that, in the coming-into-being of a person or of an animal, there are many 'generatings' and 'perishings' in serial succession - the appearance of a more perfect form involves the loss of a less perfect one. So it is that, although first in the embryo is vegetal soul only, arrival at a higher level of development means cessation of imperfect form as more perfect form succeeds it - one that's simultaneously vegetal and sentient; and this form finally gives place to the ultimate and most perfective form, which is the rational soul.

to 14: 'Body' as considered by mathematicians is described as abstract; therefore, to say that 'body' in this sense is found amongst sense-perceptible realities is to assert two opposing concepts at the same time, as Aristotle argues in book 3 of the *Metaphysics* [998a 7] in reply to certain Platonists asserting just this. Nor does it follow that abstraction involves falsity if 'body' as considered by mathematicians exists in the intellect only; because the abstracting intellect doesn't think of a body as *not existing* within sense-perceptible realities, but thinks of it *without thinking of* sense-perceptible

realities - rather as someone who thinks about 'human being' without thinking about 'the human ability to laugh' doesn't think falsely, but would do so if he or she understood 'human being' *not to involve* this capacity. I do say, however, that if 'body' as considered by mathematicians were to be found in sense-perceptible bodies, it would pertain only to the genus *quantity*, since such a body is purely 'dimensional' and doesn't call for any substantial form. However, 'body' which is in the genus *substance* does have a substantial form which is identified in relation to 'bodiliness'. This form isn't just 'being three dimensional', but is any substantial form at all from which result three dimensions in matter. This form in fire is 'fireness', in an animal 'sentient soul', and in a person 'intellective soul'.

to 15: The components of a definition are components relating to form or species, not because of a real-world distinction between forms but because of conceptual distinctions, as has been said.

to 16: Although the soul doesn't *actually* have bodiliness, it *virtually* does so - like the sun with heat. (25)

to 17: The order that Averroes mentions rests on conceptual meanings only. This is so because matter is first grasped as actualised in terms of universal, rather than specific, form - as something is first understood as *being* than as *living* being, as *living* than as *sentient* being, and as *sentient* than as *human* being.

to 18: The distinctive non-substantial features (*propria accidentia*) of any genus or species follow on the being (*esse*) of the genus or species. So, when matter is thought of as actualised in terms of the genus *body*, dimensions can be thought of in it - they are the distinctive non-substantial features of this genus. Then there follow in matter in an understandable order the diverse forms of the elements, matching matter's diverse parts.

to 19: Specifically the same heat is in fire and in air, given that any quality at all is particularly attributed to one element in which it exists in its perfection, and to another through internal connection or derivation, so less perfectly. So when from *this* air is made *this* fire, the heat remains *specifically* the same, but intensified (*augmentatus*); it isn't, however, *numerically* the same, because the same subject doesn't remain. But this doesn't make for any difficulty in bringing about the change, since the heat is destroyed indirectly when the subject [the air] is destroyed, with no directly destroying action by the agent cause being needed.

to 20: Matter considered on its own is equally open to all forms but is limited to taking on particular forms by the power of what is changing it, as taught by Aristotle in book 2 of the *De generatione et corruptione* [335b] (26); and the order of agent causes in nature matches an intelligible order of forms in matter. The situation is this: amongst the heavenly bodies, one is a more universal active principle than another, but the more universal agent cause doesn't act separately from lower agents; rather, the last agent cause produces its proper effect in virtue of all the higher agent causes. Accordingly, diverse forms are not imparted to an individual thing by diverse agent causes, but a single form, virtually containing all preceding forms, is imparted by the last agent cause. And

matter, considered as actualised in respect of some more universal form and related non-essential features, is made ready for further actualisation.

to 21: Although every genus embraces potentiality and actuality, potentiality within the genus *substance* is matter, as actuality is form. So matter-underlying-form doesn't call for some other potentiality as intermediary.

## NOTES

1. Keeler's reference seems to be defective here. The definition cited is to be found at 412a 27 (in the Bekker numbering of Aristotle's text), not at 412b 5 where we have soul defined as "the first grade of actuality of a physical organic body", with no explicit mention of body's "...potentially having life activity within it", as at 412a 27.

2. The specific reference to 254b 22 (Bekker numbering) is perhaps too restrictive. In arguing the point about 'parts' in the context of a discussion of motion, the whole of chapter 4 of book 8 of the *Physics* should be seen as offering an inductive treatment of the topic.

3. For Damascene, refer note 6, article 1 *supra*.

4. Refer note 1 of article 2 *supra* for details regarding this instance of pseudepigraphy.

5. Leo Keeler, S.J., identifies this "particular philosopher" as Costa ben Luca, and adds (in a footnote to p.35 of his critical text of the *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis*) that ben Luca's *De differentia spiritus et animae* was "translated in the 12th century by John of Spain, and was used in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Paris. C.S. Baruch edited excerpts in his *Library [Bibliotheca] of Philosophy of the Middle Ages*, Innsbruck, 1878." (My translation.)

Searches of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, *Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique*, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, *Routledge History of Philosophy (volume 3, 'Medieval Philosophy')*, the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, and E. Gilson's *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, have failed to turn up a single mention of Costa ben Luca. C.S. Baruch's work does not appear to be any longer available.

6. For Averroes, refer note 2, article 2 *supra*.

7. The whole of 331a is concerned with the four 'simple' bodies - fire, air, water, and earth - and the qualities and changes that affect them.  
- See note 1, article 7 *infra*.

8. In Aristotle's account of the qualities of the four simple bodies or 'elements', *dry* belongs to earth and to fire; *cold* belongs to water and to earth; *moist* belongs to air and to

water; *hot* belongs to fire and to air. If each quality differed in kind in each of the elements in which it was found, there would be eight prime (or characterising) qualities, not simply the four identified by Aristotle. Book 2, chapters 2-4, of the *De generatione et corruptione* treat of these matters in some detail.

9. According to Aristotle, air's two qualities are *moist* and *hot*, whilst water's two qualities are *cold* and *moist*.

10. The book *De ecclesiasticis dogmatibus* is linked with Gennadius of Marseilles (fl.c.470AD), a priest and church historian of whom not much is known. The *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (3rd edition) notes that “[Gennadius] is almost certainly the author of an early version of the *Liber ecclesiasticorum dogmatum*, a theological compendium which circulated widely in the Middle Ages.” (Entry under ‘Gennadius of Marseilles’, p.663).

11. Peter Lombard (c.1095-c.1160) is the ‘Magister Sententiarum’ - ‘Master of the Sentences’ - a reference to his being the author of the renowned *Sententiarum libri quattuor* (*The Four Books of the Sentences*) (1155-1158). The work is mainly a compilation of the theological teachings of the principal Latin Fathers of the Church, and of some later writers. The text was extensively commented on by the Schoolmen of the 13th century, and continued to be commented on by theologians well into the 17th century. St Thomas's *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum* (Paris, 1252-56) is described as follows by James Weisheipl, O.P.: “Strictly speaking, this is not a ‘commentary’ on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, but rather ‘writings’ (scripta) or elaborations of the text in the form of questions and discussions of relevant themes arising from the text....it is a carefully elaborated and edited version of questions discussed in the classroom, polished after the event.” (*Friar Thomas d'Aquino: His Life, Thought, and Works*, pp.358-9).

12. Thomas uses this argument to remind us that substantial form itself is neither more nor less than the very actualisation or essential ‘being actual’ of the body.

13. For the translation of “spiritus” as “connatural energy”, see paragraph 2 of note 24, *infra*. St Thomas's text here reads: “Manifeste enim anima per cor movet alia membra, et etiam per spiritum movet corpus.” I have translated this: “For it is clear that the soul through the heart moves other bodily members, and also, through connatural energy, moves the whole body.” Leo Keeler, S.J., valuably conjectures (on the basis of a comparable passage in Thomas's *Quaestio disputata de anima*, article 9, replies to objections 7 and 13) that the last part of Thomas's sentence should perhaps be read as: “...et etiam per spiritum movet *cor*”, not “...movet *corpus*”, as in the received text. The translation of the passage would then become: “For it is clear that the soul through the heart moves other bodily members, and also, through connatural energy, moves the heart.”

14. For an elaboration of the notions connected with ‘substance’, refer note 1, article 1 *supra*.

15. Simplicius (early sixth century AD) was a Neoplatonist working in the Academy at

Athens until its closure by the emperor Justinian in 529. His principal activity, however, consisted in scholarly commentaries on the works of Aristotle, motivated by the belief that most of Greek philosophy, even extending back to the pre-Socratics, could be reconciled with Neoplatonism.

St Thomas had access to the work of Simplicius *via* translations made by his Dominican colleague William of Moerbeke (died 1286).

16. This account is nicely matched by the comment of an American disciple of Wittgenstein, John McDowell, to the effect that “There is no ontological gap between the sort of thing one can...think, and the sort of thing that can be the case.” (*Mind and World*, p.27); cited by John Haldane in ‘A Return to Form in the Philosophy of Mind’ (*Form and Matter: Themes in Contemporary Metaphysics*, p.54).

17. In order to mark off Avicbron’s notion of *materia prima* from that of St Thomas, I have translated the phrase “*materia prima*” in references to Avicbron’s *Fons vitae* by the phrase “primary matter”, and reserved “first matter” to translate Thomas’s phrase “*materia prima*”.

- For Avicbron, refer note 15, article 1 *supra*.

18. In translating, I have preferred the Marietti edition’s “...effectum primi abstracti, quod est *bonum*...” to the Keeler edition’s “...effectum primi abstracti, quod est *boni*...”. The genitive case “*boni*” seems impossible to justify here.

19. Thomas may well have had his contemporary, Bonaventure, in mind here (amongst others, particularly within the Franciscan tradition). A succinct statement of St Bonaventure’s doctrine on substantial form is to be found in David Knowles’s account of Bonaventure’s ideas in his *The Evolution of Medieval Thought*. For Bonaventure, substantial form is “a perfection of a being which makes it possible for further substantial perfections to come upon it” (*op. cit.*, p.219).

One may correctly detect in this teaching of St Bonaventure about substantial form evidence of the influence of Avicbron. (The classic study of the influence of Avicbron on many of the thirteenth century Schoolmen, including Bonaventure, remains the monograph of G. Thery, ‘L’Augustinisme medieval et le probleme de l’ unite de la forme substantielle’, included in the *Acta hebdomadae augustiniana-thomisticae*, Torino-Roma, 1931, pp.140-200.)

In relation to the topic of the ‘plurality of forms’ in one substance, Etienne Gilson, commenting on Avicbron in his *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* writes: “Note that, in such a doctrine, far from endangering the unity of things, the multiplicity of their forms flows from it. It should be so, since such is the general law of the universe: ‘Unitas est origo multiplicatis per se’ (Unity is of itself the source of multiplicity)” (*op. cit.*, p.648).

The influence of Avicbron on Bonaventure may also be seen in connection with the latter’s account of matter:

Materia in se considerata nec est spiritualis nec corporalis,  
et ideo capacitas consequens essentiam materiae indifferenter  
se habet ad formam sive spiritualem sive corporalem.

(Considered in itself, matter is neither spiritual nor corporeal.  
Therefore the receptive capacity belonging to matter is equally  
poised in respect of spiritual form or corporeal form.)

(In 11 Sent., d.3, q.1, qa.1, a.2, ad 3m)

20. The sense of St Thomas's argument is disturbed at this point by what appears to be an editorial oversight in both the Keeler and the Marietti editions of the text. Clearly, the words "...ut esse hominem vel asinum vel plantam..." should be found immediately after the words "...subsequens forma non faciet esse simpliciter...", not after the words "...sed esse hoc...". 'Being a person or a donkey or a plant' are paradigm cases of the kind of 'esse simpliciter' that a 'subsequens forma' could not bring about. They are not instances of 'esse hoc', as are 'being white, say, or being large', to use Thomas's own examples, which fit the 'esse hoc' bill perfectly.

21. St Thomas provides a laconically lucid development of this idea in the course of arguing in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, question 115, article 1, that bodily entities (corpora) are agent causes:

Agere autem, quod nihil est aliud quam facere aliquid  
actu, est per se proprium actus in quantum est actus:  
unde et omne agens agit sibi simile.

(To bring about [something] - which is nothing other  
than to bring something into actuality - is an essential  
property of what's in actuality *qua* being in actuality.

So every agent cause produces something resembling  
itself.)

22. Useful introductory information about the nature of 'numbers' may be found in chapter three of Jan Gullberg's *Mathematics: from the birth of numbers*.

23. It is beyond the parameters of this study to consider the theological implications of what St Thomas says in 'to 5'. However, it should be noted that the point he makes here regarding the continuing and immediate union of the Word with Christ's flesh after the separation of soul from flesh at the time of Christ's death is dealt with in the 3rd part of the *Summa Theologiae*, qu.50, article 2. Thomas's replies to two objections put up earlier in the article are worth repeating:

Ad secundum, dicendum quod Verbum Dei dicitur esse unitum  
carni mediante anima, in quantum caro per animam pertinet ad  
humanam naturam, quam Filius Dei assumere intendebat; non  
autem ita quod anima sit quasi medium ligans unita. Habet autem

caro ab anima quod pertineat ad humanam naturam, etiam postquam anima separatur ab ea: inquantum scilicet in carne mortua remanet, ex divina ordinatione, quidam ordo ad resurrectionem. Et ideo non tollitur unio divinitatis ad carnem.

(In reply to the second objection, it should be affirmed that the Word of God is said to be united to [Christ's] flesh by means of the soul inasmuch as flesh *through soul* pertains to the human nature that the Son of God took on. It is not as if the soul were an *intermediary* binding together the elements of the union [the Person and His flesh]. Now flesh takes from the soul the fact of its pertaining to human nature, even after the soul is separated from it. This is due to there remaining in lifeless flesh by God's disposition a certain relationship to resurrection. And so the union of God with [Christ's] flesh was not done away with.)

Ad tertium, dicendum quod anima habet vim vivificandi formaliter. Et ideo, ea praesente et unita formaliter, necesse est corpus esse vivum. Divinitas autem non habet vim vivificandi formaliter, sed effective: non enim potest esse corporis forma. Et ideo non est necesse quod, manente unione divinitatis ad carnem, caro sit viva: quia Deus non ex necessitate agit, sed ex voluntate.

(In reply to the third objection, it should be affirmed that the soul has the potential to make the body alive simply by being its form. So, when the soul is present and united to the body as its form, the body must be alive. But God doesn't have the role of making the body alive as its form - He is an agent cause of life, and can't be a body's form. It's not necessary, then, that God's uninterrupted union with [Christ's] flesh makes this flesh alive. God, after all, isn't constrained by necessity, but acts as He sees fit.)

The theological context of what St Thomas says in question 50, article 2, may be found, *op. cit.*, in question 2, articles 1-10. Reference may also be made, *op. cit.* to question 17, articles 1 and 2, and to *Quaestio Disputata de Unione Verbi Incarnati*, articles 1 and 2.

24. The attribution of this work - the *Peri zoon kineseos* - to Aristotle is sometimes questioned, as it is here by St Thomas. (St Thomas entitles the work *De causa motus animalium*, although there is nothing in the Greek title corresponding to the Latin word "causa". The Oxford critical edition of the texts of Aristotle includes the *Peri zoon kineseos* as an authentic work of the Stagirite.)

My opting to translate the word "spiritus" - Aristotle's "thumos" - by the phrase "connatural energy" accords readily with the sense of Aristotle's text throughout 703a, particularly lines 5-20. (Refer also Liddell & Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, entry under "thumos".)

25. In his critical edition of the *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis*, Leo Keeler includes a footnote on ‘to 16’ (p.49):

Haec difficultas, quam posteriores adeo magni faciebant scil. quod anima simplex et expers quantitatis, non potest materiae dare quantitatem eam informando, S. Thomam non multum movet; ubique respondet dicendo formam superiorem virtute continere id quod continet inferior, provocando ad exemplum numerorum et figurarum.

(This difficulty which later thinkers made so much of, namely that a soul that is simple and free of quantity can’t impart quantity to matter when it actualises it, left St Thomas unmoved. On every occasion he replies by saying that a higher form virtually contains whatever a lower form does, and by drawing attention to the example of numbers and shapes.)

26. Keeler’s reference only to 335b of *De generatione et corruptione* is hard to justify from a reading of Aristotle’s text. To some extent St Thomas hedges his bets by giving just a broad reference to book 2 of Aristotle’s text: all of book 2 is a study of the various sorts of causality to be found in the physical world. He is perfectly entitled to do this, however, having written a commentary on the *Peri geneseos kai phthoras* as translated into Latin, most probably by William of Moerbeke (d. 1286). This commentary remained incomplete at the time of Thomas’s death on 7th March, 1274, and was almost certainly his last work in philosophy. William of Tocco reported in his deposition at Naples in 1319 to an inquiry preparatory to Thomas’s canonisation that “Vidi eum scribentem super librum *De generatione et corruptione*” (“I saw him writing [his commentary on] the book *De generatione et corruptione*”), adding that he believed the work to have been “ultimum opus suum in philosophia” (“his final work in philosophy”). I owe this information about William of Tocco’s deposition to volume 1 of Jean-Pierre Torrell’s *Saint Thomas Aquinas* (English translation by Robert Royal), p.235.

The fourth issue to be considered is this: **Is the whole soul in each single part of the body?**

It seems not:

1. In the book *De causa motus animalium (On the cause of animal motion)* [703a 36] (1), Aristotle says that “There’s no need for the soul to be in every part of the body, only in one of the body’s principal parts.” So, since nature doesn’t undertake what’s unnecessary, the soul won’t be found in each single part of the body.
2. Again, an animal is made up of body and soul. If, then, the soul were to be in each single part of the body, each single part of the body would be an animal - something quite unacceptable.
3. Moreover, wherever you find a subject, you find its properties as well. Now all the soul’s powers are found in the soul’s essence or nature as properties in a subject. So, if the soul were in each single part of the body, it would follow that all the soul’s powers would be in each single part of the body. But, then, the eye would be able to hear and the ear to see - which is nonsense.
4. Further, no form requiring diverse parts is found in each one of these parts. Take, e.g., the form of a house: it doesn’t exist in each single part of the house but in the house as a whole. On the other hand, forms not requiring diverse parts are found in each one of the parts, as is, say, the form of air or of fire. But the soul is a form requiring diverse parts, as every living thing reveals. So the soul isn’t found in each single part of the body.
5. Again, no form whose extension matches the extension of the matter [it actualises] is totally present in each single part of this matter. Now the soul’s extension matches the extension of its matter. Augustine’s *De quantitate animae (Concerning the soul’s greatness)* (book 5, chapter.7) notes: “I estimate the soul to be of the size allowed by the space of its body.” So the whole soul isn’t in each single part of the body.
6. Further, the soul’s being in each single part of the body seems very apparent from the fact that it’s active in each single part of the body. Yet the soul is active even where it isn’t found. As Augustine points out to Volusianus [Letter 137, chapter.2, section 5] the soul perceives and sees *in the sky* - and it’s not found there. So it’s not necessary for the soul to be in each single part of the body.
7. Moreover, according to Aristotle [*De anima (On the soul)* (406b 1-2)], when we’re moving, whatever’s in us is moved too. Yet it happens that one part of the body is moved, while another part is at rest. So, if the soul is in each single part of the body, the result is that it could be in motion and at rest at the same time - a conclusion to be rejected.
8. Again, if the soul is in each single part of the body, each part will have an immediate relationship to the soul, and other parts won’t depend [for this relationship] on the heart.

This is against what Jerome says in his *Super Matthaeum (On Matthew's gospel)* [PL 26, 109] where he declares that “What’s of prime importance for a human being isn’t the brain, as Plato proposes, but the heart, as Christ proposes.”

9. Besides, no form requiring a determinate shape can be found apart from that shape. Yet the soul is in the body on the basis of a determinate shape. After all, Averroes (2) states in his commentary on book 1 of [Aristotle’s] *De anima (On the soul)* that each sort of animal body has its appropriate shape, and this fact is shown across the many species: “For the bodily members of a lion differ from the bodily members of a deer, thanks to the diversity of their animal souls.” So, since the shape of the whole isn’t found in the part, the soul won’t be in the part. And this is what Averroes says later in the same book: “If the heart were to have a nature receptive of a soul due to the heart’s having a certain shape, it’s clear that a *part* of it doesn’t receive that soul, because a part doesn’t have that shape.”

10. Again, the more disengaged from matter something is, the less confined it is to anything bodily. Now an angel is more disengaged from matter than a soul. Yet an angel is confined to *some part* of the movable thing it sets in motion, and isn’t found in each single part of that thing. Aristotle is clear on this point in book 4 of the *Physics* [267b 7] where he says that the agent moving a heavenly body isn’t at its centre but at a particular section of its circumference. Even less so, then, is the soul *in each single part* of the body.

11. Moreover, if the soul is present in whatever part of the body you find the soul’s action, then, by parity of reasoning, in whatever part of the body you find the action of seeing, there the power of sight is to be found. Now the action of seeing would be in the foot if the sight’s bodily organ or structure were there. Accordingly, absence of the action of seeing will be due only absence of the relevant bodily organ or structure. The power of sight *will* be there, however, if the soul is there.

12. Further, if the soul is in each single part of the body, it’s unavoidable that, wherever there’s some part of the body, there also is the soul. But the parts of a child growing up begin to exist through increased size (*per augmentum*) where they didn’t exist previously. Therefore the child’s soul begins to exist where previously it didn’t exist. Now this seems impossible. For there are three ways in which something begins to exist where previously it didn’t: either it’s newly made, as when a soul is created and caused to enter a body; or it’s spatially transposed, as when a body is transferred from one location to another; or something else is changed into it, as when the Body of Christ begins to exist on the altar. Now none of these ways applies to the case in point. Therefore the soul is not found in each single part of the body.

13. Moreover, the soul is found only in the body whose actualising principle it is (*cuius est actus*): it’s “the actualising principle of an organic body”, as Aristotle says in book 2 of the *De anima (On the soul)* [412b 5] (3). So, since each single part of the body is not itself an ‘organic body’, the soul won’t be in each single part of the body.

14. Again, flesh and bones in one human being differ more than does the flesh in each of two human beings. But one soul can't exist in two bodies belonging to different people. So it can't exist in *all* the parts of one human being.

15. Further, if the soul is in each single part of the body, it must be the case that the removal of any part of the body brings about the following: either the soul is removed with it - which is clearly false, since the person concerned remains alive; or the soul is transferred from the part removed to other parts - an impossibility, since the soul is incomposite and, consequently, not changeable like that. It doesn't exist, then, in each single part of the body.

16. Again, the indivisible can't exist except in what's indivisible, since there's a ratio between situation and what's situated. Now, you can designate in a body an infinity of indivisible points. So, if the soul is in each single part of the body, it will follow that (4) it's at an infinity of points. And this can't be so since the soul's capacity is finite.

17. Moreover, since the soul is incomposite and without dimensions, the notion of totality is alien to it except in relation to 'soul power'. But it's not in each single part of the body in terms of its powers, which make up the totality of 'soul power'. So the whole soul isn't in each single part of the body.

18. Besides, something's being a whole-in-a-whole that takes in all the parts, appears to spring from that thing's incompositeness - we see that this just can't happen in the case of bodies. But the soul isn't incomposite: it's composed of matter and form. So it's not in each single part of the body. Proof of the second premise: in book 2 of the *Metaphysics* [988b 24], Aristotle criticises people claiming that *bodily* matter is the 'first principle' because "they were affirming only the elements of *bodies*, not of what is bodily *and* of what is non-bodily." So even what is non-bodily has some 'element'. But an element is a material principle. Therefore non-bodily substances also, such as angels and souls, have a material principle. (5)

19. Again, certain living things go on living after being cut into parts. However, one oughtn't to say that a newly separated part is alive by reason of the *whole* soul. So neither was the whole soul in that part prior to dissection, only a part of the soul.

20. Further, the whole and the perfect are the same, as book 3 of the *Physics* [207a 13] reminds us. However, the perfect is "what possesses its distinctive excellence", as book 6 of the *Physics* [246a 13] notes. But the distinctive excellence of the human soul is the intellect, which doesn't actualise *any* bodily part. So the whole soul isn't in each single part of the body.

**But against that position:**

1. Augustine says in book 3 of the *De Trinitate (On the Triinity)* that the soul is "whole in the whole [body], and whole in each single part of it."

2. Moreover, Damascene (6) states in his *De fide orthodoxa* (*Concerning correct belief*) [PG 94, 854A; 870C] that an angel is present wherever it's active - and the same reasoning applies to the soul. But the soul is active in each single part of the body because each single part is nourished, grows, and has feeling. So the soul is found in each single part of the body.

3. Again, greater power belongs to the soul than to material forms. Yet material forms, e.g. those of fire and air, are found in each single part [of fire and air]. Much more so is the soul [in each single part of the body].

4. In the book *De spiritu et anima* (*Concerning spirit and soul*) [PL 40, 793] (7), it's said that "The soul by its very presence imparts life to the body." But each single part of the body is enlivened by the soul. Therefore the soul is present in each single part of the body.

### **Response:**

The true answer to this question depends on what has already been shown. First it was shown that soul is united to body not only as its mover but as its *form* [article 2]. Then it was shown that soul doesn't presuppose other substantial forms in matter that impart substantial being (*esse substantiale*) to body and its parts. Rather, the body as a whole, and all its parts, have their substantial and specific being by reason of the soul [article 3]. And, with the soul's departure, just as there doesn't remain a person or an animal or something alive, likewise there doesn't remain an eye or flesh or bone, save equivocally as in a painting or piece of sculpture. Since, then, every actualising principle exists in *what* it actualises, the soul - the actualising principle of the whole body and all its parts - must exist in the body as a whole and in each single part of it.

However, the relation to the soul differs in the case of *the whole body*, and in the case of the body's *parts*. Why? Because the soul is principally and essentially (*primo et per se*) the actualising principle of the body as a whole, but of the parts only in their relation to the whole. Evidence for this come from considering that, since matter exists for the sake of form (*propter formam*), it's necessary that matter be adapted to form. Now, amongst things liable to perish, those having less perfect forms, i.e. forms of lower active potential, have only a few activities, and for these diversity of parts isn't required, as is clear in the case of non-living things. On the other hand, the soul, as a form of higher and greater active potential, is positioned to be the principle of diverse activities, which require a diversity of parts or structures of the body in order to be carried out. For this reason, every soul requires a diversity of organs or structures in the parts of the body whose actualising principle it is; and the more excellent the soul, the greater the diversity required. It's no surprise, then, that the least perfect forms actualise their matter in a uniform way; whereas souls do this in varying ways (*difformiter*). The upshot is that, from a diversity of parts, the completeness of the body (*integritas corporis*) is established: there's a *complete* body to which the soul is principally and essentially related as actualising principle.

But it remains to inquire into what is meant by saying ‘the *whole* soul is in the whole body, and the *whole* soul is in each single part’. In the interests of clarity, one must consider that ‘wholeness’ or ‘totality’ is found firstly and quite obviously in connection with *quantity*, in the sense that a *quantitative whole* is something adapted to being divided into quantitative parts. Now, this sort of totality can’t be attributed to forms except indirectly (per accidens), insofar as they’re divided up indirectly with the dividing up of a quantitative whole, as whiteness is divided up when a surface is divided. But this applies only to those forms that are co-extended with quantity; and this fits these forms because they have material existence that is alike, or nearly alike, both in a whole thing and in a part of it. So forms that call for significant diversity of parts don’t have this sort of extension and totality. Souls are examples of this, especially the souls of the higher animals.

Secondly, wholeness or totality is referred to in connection with something’s *completeness of nature*. This is totality to which correspond the parts of something’s nature - physical parts in things composed of matter and form; or, in a different key, conceptual parts, viz. genus and characteristic difference (genus et differentia). In non-substantial forms, the completeness of nature admits of a more and a less (magis et minus), which is not the case for substantial forms.

The third kind of wholeness or totality is that of *potential* (secundum virtutem). So, were we to speak of some form’s having extension in matter - whiteness, say - we would be able to claim that it’s totally present in each single part by totality of nature and of potential (8), but not by *quantitative* totality, which belongs to it only *indirectly* (per accidens): the full *specific nature* of whiteness is realised in each single part of a [white] surface; not, however, the *total quantity*, which whiteness has only indirectly; rather, there’s a part [of the whiteness] on a part [of the surface] (pars in parte).

But the soul, and above all the human soul, doesn’t have extension in matter; so the first or quantitative kind of wholeness or totality has no place here. What’s left to affirm is that the whole soul is present in each single part of the body in terms of *totality of nature*; not, however, in terms of *totality of potential*. This is so because parts of the body are actualised by the soul in a non-uniform way in view of diverse activities; and there’s a particular activity of the soul, viz. to think (intelligere), which isn’t carried out by any part of the body at all. Accordingly, when the soul’s totality of *potential* is understood in this way, not only is the whole soul not present in each single part of the body, it’s not present in the whole body either, because the potential of the soul transcends the capacity of the body, as was shown above. [Article 2, Response]

**So:**

to 1: Aristotle is there speaking of the soul in relation to its power to move the body - a power which is primarily located in the heart.

to 2: The soul is not in each single part of the body principally and essentially (primo et per se), only as each part is related to the body as a whole, as has been said. So each

single part of an animal isn't itself an animal.

to 3: In his book *De somno et vigilia* (*On sleep and sleeplessness*) [454a 8], Aristotle says that "The subject of the power is also the subject of the action (cuius est potentia, eius est actio)." Accordingly, those powers whose actions belong not to the soul alone but to the composite whole exist in bodily organs or structures as in their subjects, but in the soul as in their source (sicut in radice). Only those powers are in the soul as subject whose actions the soul doesn't carry out through a bodily organ or structure; these belong to the soul insofar as it transcends the body. So it doesn't follow that all the soul's powers are found in each single part of the body.

to 4: Since the form of a house is a non-substantial form, it doesn't impart specific being (esse specificum) to each single part of the house - as the soul does to each single part of the body. So the cases aren't similar.

to 5: The authority invoked isn't to be understood as meaning that the human soul has an extension matching the body's extension, only as meaning that the soul's *virtual* quantity isn't extended so as to be greater than the body's extension (in maiorem quantitatem quam corporis). (9)

to 6: Every action is understood as being in some sense an intermediary between an agent and the object of an agent's action. This is so in the extra-mental order in those actions which pass from the agent to change something outside the agent. It also applies to the mental order (secundum modum intelligendi): to think, to wish, and other actions of this sort, though actions remaining in the agent, as Aristotle notes in book 9 of the *Metaphysics* [1050a 35], are still described like those other actions, as tending from one thing to something else. So, when someone is said to be active (operari) *here* or *there*, this can be understood in two ways: in the first way, adverbs of this kind modify the verb relative to an action as *coming from* an agent and, in this sense, it's true that the soul is present wherever it's active; in the second way, relative to an action understood to *terminate in something else* and, in this sense, the soul isn't present wherever it's active. In this sense, it perceives and sees 'in the sky (in caelo)', insofar as the sky *is perceived* and *is seen* by it. (10)

to 7: The soul is moved indirectly (per accidens) when the body is moved, not directly (per se). Nor is it unacceptable that a thing should be at the same time both moved and at rest, though indirectly and under different aspects. Its being at rest and moved, directly and at the same time, would be unacceptable, however.

to 8: Although the soul is the actualising principle of every part of the body, nonetheless all the parts of the body are not made actual by it in a uniform way (uniformiter), as has been indicated. Rather, one part is made actual with a pre-eminence and excellence surpassing another part.

to 9: The soul is said to be in the body in light of a determinate shape, but the shape isn't the reason the soul is in the body; rather, the body's shape is due to the soul. So, where

there's no shape appropriate to *this* soul, then *this* soul can't be found there. But the soul requires one shape in the whole body, whose actualising principle it primarily is, and another shape in a part, whose actualising principle it is in [the part's] relation to the whole body, as has been said. So, in those living things in which the shape of a part is practically the same as the shape of the whole, the part possesses the soul as though the part were a whole thing (ut quoddam totum). No surprise, then, if it goes on living after being severed. In higher animals, however, in which the shape of a part is nothing like the shape of the whole animal, a part doesn't possess the soul as if the part were a whole and the-first-thing-to-be-actualised, so that it would go on living if severed. It possesses the soul only as part-related-to-the-whole-animal, so goes on living only provided that it's joined to the whole animal.

to 10: An angel is related to the heavenly body it moves not as *form* but as *mover*. So there's no similarity between it and a soul, which is the *form* of the whole body, and of every one of its parts.

to 11: If an eye were in a foot, the power of sight would be there, because this power is the actualisation of a living bodily structure of the relevant sort. In the absence of such a structure the soul is, of course, still there - but the power of sight isn't.

to 12: A thing's getting larger doesn't occur without local motion, as Aristotle notes in book 4 of the *Physics* [209a 28; 213b 4]. So, as a child grows up, and some part of his or her body directly (per se) begins to exist where previously it didn't, so also - indirectly (per accidens) and through its own change - does the soul, to the extent to which it's changed indirectly as the body itself is changed.

to 13: The whole organic body is what's principally and essentially (primo et per se) actualised by the soul. Individual organs or structures, and parts of them, are involved *qua* related to the whole, as we've argued. (11)

to 14: *My* flesh accords more with *your* flesh in terms of what-it-is than does my *flesh* with my *bones*. It's the other way round, however, relative to the whole living being: my *flesh* and my *bones* can be oriented towards making up *one whole* living being, not so my *flesh* and *your* flesh.

to 15: Remove a part of the body, and it doesn't follow that the soul has been removed or transferred to another part - unless you presuppose that the soul existed only in the part removed. What does follow is that the part removed ceases to be actualised by the soul that actualises the whole bodily being.

to 16: The soul isn't indivisible like a point that has position in a continuous quantity. It contradicts the very idea of such a point that it be in a *divisible* location. The soul is indivisible in the sense of not belonging to the entire class of things that have continuous quantity. So there's no conceptual problem involved in the soul's being in some whole that's divisible.

to 17: The soul's being indivisible entails that it doesn't have *quantitative* wholeness or totality. But this doesn't mean that it's left only with being a whole made up of *potentials* (*totalitas potentiarum*). For there's wholeness or totality in the soul in terms of its very nature (*secundum essentiae rationem*), as we've said.

to 18: In book 1 of the *Metaphysics* Aristotle indicates his intention to inquire into the principles or causes of the whole of reality - not just material principles or causes, but formal and agent and final ones, as well. So the early natural philosophers were refuted by him for positing only the *material* cause of things - a concept inapplicable to non-bodily entities - and therefore being unable to establish the principles of *all* beings. He didn't intend to say that there exists some 'material element' of non-bodily things, only to say that thinkers who neglected the principles of non-bodily things were to be criticised since they'd posited the material cause only.

to 19: In living things that go on living after being cut up, there's one actual soul though many in potentiality (*multae in potentia*). Thanks to a living thing's being cut up, the *potentially* many are brought into actuality - something that happens in the case of all forms that have extension in matter.

to 20: When it's said that the *whole* soul is present in each single part of the body, the terms "whole" and "perfect" are taken as referring to the soul's nature, not to its active potential or capacity - a point made clear from what has been argued above.

## NOTES

1. Refer paragraph 1 of note 24, article 3 *supra*.
2. For Averroes, refer note 2, article 2 *supra*.
3. I have amended what appears to be a typographical error in Keeler's reference to Aristotle. The definition cited appears at 412b 5 (Bekker notation), not at 312b 5.
4. Keeler's "...sequetur *quid* sit in infinitis..." in Objection 16 should read "...sequetur *quod* sit in infinitis...", as in the Marietti edition.
5. In translating the final sentence of Objection 18, I have used the Marietti edition's "...habent *materiale* principium", not Keeler's surprising "...habent *etiam* principium". The reference in the Objection should be to book 1, not book 2, of the *Metaphysics*; the Bekker notation should be 988b 25, not 988b 24.
6. For Damascene, refer note 6, article 1 *supra*.
7. Refer note 1 of article 2 *supra*.

8. It is interesting to notice that St Thomas subsequently changed his use of the example of whiteness (*S. Theol.*, 1a, question.76, article 8, response; *Quaestio disputata de anima*, article.10, response) by stating that it was not present by “totality of *potential*” in a part of a surface. It is worth citing the *Summa Theologiae* reference on this point:

Si ergo quaereretur de albedine, utrum esset tota in in tota superficie et in qualibet eius parte, distinguere oporteret. Quia si fiat mentio de totalitate quantitativa, quam habet albedo per accidens, non tota esset in qualibet parte superficiei. Et similiter dicendum est de totalitate virtutis: magis enim potest movere visum albedo quae est in tota superficie, quam albedo quae est in aliqua eius particula. Sed si fiat mentio de totalitate speciei et essentiae, tota albedo est in qualibet superficiei parte.

(The question whether whiteness exists as a whole in the whole of a surface, and in each single part of it, is one that calls for a distinction: if one is talking about *quantitative* wholeness - which whiteness has only indirectly - the *whole* of the whiteness is not present in any particular *part* of a surface. And the same thing must be said about the wholeness or totality of *potential*; for whiteness spread across a whole surface is better able to excite the sense of sight than whiteness confined to some small part of a surface. But if one is talking about the wholeness or totality of *specific nature*, then the *whole* of whiteness is present in any particular *part* of a surface.)

St Thomas would surely wish to uphold the same account with respect to any non-substantial forms relevantly analogous to whiteness. The factor causing the sweet taste of sugar, say, is not present “totalitate *virtutis*” in a single grain of sugar; it is present, however, in a spoonful of sugar.

9. Refer to ‘to 16’, and note 25, of article 3 *supra*.

10. Objection 6, to which Thomas is here replying, mentions St Augustine’s letter to Volusianus. Keeler’s reference (in brackets in the objection) is confined to section 5 of chapter 2 of the letter [letter 137]. It may be noted that questions regarding where the actions of the soul are located are continued into section 6. In both sections, Augustine’s theme is that, given the mysteriousness of the soul’s operation - and this operation is something at our very core - we shouldn’t be surprised at the mysteriousness of utterly surpassing realities such as the Trinity and the Incarnation. Letter 137 is, in fact, a short, brilliantly written treatise which, *inter alia*, exhibits the philosophical acuteness of the great 5th century Latin Doctor.

11. For St Thomas the soul or substantial form is the intrinsic source or principle of the enduring identity that each living thing has - an enduring identity that extends into some or other mode of self-identity in the case of the more complex or 'higher' organisms (human beings and the more developed animals) that have *consciousness*.

For St Thomas, following Aristotle, the soul is the *formal cause* of the living thing, that is, the intrinsic principle functioning as the *substantial* principle determining or specifying the nature or kind of living thing under consideration: the *principium specificans*. The soul is at the same time the intrinsic principle determining or specifying the mode of activity distinctive of a particular nature or kind - "modus agendi sequitur modum essendi", as the Thomistic tag puts it. Since the mode of operation or activity of the living thing presupposes an appropriate organisation or arrangement of parts and powers, the soul is also invoked by Thomas as the inner formal source of the distinctive teleology of an organism: the *principium teleologicum*. The organised state of the living thing involves (a) a heterogeneous array of chemical substances literally 'brought to the level of being alive' within the organism; (b) the disposition or ordering of these substances in such a way that living cells are formed and, from these cells, the tissues, organs, and systems that constitute the organism. Substances, cells, tissues, organs, systems are instruments operating for the continuing being and well-being of the living thing as their 'telos' or goal.

In his *Philosophy of the Human Person* James Reichmann reflects that

What is cause for unceasing wonderment not only in man but in all living organisms is that, despite their seemingly inexhaustible complexity, all components of an organism are hierarchically structured and ordered to the promotion of the organism's well-being....The aim of the program encoded within the DNA molecule and found within every cell of the organism is the promotion of the health and overall development of the total organism.

The living thing, pulsating with activity, is in a state of dynamic equilibrium, whereby, through the constant internal repair and creation of new cells to replace the old, the organism maintains itself in being. What above all, therefore, is worthy of note is that although many living things are constituted of millions and even trillions of cells, not to mention countless more sub-cellular structures, the living organism remains an effective, closely knit unity. It is but *one* being, *one* reality.

(*op. cit.*, p.232)

St Thomas (not to mention Aristotle) would be untroubled to accommodate recent findings in biology, including those in microbiology, within the conceptual framework of *hylomorphism*. He would see the astonishing range and variety of chemical changes taking place within the organism, e.g. the chemical reactions occurring in a cell or organ

under the influence of enzymes themselves produced within living cells, and that make up the processes of anabolism and catabolism, as revealing something of the ‘malleability’ or ‘plasticity’ of matter at its deepest or substantial level, thus disclosing the reality of *first matter (materia prima)* - the ‘proto matter’ of the Universe that is shared in by the living organism. He would also wish to interpret the enduring identity of living things as things of this or that stable kind or nature, and the presence in them of an overall teleology or finality of parts and processes - with these features giving rise to identifiable *natural wholes* or *substantial units* - as the distinctive effects of the pervasive specifying and actualising causality within living matter of *substantial form* or *soul*.

The following remarks of the late Ludwig von Bertalanffy, the inventor and major developer of general systems theory, and eminent contributor to debate about matters biological, would have been welcomed by St Thomas:

The ultimate “reduction” of the phenomena of life to the molecular properties of DNA and related substances as promised in popular accounts of molecular biology, appears somewhat less than convincing. If anything, organisms are organised things, with respect to both structure and function, exhibiting hierarchical order, differentiation, interaction of innumerable processes, goal-directed behaviour, negentropic trends, and related criteria. About these, the mechanistic approach - not excluding molecular biology - is silent. The reason is not simply imperfect knowledge, so that the discovery of some new enzyme, or a new electromicroscopic structure, would close the gap. The trouble is rather that the conventional categories, concepts and models of physics and chemistry do not deal with the organismic aspects that I have mentioned. They seem to leave out just what is specific to living things and life processes; and new categories appear to be required.  
(*Beyond Reductionism*, p.58)

St Thomas might perhaps have been tempted to comment that, what was required for better understanding of the sort of data listed by the distinguished former Faculty Professor of the State University of New York at Buffalo, was not so much “new categories” as a new consideration of some quite old concepts - the Aristotelico-Thomistic concepts of ‘first matter’ and ‘substantial form’ (in the case of living things, ‘soul’) in light of recent discoveries in the general field of biology, and in the specialised field of microbiology.

Of course, the fact that these concepts are indeed “quite old” might cause some people to demur. But, against demurrers, it might be enough to invoke Jacques Maritain’s dictum that “Thought is not the harlot of time” (*The Peasant of the Garonne*, p.102).

## ARTICLE 5

The fifth issue to be considered is this: **Is there any created spiritual substance that is not united to a body?**

It seems that there isn't:

1. Origen says in the first tract of his *Peri archon (Treatise on the first principles)* [PG 11, 170] (1) that "It's a feature of God alone, i.e. of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, to be understood to exist without any addition of bodily structure." So no created spiritual substance can exist unless united to a body.
2. Again, Pope Paschal (2) says that what's spiritual can't exist without what's corporeal. It's impossible, then, to have spiritual substances not united to bodies.
3. Moreover, Bernard (3) in sermon 5 of his *Super Canticum (On the Song of Songs)* [PL 183, 800] states that "It's clear that every created spirit...needs the support of a body." Now it's obvious that, since nature doesn't fail in providing what's necessary for things, even less so does God. So you won't find created spirit minus body.
4. Further, if there were a created spiritual substance in no way united to a body, then it simply couldn't be touched by time - time doesn't get beyond the domain of what's bodily. Yet created spiritual substances aren't wholly untouched by time: since they've been created from nothing, and therefore take their rise from change, they're necessarily subject to change. They can, then, collapse into non-existence, unless held back from this by some agent. Now, what can collapse into non-existence isn't wholly untouched by time - it's able *at one moment* to exist, *at another moment* not to exist. So no created substance at all can exist apart from a body.
5. Besides, angels take on bodies of a sort. But a body taken on by an angel is moved about by it. Now, since being moved about relative to place presupposes being sentient and alive, as Aristotle makes clear in book 2 of the *De anima (On the soul)*, it's evident that bodies taken on by angels are sentient and alive, and so angels are naturally bonded to bodies. But you would expect *them*, above all, to be disengaged from bodies. So there's *no* created spiritual substance not united to a body.
6. Further, an angel is by nature more perfect than a soul. Now what's alive and imparts life is more perfect than what's alive only. Since, then, a soul is alive and imparts life to a body through being its form, it's obvious that, *a fortiori*, an angel is not only alive but bonded to a body to which it imparts life - the conclusion we reached before.
7. Again, it's evident that angels are conscious of individual things, otherwise their being deputed as guardians for human beings would be pointless. Now, they can't be conscious

of individual things through *universal* ideas. This would relate their knowledge equally to the past and to the future, whereas to know what lies in the future belongs only to God. So angels are conscious of individual things through ideas restricted in scope (*per formas particulares*), which call for bodily organs or structures in which they're received. Angels, then, have bodily organs or structures joined to them. So no created spirit is totally disengaged from a body.

8. Moreover, matter is the principle of individuation. But angels are identifiable individuals (*quaedam individua*), otherwise they wouldn't have actions of their own - actions spring from individual agents. So, since they don't have matter *from which* they have being, as was settled earlier [Article 1], it would appear that they have matter *in which* they have being, namely the bodies to which they're joined.

9. Besides, since created spirits are finite substances, they must belong to a determinate genus and species; so the universal nature of a species is found in them. But a *universal* nature doesn't give rise to their being *individual* entities. There must, then, be something added through which they're formed into individuals. Yet this can't be some sort of material entering into *the very make-up* of an angel, since angels are non-material substances, as was shown previously [Article 1]. Accordingly, it's necessary to *add to* them (*quod addatur eis*) some sort of corporeal stuff through which they're individuated. And we have the same conclusion as before.

10. Moreover, created spiritual substances aren't matter only, because then they would be in potentiality only, and action-less. Nor are they made up of matter and form - we've shown that [Article 1]. So what's left is that they're forms, exclusively. Now it belongs to the nature of form to be the actualising principle (*actus*) of the matter to which it's united. It seems, then, that created spiritual substances are united to bodily matter.

11. Again, like judgments should be made about like things. But *some* created spiritual substances are combined with bodies. So the lot of them must be.

### **But against that position:**

1. Dionysius says straight out in chapter 4 of his *De divinis nominibus* (*The Divine Names*) that angels are "incorporeal and non-material."

2. Further, according to Aristotle in book 8 of the *Physics* [256b 20], if any two things are in fact connected, but one of them *can* be found without the other, it's inescapable that the other can be found without the first. To illustrate: there can be found a moved mover (*movens motum*). So there can be found something *moved* that's not moving [anything], and a *mover* that's not itself moved. But something can be found composed of both bodily and spiritual substance. Since, then, body minus spirit can be found, so, too, can spirit minus body.

3. Again, Richard of St Victor (4) argues in this way (in his *De Trinitate* (*On the Trinity*) [PL 196, 921]): in the divine order, three Persons are found in one nature; on the other

hand, in the human order, one person is found in two natures - those of soul and body. No surprise, then, that a middle way is found, viz. *one* person in *one* nature - which would not be the case were every spiritual nature united to bodily nature.

4. Besides, an angel can exist in a body it has 'taken on' (in corpore assumpto). So, if another body were united to it *naturally*, the upshot would be two bodies existing at the same time in the same being, which is impossible. There are, then, some created spiritual substances that don't have bodies naturally united to them.

### **Response:**

Because our knowledge takes its rise from sense experience, and sense experience is of things that are bodily or physical, it has to be said that, right from the start [of philosophising], there were people in search of the truth who couldn't think beyond *bodily* natures. This means that the first philosophers of nature (5) reckoned that nothing existed except bodies, then went on to say that the soul itself was a body. Even the heretical Manichees (6) seemed to take up this line, reckoning that God was a sort of corporeal light diffused across infinite space. And the Anthropomorphites (7) as well - they construed God as formed after the pattern of a human body, and supposed that nothing existed except bodies.

Later philosophers, rising above the physical through the rational use of their intellects, arrived at the knowledge of non-bodily substance. The first of these was Anaxagoras (8). He argued that, from the beginning, there was a universal 'mingling in' of everything with everything, but felt constrained to posit above everything physical something incorporeal and unmingled, which divided up and moved all that was bodily. This factor dividing up and moving everything he called Mind. We call it God.

Plato, however, made use of a different way to affirm non-bodily substances. He thought that, prior to things that participate or share, there must be reality that is abstract and unshared. Accordingly, since all sense-perceptible bodies participate or share in the features that are predicated of them, namely generic and specific natures, and the natures of whatever else is said of them, he asserted that these natures subsisted in their own right in abstraction from the sense-perceptible order. He called them 'separated substances'.

Aristotle, on the other hand [book 12, chapter 8, of the *Metaphysics*] affirmed separated substances on the basis of the perpetuity of celestial movement: it's necessary that the movement of heavenly bodies have a goal. Now, if the goal of any movement at all isn't always stable but is directly or indirectly changed (moveatur per se vel per accidens), it's inevitable that the movement won't always be uniform. So it is that the natural movement of heavy and light things is variable as it approaches its goal of [the moved thing's] being in its assigned place (esse in loco proprio). However, we see that uniformity is always conserved in the movements of the heavenly bodies; and from this Aristotle concluded to the perpetuity of each such uniform movement. It was necessary, then, for him to claim that the goal of this movement was neither directly nor indirectly changed. But everything that's bodily, or in a body, can be either directly or indirectly changed.

So he was bound to affirm some substance altogether separated from what's bodily which would be the goal of a heavenly body's movement.

The three positions just mentioned seem to differ in this way: Anaxagoras wasn't obliged to posit more than one non-bodily substance on the principles put forward by him. Plato, on the other hand, found it necessary to propose many of them, arranged in relation to each other with respect to the number and order of genera and species, and of the other abstract objects he acknowledged. His position was that there was a separate 'first reality' (*primum abstractum*), which was essentially both good and one, and flowing from it diverse orders of intelligible objects and of minds. Aristotle, however, maintained that there were many separated substances: there were many movements in the sky; each one of them was uniform and perpetual; each one required its own goal; each one had as its goal a non-bodily substance. The result was his affirming many non-bodily substances interrelated on the basis of the nature and order of the celestial movements. Nor did he go any further in acknowledging these substances, since it was the mark of his philosophy not to go beyond what the evidence supported. (9)

But these ways aren't really suitable for what we're doing. We don't affirm the general 'mixing up' of sense-perceptible things, as did Anaxagoras; nor Plato's world of abstract universals; nor Aristotle's perpetuity of celestial motion. So we need to proceed along other paths to demonstrate what we're looking for.

First argument: it's evident from *the perfection of the universe* that there exist some substances altogether free from what's bodily. For the perfection of the universe is evidently such that there isn't lacking to it any nature that ought to be part of it. On account of this, things taken severally are said to be good, while *all things taken jointly* are said to be very good [*Genesis, chapter 1*]. Now, it's obvious that, if any two things exist, one of which doesn't depend on the other as far as the very idea of it goes, it's also possible for such a thing to be found without the other. 'Sentient being', say, as far as the idea of it goes, doesn't depend on 'rational being'; so it's possible to encounter sentient beings that aren't also rational beings. Now the concept *substance* means 'what exists in its own right', and this meaning in no way depends on the concept *body*. For the concept *body* includes in some way reference to particular non-essential features, namely dimensions, which don't give rise to something's 'existing in its own right'. So it remains that, after God - who isn't confined to any genus - there are to be found in the genus of substance some substances (*aliquae substantiae*) altogether free from what's bodily.

Second argument: reflection on *the order of things* can make the same point. This order turns out to be such that one traverses the interval between extremes only by way of intermediaries. For example, beneath heavenly bodies, there's next found fire; beneath fire, air; beneath air, water; beneath water, earth. What we have is succession in terms of the excellence and refinement of these bodily realities. Now there exists at the very summit of things a reality in every way incomposite and unitary, namely God. So it's not possible that there be situated immediately 'beneath' God just *bodily* substance in all respects composite and divisible. Rather, there must be admitted many intermediaries

bridging the gap between God's utter simplicity and the plethora of bodily realities. Of these intermediaries, some are non-bodily substances not united to bodies; others, of course, are non-bodily substances united to bodies.

Third argument: the same conclusion can be arrived at from *the special nature of the intellect*. It's evident that *to think* is an activity that can't be brought about by anything bodily. Aristotle proves this in book 3 of his *De anima (On the soul)* [429 a&b] (10). Now, given that the being of something is the measure of its activity (sicut enim est unumquodque, ita operatur) (11), it must be the case that a substance to which this sort of activity belongs has being that is not dependent on the body but surpasses it. So, if some substance able to *think* is united to a body, this state won't belong to it *qua* being able to think but for some other reason. We said above [responses, articles 2&3] that it was crucial for the human soul to be united to a body, insofar as this soul has need of activities exercised through the body to fill out its intellectual activity, in the situation when it thinks on the basis of abstracting content from images. Yet certainly it's incidental to intellectual activity, and reflects the imperfection of this case, that intellectual knowledge has to be garnered from things that are only in potentiality as far as their being objects of thought goes - the comparison here is with the imperfection of a bat's sight which allows it to see only in the dark. Now, what's linked to something only incidentally isn't encountered with it in *every* situation. Furthermore, it's essential that, prior to what is imperfect in some category, there be what is perfect in that category, since the perfect has priority of nature over the imperfect, as actuality has over potentiality. It remains, then, that one must affirm the existence of some non-bodily substances that aren't united to bodies, and that don't have need of anything bodily for their intellectual activity. (12)

**So:**

to 1: Origen's authority on this topic is unacceptable. He falls into a number of errors in his *Treatise* as a consequence of following the opinions of ancient philosophers.

to 2: Paschal is speaking about spiritual goods to which temporal goods are annexed - with the sale or purchase of which, spiritual goods themselves are reckoned to be bought or sold. Spiritual titles, after all, and even consecrations, don't exist in their own right apart from the corporal and temporal goods linked to them.

to 3: All created spirits need the support of a body: some for their own sake, as in the case of rational souls; others for our sake, as in the case of angels who come amongst us in bodies they have taken on.

to 4: With respect to their *being*, created spiritual substances are thought to be measured by a *mode of eternity* (mensurari aevo), although their *movements* are measured by *time*, as Augustine points out in his *Super Genesim ad litteram (Commentary on Genesis)* [book 8, chapter 22]: "God moves a spiritual creature through time." (13) What is said about their being "able to collapse into non-existence" doesn't have reference to any potentiality existing in them, but to the power of an agent cause. For just as, prior to existing, they were able to come into being only through the power of an agent cause, so,

when they are in being, they are able to cease being only through the power of God, who can withdraw the hand that sustains them. In them, of course, there's none of the potentiality to non-being of the sort that would make their duration measurable by time, as things in potentiality to being moved, though not actually being moved, are measurable by time.

to 5: To be moved about relative to place presupposes being sentient and alive only when the mover is intrinsically united [to what is moved]. But this isn't the sort of 'being moved about' that applies to bodies taken on by angels. So the reasoning [in the objection] is inconclusive.

to 6: To be alive, and to impart life as *agent* cause (effective), is more excellent than to be alive only. But to impart life as *formal* cause (formaliter) belongs to a substance less excellent than one that has life by subsisting in its own right without a body. For the being (esse) of that intellectual substance that is the form of a body is of markedly lower rank, and borders on bodily nature in that it can be communicated to this nature.

to 7: Angels are conscious of particular things through universal ideas only analogous to the archetypal ideas by which God knows realities both universal and individual. But this doesn't require them to be conscious of future individual things that haven't yet taken on a nature or form - a nature or form made present to the angelic intellect through its ideas. It's quite otherwise, however, for the divine intellect which, existing in the 'now' of eternity (14), sees in one intuitive act the panoply of the temporal.

to 8: Matter is the principle of individuation in that it's not adapted to being taken on by anything else. On the other hand, forms adapted to being taken on by some subject, can't be individualised of themselves. This is so since, simply on the score of *what* they are, they're equally open to being taken on by one or by several subjects. But, if there should exist a form not able to be taken on by any subject (non... in aliquo receptibilis), it has individuation by this very fact, since it can't exist in several subjects but remains self-contained in itself. So, in book 7 of his *Metaphysics* [1039a 30], Aristotle argues against Plato to the effect that, if the forms of things are disengaged from matter (abstractae), each one must be single of its kind.

to 9: In things composed of matter and form, the individual adds to the specific nature *designated* matter, and non-essential features that are individuated. But, in forms separated from matter, the individual doesn't add anything *real* to the specific nature. In things of this sort, each essence is the very individual itself that subsists, as Aristotle makes clear in book 7 of the *Metaphysics*. It does, nonetheless, add something *conceptual*, namely 'not being able to exist as more than one'.

to 10: Substances which exist separately from bodies are forms exclusively - they're not in any sense actualising principles of matter. The point is this: matter can't exist without form, but form *can* exist without matter. This is so since matter has being (esse) through form, but the reverse doesn't hold.

to 11: Because it occupies the lowest rank amongst spiritual substances, the soul has greater affinity with bodily nature - needed so that it can function as *form* - than higher substances have.

## NOTES

1. In an entry on Origen, the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* has this to say concerning the *Peri archon*:

The most important of Origen's theological works is the *De Principiis (Peri archon)*, which covers a wide range of doctrinal topics in four books treating of God and the heavenly beings, of man and the material world, of free will and its consequences, and of Holy Scripture. The original text has almost completely disappeared, and the work is extant only in the not very reliable Latin translation of Rufinus and the more faithful, but fragmentary, rendering of St Jerome.

(*op.cit.*, p.1193, col.2)

Origen (185-253) was a major intellectual figure of the third century Church. He was born in Egypt, most probably at Alexandria, where he taught and wrote before moving to Palestine, and finally residing in Caesaria. He founded his own school there which quickly achieved fame. He was a keen student of pagan philosophy, with a pronounced interest in Platonic thought.

However, Origen was above all a biblical exegete who detected in the sacred writings three levels of meaning or 'message': literal, moral, and allegorical or spiritual. These three levels corresponded to the three parts of human nature: body, soul, and spirit.

Origen interpreted the visible realities in the Universe as symbols of invisible realities, and believed that all material things had two aspects: one visible and corporeal (accessible to all), the other spiritual and mystical (accessible only to the 'perfect'). His openness to Platonic doctrines led him to teach the pre-existence, as well as the immortality, of human souls. It also led him to declare that punishment after the death of the body was corrective in nature for human souls, and was aimed at eventually bringing all persons, including the fallen angels, to salvation - the doctrine of 'apocatastasis'. He took the view that God was finite - an infinite deity would not be able to "think himself" comprehensively - and held that creation was eternal.

Many of the views put forward by Origen were subsequently pronounced to be at variance with received Catholic doctrine, and were formally condemned at a number of synods and Councils, culminating in their condemnation at the Second Council of Constantinople in 553.

2. It is not altogether clear which Pope Paschal St Thomas had in mind - Paschal 1 (Pope, 817-824) or Paschal 11 (Pope, 1099-1118). After consulting accounts of the lives of both (*Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique*, vol.11, pp.2054-74; *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol.10, pp.1048-9), I believe Pope Paschal 11 to be the more likely. Objection 2, and especially Thomas's reply to it, appear to hint at broad issues that seriously confronted this Pope (although they were not completely unknown to Paschal 1). These relate, in particular, to conflict with secular powers (principally in Germany, England, and France) over control of ecclesiastical appointments, and to conflict with these same powers over lay investiture.

3. Thomas refers here to St Bernard (1090-1153), founder of the Cistercian abbey at Clairvaux, who exercised great influence in ecclesiastical and political affairs during his lifetime. Unlike St Thomas, he was no great friend of the use of reason in theology, and launched strong attacks against dissident thinkers such as Peter Abelard and Gilbert de la Porree.

4. Richard of St Victor (d.1173) was an important twelfth century theologian and philosopher, based at the Abbey of St Victor in Paris, of which he became prior in 1162. Unlike St Bernard, he vigorously promoted the necessity of using reason in theology. He commented as follows on his own work in this area: "In all these [theological] matters authorities abound, but not arguments; in all these matters *experimenta desunt*, proofs are becoming rare; so I think that I shall have done something, if I am able to help the minds of the studious a little, even if I cannot satisfy them." (Cited - and translated - by Frederick Copleston, SJ, in volume 2, 'Medieval Philosophy', p.179, of his *A History of Philosophy*.)

5. "...the first philosophers of nature...": Thomas would here have had in mind such philosophers as the 6th century BC thinkers Thales (fl. 585), Anaximander (c.612-545), and Anaximenes (fl.545), from Miletus on the coast of Asia Minor. In initiating the Western tradition of philosophical speculation, these thinkers adopted a materialistic account of the Universe. St Thomas did not have any direct access to the so-called 'fragments' of their writings (although possibly indirect access to some of these 'fragments' through Latin translations from the Greek). He knew these philosophers principally through Aristotle's comments, in Latin translations of the works of that philosopher.

6. The Manichees or Manichaeans were followers of the Persian Mani (216-c.273). Their central belief was that there were two ultimate principles: one good, the other evil. Light, the soul, and God, were the agents of good. Darkness, the body, and Satan, the agents of evil. St Augustine strongly attacked the Manichees in his *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* (c.400 AD). Faustus had earlier been a teacher of Augustine, who subsequently repudiated him as a fraud.

7. The 'Anthromorphitae' were also known as the 'Audiani'. They were followers of the 4th century church reformer, the Syrian Audius. They attributed to God human characteristics and feelings on the basis of a thorough-going literal interpretation of the

Scriptures. The emperor Constantine banished them from Mesopotamia into exile in Scythia, where they endeavoured to spread their doctrines amongst the Goths.

8. Anaxagoras of Clazomenae (on the west coast of Asia Minor) (c.500- 428 BC). The entry under 'Anaxagoras' in Thomas Mautner's *A Dictionary of Philosophy* includes the following comment:

Anaxagoras maintained that Mind ordered all things, whether past, present, or future. Plato and Aristotle praised Anaxagoras for making Mind the cause of order in the universe, but they criticized him for failing to exploit his insight, for he appealed to mechanical causes rather than to reasons and purposes to tell how the universe came to be. Nevertheless, he did for the first time make a categorial distinction between mind and matter, and he did assign an essential causal role to mind.

(op.cit., p.17)

9. In book 12 of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle writes as follows:

It is clear then from what has been said that there is a substance which is eternal and unmovable and separate from sensible things.... (1073a 3&4)

But we must not ignore the question whether we have to suppose one such substance or more than one, and if the latter, how many.... (*loc. cit.*, 13&14)

There must be substances which are of the same number as the movements of the stars, and in their nature eternal, and in themselves unmovable, and without magnitude....

(*loc. cit.*, 36&37)

Basing himself on the astronomy of the time, Aristotle held as probable that there were fifty five such substances, each one of which was in some sense the 'goal' (in St Thomas's Latin, the 'finis') of a particular celestial movement:

...every being and every substance which is immune from change, and in virtue of itself has attained to the best, must be considered an end.... (1074a 18)

Aristotle also held that the universe was a system of spheres encircling the Earth at its centre. Accordingly:

Let this, then, be taken as the number of the spheres, so that the unmovable substances and principles also may probably be taken as just so many. (*loc. cit.*, 14 &15)

Sir David Ross usefully summarises much of what Aristotle has to say in 1073a & b, and in 1074a as follows:

The argument is: Each unchangeable perfect substance is an end and must produce...a distinct motion. But motion is ultimately for the sake of a 'phenomenon', and as we have enumerated the motions necessary for the 'phenomena', there can be no more motions, and therefore no more unchangeable perfect substances.

(Footnote 1, to book 12, chapter 8)

All passages (including Sir David Ross's footnote) cited in this note are from Volume V111: *Metaphysica* (edited and translated by W.D.Ross) of *The Works of Aristotle Translated into English*. All volumes of this edition use only the Bekker numbering of the translated text, and the printed pages themselves are unnumbered.

10. An excellent translation by J.A.Smith of Aristotle's argument in the *De anima* (429 a&b) to show that thinking is an activity that can't be brought about by anything bodily is to be found in Volume 111 of Aristotle's *Works* in English translation (refer note 9).

11. St Thomas affirms this principle with equal crispness in his response in article 2 *supra*: "...esse rei proportionatur eius operationi...cum unumquodque operetur secundum quod est ens." ("There's a symmetry between a thing's being and its activity...since each single thing is active according as it has being.")

12. In a footnote (p.68) in his critical edition of the *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis*, immediately following the text of St Thomas in which are set out three arguments for the existence of created substances free of bodily existence, Leo Keeler comments that

Quamvis exponat S. Doctor illa argumenta modo adeo firmo et systematico, certe perspexit ea non plus probare quam quandam congruentiam; et in *De subst. separatis*, omissis probationibus ex ratione, recitat solas auctoritates. Est exemplum eius modi scribendi et generis dicendi, quo argumenta nonnisi probabilia ordinat et proponit iuxta schema demonstrativum.

(Although [St Thomas] sets out those arguments in strongly systematic fashion, he certainly saw that they established no more than a sort of 'fittingness' [about the existence of pure spirits]; and in his *De substantiis separatis* (*Treatise on separated substances*), he omits all proofs from reason and just lists authorities. We've been given [in the *Disputed question* text] an example of the way of writing, and style of presenting, by which he arranges and proposes, in an almost 'demonstrative' manner,

arguments that are only probable.)

It is difficult to agree with these comments of the late Professor Keeler SJ: (1) A careful reading of Thomas's three arguments (Keeler edition, pp.67-68) can hardly avoid the conclusion that it was the intention of the Angelic Doctor to offer strict demonstrations or proofs of the proposition that there exist purely spiritual created substances. It in no way appears to be the case that his intention was merely to offer lines of reasoning that would go to show that this proposition was only 'probably' true. (2) The implication of the claim, in connection with the *De substantiis separatis*, that St Thomas "omits all proofs from reason and just lists authorities" is clearly that Thomas did not really regard such proofs as strictly demonstrative, and was happy to call upon 'authorities' to fill the gap. But this is to misunderstand what St Thomas was doing in his (unfinished) *Treatise on separated substances*. The purpose of the *Treatise* was to set out systematically what earlier thinkers - in particular Plato, Aristotle, later Platonists, Origen, the Manichaeans, pseudo-Dionysius, and Avicenna - had taught about 'separated substances', with a view to accepting from their teaching what was in accord with Catholic faith, and rejecting what wasn't. The concern of St Thomas was not to "list authorities" in support of a particular view, but to offer sustained critical reflection of a philosophical kind on the teaching of earlier thinkers about 'separated substances'. The unfinished character of the *De substantiis separatis* leaves open the possibility that Thomas intended at some later point to include his own (demonstrative) arguments from reason in favour of the proposition that created purely spiritual substances exist.

- In connection with what has just been said, it is worth remarking that, in book 2, chapter 91, of the *Summa contra Gentiles*, where St Thomas defends the proposition "quod sunt aliquae substantiae intellectuales corporibus non unitae (that there are some intellectual substances not united to bodies)", no fewer than eight arguments are given by the Angelic Doctor as intended demonstrative proofs from reason of the truth of the proposition at issue. The detailed commentary on book 2, chapter 91, by Ferrariensis (Francesco Silvestri [1474-1528] of Ferrara) - part of his vast commentary on the *Summa contra Gentiles*, which is included in the Leonine edition of that work - serves strongly to reinforce the point regarding the intention of St Thomas vis-a-vis philosophical arguments for the existence of created spirits not united to bodies.

It may be noted that, when Thomas deals with the question of the existence of pure spirits in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, question 50, article 1, the argument he provides - a *philosophical* argument - concludes "Unde necesse est ponere, ad hoc quod universum sit perfectum, quod sit aliqua incorporea creatura (Therefore it's *necessary* to affirm that non-bodily created entities exist in order that the Universe be complete)." St Thomas didn't think for one moment that he was offering an argument from reason to be taken as a merely 'probable' proof of the existence of pure spirits or 'angels'.

In his impressive book *The Mind Matters: Consciousness and Choice in a Quantum World* - a lengthy study of the nature of mind and its relation to the world that includes a section of almost two hundred pages dealing with quantum mechanics (with little consideration for the mathematically unready) - David Hodgson offers the following interest-

ing, and relevant, reflection:

What I think the implausibility of the scenario [the emergence, out of a pre-existing purely physical world, of consciousness, thought, and choice] suggests is the falsity of the supposition that conscious entities are all matter-dependent or even matter-associated; that they can exist and rational decisions can be made only in association with the occurrence of appropriate (quantum) physical processes. It is more reasonable to believe that the mental and the rational have not emerged from the physical but somehow have existed as long as the physical has existed. Our present understanding of the physical is that it commenced with the Big Bang; and from our understanding of what physical conditions were like then and for some time after, it seems clear that there were then no physical structures appropriate to support any conscious entity or entities. The plausible conclusion is that any conscious entities then existing were not matter-dependent, as we are.

(*op. cit.*, p.458)

It is easy enough to imagine St Thomas welcoming David Hodgson's reflection as supporting from a completely different perspective his own philosophically argued conclusion as to the falsity of the position that "conscious entities are all matter-dependent or even matter-associated."

13. In his *Elementa Philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae*, Joseph Gredt O.S.B. comments that

Triplex duratio est distinguenda: 1. aeternitas, duratio entis omnino immutabilis; 2. aeviternitas (aevum), duratio eius quod substantialiter est immutabile, accidentaliter vero secundum activitatem mutabile; 3. tempus, duratio eius quod est simpliciter mutabile.

(There are three sorts of 'duration': 1. eternity, the duration of a being that is completely unchangeable; 2. modal eternity (aevum), the duration of a being that is essentially unchangeable, though non-essentially changeable in respect of its activity; 3. time, the duration of a being that is unreservedly changeable.)

(*op. cit.*, volume 1, pp.265-66)

Gredt goes on on p.266 to distinguish between 'tempus continuum' - the duration of continuous movement, and of bodily substance dependent on the continuous movement of alteration (time as duration in an *unqualified* sense of the term) - and 'tempus discretum'. The latter is the duration of the activity of a created spiritual substance which consists of a plurality of intellectual activities, each of which may co-exist with a long stretch of 'tempus continuum': it is time as duration in a *qualified* sense of the term. The "time" referred to by Augustine in the citation from *Super Genesim ad litteram* in

Thomas's reply to objection 4 appears to be time in the 'tempus discretum' sense.

It is worth adding at this point Thomas A.F.Kelly's attractively expressed insight which cuts across the distinction between 'aevum' and 'tempus': "Entities are contingent insofar as they are temporal, for the flow of time is the entity's living its contingency. Entities are temporal insofar as they are contingent, for being contingent projects being as possibility of continuity for that which already is, now is" (*Language, World, and God - An Essay in Ontology*, p.164).

To return briefly to Gredt: Joseph Gredt OSB (1863-1940) was professor of philosophy at the Collegio di San Anselmo, Rome, from 1896 until his death in 1940. His two-volume work, *Elementa Philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae*, offers its readers more than a thousand pages of closely argued Latin text. This work, first published in 1899, went through thirteen editions, each one a careful revision and expansion of the previous edition. The final edition (1961) was posthumous, under the editorship of the distinguished Benedictine philosopher Eucharis Zenzen. Zenzen made it clear that the changes were mostly to do with presentation, and that revisions of content had, for the most part, been seen and approved by Gredt himself.

Two features in particular make the *Elementa* outstanding amongst philosophy text-books in the Thomistic tradition. The first is the numerous, often very long, citations from the writings of St Thomas, together with many citations in the Greek from Aristotle. The second is Gredt's concern to keep his readers alert to the bearings on philosophical questions of developments in the special sciences. (Gredt himself had an insatiable interest in what was happening in the sciences, particularly in theoretical physics, cosmology, and biology.)

Joseph Gredt's commitment to a traditional form of the Thomistic 'world view' did not prevent him from arguing for such theses as a natural desire of the human intellect for the immediate and direct vision of God ("datur in intellectu humano appetitus capacitatis naturalis videndi Deum per essentiam"), the inclusion of 'aliquid' ('something') amongst the transcendental properties of being (ens), and the validity of a 'sixth way' to the existence of God from the ordering of the human intellect and will towards the Infinite.

Over some forty years Gredt contributed important philosophical articles to leading European journals specialising in Thomistic/Scholastic philosophy and theology. Most of these articles were in German, though some were in French. A number of them were reprinted in the collection *Miscellanea Philosophica R.P. Josephi Gredt* (Rome, 1938).

14. In speaking of the divine mind as being "in nunc aeternitatis constitutus", St Thomas is returning to the definition of *eternity* provided by Boethius in book 5, passage 6, of the *De consolatione philosophiae*: "Aeternitas est interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio." ("Eternity is the all-at-once total, and perfect, possession of life without beginning or end.") Thomas explores the essentials of the concept when dealing with the eternity of God in the *Summa theologiae*, 1a, qu. 10, article 1. It suffices here to note his laconic statement in this article:

Sic...ex duobus notificatur aeternitas. Primo, ex hoc quod id quod est in aeternitate est interminabile, id est principio et fine carens (ut *terminus* ad utrumque referatur). Secundo, per hoc quod ipsa aeternitas successione caret, tota simul existens.

(So... 'eternity' is made known through two features.

The first: what is eternal is illimitable, that is, without beginning and end (the word "limit" refers to both). The second: 'eternity' excludes successiveness; it is all-at-once existence.)

The Boethian concept of *eternity* is consistently used by St Thomas in discussing divine eternity. Refer, for example, *Scriptum in quattuor libros Sententiarum*, book 1, distinction 19, question 2, article 1; *Summa contra Gentiles*, book 1, chapter 15; *Quaestio disputata de potentia Dei*, question 3, article 17, ad 23; *Compendium theologiae*, chapters 5 & 8.

It is interesting to note that a number of theoretical physicists and cosmologists engage with something resembling the Boethian account of 'eternity' in the following way: (1) The Universe is regarded as 'illimitable' in the sense that it is without beginning or end in *imaginary time* when by "imaginary time" is meant time that is measured using imaginary numbers, i.e. numbers which, when squared, give a negative result, e.g. the square of imaginary 4 is -16. (What must be kept in mind is that the use of the word "imaginary" in the phrases "imaginary number" and "imaginary time" has nothing in common with the use of "imaginary" in everyday discourse. The former use is a strictly technical, mathematical one.) Stephen Hawking neatly sums up the point about the Universe's being 'illimitable' in his book *Black Holes and Baby Universes*:

The imaginary time direction is at right angles to real time. This means that it behaves in a similar way to the three directions that correspond to moving in space. The curvature of space-time caused by the matter in the universe can then lead to the three space directions and the imaginary time direction meeting up....The three space directions and imaginary time would form a space-time that was closed in on itself, without boundaries or edges. It wouldn't have any point that could be called a beginning or end, any more than the surface of the earth has a beginning or end.

(*op. cit.*, p.82)

(2) The Universe is regarded as excluding 'successiveness' and as having 'all-at-once-existence'. This position is adopted on the grounds that (a) the laws of physics are totally unaffected by anything corresponding to present, past, and future; (b) the special theory of relativity excludes any universe-wide 'now': every 'now' is relative to some or other

*frame of reference*, with the consequence that there is never any absolute simultaneity of spatially separated events; (c) quantum electrodynamics, using Minkowski diagrams, is able to show a symmetry of directions in time, e.g. particles moving forward in time have an equivalence to anti-particles moving backward in time, when by “time” ( or “real time”) is meant no more than an ordering of things and events in terms of ‘what occurs first’ and ‘what occurs next’.

The Universe is interpreted as a ‘block Universe’ in that there is no objective ‘passage of time’ in which things and events that were *future* become *present*, then move inexorably into the *past*. Past, present, and future are modalities of human consciousness that should not be projected on to the realities that fill out the Universe. The Universe is the place where everything just *is* tense-lessly. Human consciousness is the place where everything *happens* under the forms of past, present, and future. The Universe is a four-dimensional continuum or ‘block’ which is progressively disclosed to human consciousness - rather as the parts and contents of a darkened room are progressively disclosed to someone who is directing the beam of a torch around it. And, just as all the parts and contents of the room are there ‘all-at-once’, so likewise are all the things and events of the Universe there ‘all-at-once’.

It is surely likely that, were he in different circumstances, the Angelic Doctor would pay close attention to the sort of theoretical considerations articulated by scientists prepared to understand the Universe along the lines just indicated, i.e. along lines having resonances with Boethius’s analysis of the concept of ‘eternity’. That he would find the considerations advanced intellectually compelling is surely unlikely, given the natural realism that always characterised his thought, and the conceptual schemata he developed to deal with questions about ‘time’, ‘change’ and ‘duration’ in his commentary on books 4 and 6 of Aristotle’s *Physics*; and on these same questions as well as on ‘eternity’ and ‘modal eternity’ (aevum) in his *Scriptum in quattuor libros Sententiarum*, book 1,

distinction 19, question 2, article 1; in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, question 10, articles 1 to 6, and the 1-11, question 113, article 7, ad 5. (This last is a superb analysis of the different ways in which two opposed qualities can succeed one another in the same subject - “*successio duorum oppositorum in eodem subiecto*” - in beings that are subject to time (“*in his quae subiacent tempori*”), and in beings that are above time (“*in his quae sunt supra tempus*”).

## ARTICLE 6

The sixth issue to be considered is this: **Is a spiritual substance united to each heavenly body?**

It seems that one is:

1. In chapter 7 of his *De divinis nominibus (Divine Names)*, Dionysius says that divine Wisdom “links up the border of what’s higher with the top level of what’s lower.” From this it can be inferred that a lower nature at its peak attains to a higher nature at its lowest point. Now the peak in physical natures is the heavenly body (*corpus caeleste*), while the lowest point in spiritual natures is the soul. So a heavenly body is made alive by a soul.

2. Besides, the more excellent the body, the more excellent its form. A heavenly body, however, is the most excellent of bodies, and the soul the most excellent of forms. So, if some lower bodies are made alive by souls, even more so are heavenly bodies.

- But [the respondent] said that, although a heavenly body isn’t made alive by a soul, nonetheless the form that makes that body a body is more excellent than the form that makes the body of a human being a body. On the contrary:

3. Either the human body has another substantial form besides the rational soul to impart being to the body, or not. If not, and the soul itself imparts substantial being to the body, then the form making a human body a body is more excellent than the form making a heavenly body a body, since the soul is the most excellent of forms. On the other hand, if there’s another substantial form in a human being imparting being to the body besides the rational soul, it’s clear that that form makes the human body receptive of the rational soul. But what’s receptive of something perfectly good is more excellent than what is not receptive, as Aristotle says in book 2 of the *De caelo (On the heavens)* [292b]. So, if a heavenly body doesn’t have a rational soul, it will still follow that the form making a human body a body is more excellent than the form making a heavenly body a body - a conclusion that’s unacceptable [to the respondent].

4. Moreover, the perfection of the universe requires that no bodily entity be denied whatever it has a natural inclination towards. And every bodily entity has a natural inclination towards what it needs for its activity. Now the distinctive activity of a heavenly body is its *moving in a circle* (*motus circularis*) and, for this, it needs a spiritual substance. Why? Because this sort of movement can’t be the consequence of having a form dependent on matter, as the movements of heavy and light things can be. Otherwise, movement would have to cease when a definite place was reached, as we see happen in the case of heavy and light things - something clearly false [in the case of heavenly bodies]. It remains, then, that heavenly bodies have spiritual substances united to them.

5. Again, anything disposed or arranged in a particular way, and thereby having natural

movement, can't, while still existing in that disposition or arrangement, be halted except by force - just look at heavy and light bodies [halted] outside their natural places. So, if the movement of what's in the sky were from a natural form, there would have to be natural movement moving the heavenly body on from each location, and force would be needed to halt it in any place that it halted. But no use of force can last forever. So what's in the sky wouldn't halt forever after the Day of Judgment, as our faith assures us it does. Since, then, conflict with our faith is objectionable, it's obvious we must say that what's in the sky is moved by the action of its *will*. It follows that what's in the sky is made alive by a soul.

6. Further, in any category, what belongs essentially (*per se*) is prior to what comes from outside (*per aliud*). But a heavenly body is first in the category of moveable things. So it is essentially moved in the sense of causing its own movement. Now, whatever causes its own movement is divided into two components: one does the moving through desire - the soul; the other is moved - the body. A heavenly body, then, is made alive by a soul.

7. Again, nothing moved by a mover totally outside it has natural movement. So, since the movement of what's in the sky is due to spiritual substance - according to Augustine in book 3 of his *De Trinitate*, God oversees bodily substance through spiritual substance - if that substance were not united to it, but totally extrinsic, the movement of what's in the sky would not be natural - a flat contradiction of what Aristotle says in book 1 of the *De caelo* (*On the heavens*) [276b].

8. Besides, assuming that the spiritual substance moving what's in the sky is outside it, it couldn't be claimed that it would move what's in the sky simply by an act of will (*solum volendo*); because *to will* would then be the same for it as *to be causally active*, which is God's prerogative. So it's necessary to use an intermediary to do the moving. But this intermediary's power would be finite, and fatigue would affect it in doing the moving over a long stretch of time (*per diurnitatem temporis*) - something unacceptable, particularly for those who assert this movement to be everlasting. So a spiritual substance which moves what's in the sky is united to it.

9. Further, as maintained in book 4 of the *Physics* (1), the movers of things moved in the lower spheres are themselves moved indirectly (*per accidens*), but not the mover of things in a higher sphere. But the mover of things in a higher sphere is united to its sphere *qua* mover. This shows that the movers of things moved in lower spheres are united to these things not only as *movers* but as *forms*. So at least things in the lower spheres are alive.

10. Moreover, when commenting on book 11 of the *Metaphysics*, Averroes (2) notes that the separated substances are found in the best state in which they could be found. This implies that each one of them moving a heavenly body does so both as agent cause and as final cause. Yet this couldn't be so unless they were in some way united with these heavenly bodies. Accordingly, non-bodily substances are united to heavenly bodies, and heavenly bodies are evidently alive.

11. Besides, Averroes says straight out in the same work that heavenly bodies are alive.

12. Further, nothing acts beyond the limits set by its species: an effect, after all, can't be greater than its cause (3). Now a substance that's alive is greater than one that isn't, as Augustine points out in his *De vera religione* (*On true religion*). Since, then, heavenly bodies cause life - especially in the case of living things generated from decaying material - it's apparent that heavenly bodies are alive and have souls.

13. Again, Averroes affirms in his book *De substantia orbis* (*On the world's substance*) that circular movement is distinctive of the soul. So those bodies above all must be regarded as having souls for which being moved in a circle (*circulariter moveri*) is natural. Now, the heavenly bodies are of this sort, and are, therefore, made alive by souls.

14. Moreover, 'to praise', 'to declare', and 'to celebrate' belong only to something that's alive and conscious. But these features are attributed to the heavens in Sacred Scripture: "Praise him, highest heavens." (Psalm 148, v.4); "The heavens declare the glory of God." (Psalm 19, v.1); "Now, heaven, celebrate (Babylon's) downfall." (*Apoc.*, chap.18, v. 20) (4). Therefore the heavens are made alive by souls. (5)

**But against that position:**

1. In book 2 of his *De fide orthodoxa* (*Concerning correct belief*) [PG 94, 886], Damascene (6) writes: "Let no one reckon that the heavens - luminous heavenly bodies - are made alive by souls; they're lifeless and senseless."

2. Again, a soul united to a body is separated from it only by death. But the heavenly bodies aren't subject to death - they're imperishable. So, if some spiritual substances were united to them as souls, they'd be made fast to them in perpetuity. But it's inappropriate for some angels to be assigned in perpetuity to certain bodies.

3. Moreover, the heavenly society of the blessed is made up of angels and souls. But, if heavenly bodies are made alive by souls, these latter souls fall into neither category. So there would be a class of rational creatures unable to share in blessedness - a conclusion not to be entertained.

4. Besides, taking account of its nature, every rational creature is able to sin. If, then, there are rational creatures united to heavenly bodies, there's nothing stopping any one of them from falling into sin. And, if that happened, it would follow that some or other heavenly body was being moved by an evil spirit - a conclusion that's absurd.

5. Again, we should entreat the prayers of good spirits. So, if there are spirits united to heavenly bodies, and it's not appropriate to regard any of them as evil, but necessary to regard them as good - they're serving God in governing physical nature - it follows that their prayers are to be sought. But then we have the absurdity of someone saying: "Oh Sun (or Oh Moon), pray for me." So it shouldn't be claimed that some spirits are united to heavenly bodies.

6. Moreover, according to Aristotle in book 1 of the *De anima (On the soul)* [411b 7], the soul contains the body to which it's united. So, if heavenly bodies are alive, it would follow that some created spiritual substance contains all that's in the sky - quite a wrong-headed claim: this belongs to Uncreated Wisdom only, of whom it's said in *Ecclesiasticus*, chap.24, v.8: "Alone I encircled the vault of the sky." (7)

### **Response:**

It has to be said about this question [Is a spiritual substance united to each heavenly body?] that different views have been put forward, both by earlier philosophers, and also by the Church's doctors. Anaxagoras thought that heavenly bodies were not alive - and was killed by the Athenians for his trouble (8). (He had said that the sun was a stone that was on fire). On the other hand, Plato, Aristotle, and their followers, were convinced that the heavenly bodies were endowed with life. There were comparable differences amongst the Church's doctors. Origen held that the heavenly bodies were alive, and St Jerome followed him, as is clear in one of his glosses on chapter 1 of *Ecclesiastes*, "Traversing all things, the spirit continues in its cycle." Damascene, however, takes the heavenly bodies to be devoid of life, as is clear from the citation above. On the other hand, Augustine leaves the matter in doubt in both book 2 of the *Super Genesim ad litteram (Commentary on Genesis)*, and in his *Enchiridion (Handbook)*.

Yet each opinion has a measure of probability. Reflection on the excellence of the heavenly bodies leads us in the direction of maintaining that they're alive - after all, in a wide classification of things, those that have life are put before those that don't. Still, reflection on the excellence of spiritual substances draws us to the opposite view. For higher spiritual substances exhibit only those actions of the soul which concern the intellect. Other vital actions are actions of the soul *qua* being the form of a perishable, so changeable, body; they come about in connection with certain bodily changes and alterations. Nor does the intellect of any of the higher substances reveal a need to seek out knowledge based on what's sense-perceptible, as does our intellect. So, if they enjoy no vital activities apart from those of *being intellectually conscious* (intelligere) and *intending* (velle) - activities which don't call for bodily organs - their excellence manifestly transcends all union with what's bodily.

Now the second of these two considerations (9) is more compelling than the first. For the union of a body and a soul isn't for the body's sake, in order that the body be ennobled, but for the soul's sake, which draws on the body for the soul's own perfection or completion, as was said above [Article 2, 'to 5']. (10)

However, if anyone considers the issue more closely, perhaps he or she will find no disagreement at all, or only very little, between these two accounts. Let's look at it this way: it can't be said that the movement of a heavenly body results from a bodily form in the manner that fire's upward movement results from its form. For it's clear that one natural form (11) inclines or directs a thing only to one objective. Now the concept of 'movement' runs counter to that sort of 'oneness' in that it belongs to the concept of a

thing's movement that the thing be *differently* disposed in respect of *now* and *before*. So a natural form doesn't incline a thing to move just for movement's sake, but for the sake of *being in some definite place*; and, when this has been arrived at, the movement is over. And this is how it would be for the movement of what's in the sky, if this movement resulted from some natural form. One must say, then, that the movement of what's in the sky (12) arises from some intellectually conscious substance (ab aliqua substantia intelligente). For the purpose of this movement can't be other than a kind of separate intellectually known good, for the sake of which an intellectually conscious substance that moves what's in the sky does this moving. It thus pursues the likeness of that good through what it is doing (in operando), and brings into actuality what is contained only virtually in that intellectually known good - above all, the completion of the number of the elect, on whose account everything else seems to take place. (13)

On this basis, then, there's really a twofold order of spiritual substances. Some of these substances will actually move heavenly bodies, and be united to them as movers to what-is-to-be-moved - Augustine accepted this in book 3 of his *De Trinitate (On the Trinity)*, saying that all such bodies are controlled by God *via* a living rational spirit, a point agreed to by Gregory in book 4 of his *Dialogi (Dialogues)* [PL 77, 329] (14). Some of them - those altogether separated from, and not linked to, heavenly bodies - will be the goals or purposes of these movements; with the others, as we've said, united to heavenly bodies in the way in which a mover is united to what-is-to-be-moved. And notice how this seems enough to safeguard the intentions of both Plato and Aristotle. In Plato's case, this is perfectly obvious: as was said above [Article 2, response], Plato asserted that even the human body itself was made alive only to the extent to which soul was united to body as *what moved it* (ut motor). In Aristotle's case, it's evident from what he said about the powers of the soul not being in heavenly bodies except the intellectual power - and, according to him, the intellect isn't the actualising principle of any-thing bodily.

To want to go further and say that heavenly bodies are made alive in the way that lower bodies are made alive with vegetal and sentient life in virtue of their souls, is at odds with the imperishable nature of the heavenly bodies. So we have to deny that heavenly bodies are made alive in the way that lower bodies are. But we don't deny that they're made alive if by *being made alive* (per animationem) nothing else is meant than a union of mover to what-is-to-be-moved. And Augustine seems to touch on these distinctions in book 2 of his *Super Genesim ad litteram (Commentary on Genesis)* when he says: "It's often asked whether those remarkable, luminous, heavenly bodies are on their own, or whether they have certain spirits as their controllers. And, if the latter, is life also imparted to them by these spirits, as the bodies of animals have life imparted to them by souls?". Although Augustine leaves these questions open, as is clear from what he goes on to say, nonetheless we're committed to affirming on the basis of what has already been argued that the heavenly bodies have spirits in charge of them, though not as sources of life, in the sense in which living things on lower levels have souls as their sources of life.

**So:**

to 1: Heavenly bodies border on spiritual substances in that a lower order of spiritual substances is united to heavenly bodies by way of being their movers.

to 2: According to Averroes, a heavenly body is composed of matter and form, as a living substance is in a less excellent order of reality. However, the term 'matter' is understood in different senses in the two cases: in the higher order of things, it's not a potentiality for being (*ad esse*), as it is in the lower order of things - only for location (*ad ubi*). Accordingly, an actually existent heavenly body is matter which doesn't need form to give it [new] being - since [by nature] it's a being in actuality - only to give it movement. So a heavenly body has a more excellent form than does a human body, but has it in a different way. On the other hand, if we go along with what others have said, viz. that a heavenly body is itself composed of matter and material form (*ex materia et forma corporali*), even then it could still be said that its form is the most excellent of all: it's a form and actualising principle that brings to achievement the whole potentiality of its matter, so leaving in it no potentiality for any other form. (15)

This Reply also answers the third Objection.

to 4: From the fact that a heavenly body is moved by a spiritual substance there results an inclination or tendency toward such a substance *qua* mover, with nothing else called for.

Objections 5 and 6 can be answered along similar lines.

to 7: A spiritual substance which moves a heavenly body has natural power focused on the movement of a body of this kind. Similarly, a heavenly body has a natural readiness to be moved by this sort of movement. On this basis, the movement of what's in the sky is natural, in spite of its being from an intellectually conscious substance.

to 8: It's probably the case that a spiritual substance moves a heavenly body by will's command (*imperio voluntatis*): although bodily matter doesn't at once obey a created spirit, only God, with respect to substantial change - Augustine notes this in book 3 of his *De Trinitate (On the Trinity)* - it does do so with respect to change of place. This is clear even in our own case; for movement of our bodily members immediately follows our will's command. Moreover, add an influx of power to will's command, and no fatigue results only from this power's being finite. For any power at all of a higher order can be finite in itself, and in contrast to what's even higher, yet be *infinite* in contrast to what's below it. Take the case of the sun: it's infinite in respect of the generation of perishable things; and its power is undiminished though it be used *ad infinitum* in producing these things. It's similar for the power of the intellect which is infinite in respect of taking in the natures of sense-perceptible objects. So the power of a spiritual substance moving what's in the sky is infinite *vis-a-vis* moving something physically - and there's simply no issue about fatigue.

to 9: The soul that moves a perishable living thing is united to it in terms of *being* (*esse*). A spiritual substance that moves a heavenly body is united to it only in terms of its *move-*

*ment* (moveri). So *being moved indirectly* (per accidens) is attributable to the soul of a perishable living thing by reason of what it is (ratione sui ipsius): given that the body with which it's one in terms of *being* is moved, it must itself be moved indirectly. But *being moved indirectly* is attributable to the mover of things in a lower sphere, not by reason of what-this-mover-is, but by reason of what-is-to-be-moved (mobilis) insofar as things in a lower sphere are themselves moved indirectly *qua* influenced by the movement of a higher sphere. However, the mover of things in a higher sphere is indirectly moved in neither fashion - its sphere isn't influenced by other spheres, but influences them.

to 10: Averroes is found to have held various views. In his book *De substantia orbis* (*On the world's substance*), he said that the same reality moved heavenly bodies both as agent cause and as final cause. But this is surely wrong (especially if account is taken of his opinion that the First Cause doesn't transcend the substances that move the first or outermost sphere - it follows in this case that God is the *soul* of the first or outermost sphere, given that the substance which moves this sphere as agent cause is taken to be its soul).

The reason [Averroes] gave for this view is totally inadequate: because *thinking* and *what is thought* are one and the same in substances distinct from matter, he supposed that *desiring* and *what is desired* are also one and the same. But there's no similarity: *knowing* something takes place in terms of *what is known* existing *in* the knowing subject; *desiring*, on the other hand, takes place in terms of the turning or moving of the desiring subject *towards* the thing desired. If, then, the good that's desired were present *in* the one who desired it, there would be no call for movement in pursuit of it. So we're bound to say that *what is desired* - which moves as *final cause* - is other than the desiring subject, which does *its* moving as *agent cause*. And Averroes himself says the same thing when commenting on book 11 of the *Metaphysics*. For there he acknowledges *two* movers: one united to what it moves, which he calls its soul; the other separated from it, which moves it as final cause.

From all of this, however, nothing further can be gathered beyond the fact that a spiritual substance is united to a heavenly body as its [agent] mover.

to 11: Averroes says that heavenly bodies are alive, meaning only that spiritual substances are linked to them as movers, not as forms. Likewise, when commenting on book 7 of the *Metaphysics*, he says that the formative power of a seed acts only through the seed's warmth - there's no form in the warmth - a sort of soul *in the natural warmth*. The point he's making is that a life principle is *involved* there, as a life principle is *involved* in heavenly bodies.

to 12: A heavenly body is the instrument of a spiritual substance insofar as it's moved by such a substance. So it operates to cause life in lower-order things in virtue of this spiritual substance, rather as a saw acts to cause a piece of furniture in virtue of an artisan's skill.

to 13: The reasoning of Averroes justifies nothing beyond the conclusion that heavenly bodies are moved along by spiritual substances.

to 14: Note Damascene on this point: the heavens are said to declare the glory of God, and to praise and celebrate, to the extent to which they're the *occasion* for people to praise or declare or celebrate God. Similar things are found in the Scriptures about mountains and hills and other non-living creatures.

### **The 'Against that position' Arguments: (16)**

to 1: Damascene denies that heavenly bodies are alive due to their having spiritual substances united to them as forms, as if to perishable living things.

to 2: One angel is assigned to watching over one human being for as long as that human being is alive. So there's nothing inappropriate about an angel's being assigned to move a heavenly body for as long as it's in motion.

to 3: If the heavenly bodies are alive, the spirits in charge of them belong to the company of the angels. Augustine states in his *Enchiridion (Handbook)* [PL 40, 260] that "I'm not certain how to respond to the question whether the sun, the moon, and all the stars belong to the company of the angels; although it's manifest to some people that they're only brightly shining bodies, lacking sense and understanding."

to 4: On this matter there's no room for doubt if we follow Damascene's opinion in the *De fide orthodoxa (Concerning correct belief)* [PG 94, 875] that angels who sinned were amongst the number of those in charge of realities *liable to perish*. On the other hand, if we follow Gregory's view (17) that even some of the higher angels sinned, it has to be said that God safeguarded from falling into sin those angels assigned to the role [of moving heavenly bodies], as He did most of the other angels.

to 5: We don't say "Pray for me, oh Sun" because a spiritual substance isn't the form of a heavenly body, but its mover only; and any occasion of idolatry is to be removed.

to 6: Aristotle points out in book 4 of the *Physics* [267b 7] (18) that the mover of what's in the sky is in some part of the sky, not in the whole of it; hence, it doesn't "encircle the vault of the sky". The soul's case is different: it imparts being (*esse*) to the body as a whole and to its parts.

### **Notes**

1. There is nothing in the text of Aristotle's *Physics* to indicate that either Leo Keeler or the editors of the Marietti edition of the *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis* are correct in saying that the reference to the movers of higher and lower spheres in Objection 9 is to be found in book 8 of the *Physics* rather than in book 4. Neither book

appears to treat the point explicitly; but there is at least as much warrant for leaving the reference to book 4 provided by St Thomas as there is for changing it to book 8.

2. For Averroes, see article 2, note 2 *supra*.

3. The principle here invoked is that what is ontologically more excellent cannot result *only* from what is ontologically less excellent, since this would imply that being can result *tout court* from non-being: to the extent to which something is ontologically less excellent, to that extent it is relatively *non-being*. St Thomas is in complete agreement with this principle, and actually uses it in his reply to Objection 12. This reply draws on the notion that an *instrumental* cause *as such* brings about an effect surpassing its own natural powers in virtue of the power of the *principal* cause making use of it.

In his *Reality - A Synthesis of Thomistic Thought*, Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, OP, sets out the following lively statement of the principle:

Most simply expressed, causality means: the more does not come from the less, the more perfect cannot be produced by the less perfect. In the world we find things which reach existence and then disappear, things whose life is temporary and perishable, men whose wisdom or goodness or holiness is limited and imperfect; then above all this limited perfection we must find at the summit Him who from all eternity is self-existing perfection, who is life itself, wisdom itself, goodness itself, holiness itself.

To deny this is to affirm that the more comes from the less, that the intelligence of a genius, that the goodness of a saint, come from blind material fatality. In this general formula are contained all *a posteriori* proofs, all founded on the principle of causality. (*op. cit.*, pp. 72-73).

4. The translations are from the 1985 Standard Edition of *The Jerusalem Bible*.

5. As Leo Keeler indicates in a footnote, p. 74, of his critical edition of the *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis*, this is an argument of Moses Maimonides (for whom see article 8, note 6 *infra*) which St Thomas notes, and responds to, in the *Quaestio disputata de anima*, article 8, 'to 19'. I give the argument and Thomas's reply:

Praeterea, enarrare est actus substantiae intelligentis.  
Sed caeli enarrant gloriam Dei, ut in *Psal.* XIX (1) dicitur. Ergo caeli sunt intelligentes; et ita habent animam intellectivam.

(Moreover, 'to declare' is the action of an intellectually conscious substance. But "The heavens declare the glory of God", as Psalm 19, v.1, says. Therefore the heavens are intellectually conscious, and so have an intellective soul.)

Ad decimumnovum, dicendum quod probatio illa frivola est, licet Rabbi Moyses eam ponat. Quod si enarrare proprie accipitur cum dicitur *Caeli enarrant gloriam Dei*, oportet quod caelum non solum habeat intellectum, sed etiam linguam. Dicuntur ergo caeli enarrare gloriam Dei, si ad litteram exponatur, in quantum ex eis manifestatur hominibus gloria Dei; per quem modum etiam creaturae insensibiles Deum laudare dicuntur.

(to19: It has to be said that the argument is frivolous, in spite of its being put forward by Rabbi Moses. If ‘to declare’ is taken in the strict sense when it is said that “The heavens declare the glory of God”, then the heavens must have not only an intellect, but also a tongue. But, still keeping to the letter, the heavens can be said to declare the glory of God to the extent to which the glory of God is made manifest to people by them. In this way, even creatures devoid of awareness are said to *praise* God.)

6. For Damascene, refer article 1, note 6 *supra*.

7. *The Jerusalem Bible* translation.

8. Scholarly work since the time of St Thomas has established that Anaxagoras (c.500-428 BC) spent much of his teaching life in Athens, and that a politically motivated prosecution for impiety was at one point launched against him. He was not, however, killed by the Athenians, as Thomas believed. He left Athens to avoid prosecution, and took up residence in the northern Troad - at a safe distance from his would-be prosecutors.

9. Reading “*harum autem duarum considerationum*” with the Marietti text, rather than “*harum autem duarum considerationem*” with Keeler.

10. St Thomas’s argument here is that souls have need of bodies for their perfection or completion in that the soul is imperfect or incomplete on the score of species, given that the *specific nature* of the human being involves a set of matter-dependent, as well as a set of (intrinsically) matter-independent, activities. In contrast to this, there is no call at all for the higher spiritual substances - the angels - to be united to heavenly bodies as forms making these bodies alive. Each of these spiritual substances is already perfect or complete in respect of species, and its specific nature is expressed in activities having no dependence of any kind on matter. .

St Thomas addresses in a number of places the issue whether the heavenly bodies are or are not alive. One of these places is question 70, article 3, of the first part of his *Summa Theologiae* where the argument includes the following ideas: (1) No heavenly body could be alive with *vegetal* life, since the activities involved in nourishment, growth, and reproduction are “activities of a kind incompatible with a body imperishable by nature” (*huiusmodi enim operationes non competunt corpori incorruptibili per naturam*). (2) No

heavenly body could be alive with *sentient* life, since the nature of the senses restricts them to taking in the qualities of the four elements (i.e. of earth, water, air, fire), and sense organs themselves require these elements mixed in due proportion (requirunt determinatam proportionem secundum commixtionem aliquam elementorum), with the heavenly bodies being totally apart from the nature of these elements (a quorum natura corpora caelestia ponuntur remota). [For a brief account of the ancient and medieval doctrine of the ‘four elements’, see article 7, note 1, *infra*.] (3) No heavenly body could be alive with *intellective* life, since intellective life is to be found in embodied form only when the intellect is of the kind that needs sense imagery for the content of its ideas (intellectualis operatio...non indiget corpore nisi in quantum ei per sensus ministrantur phantasmata). And sentient activity has already been ruled out in the case of the heavenly bodies.

The conclusion Thomas reaches in article 3 of question 70 is that the heavenly bodies are not ‘alive’ in the sense that plants and animals (including human beings) are said to be alive. They may, however, be said to be ‘alive’ in an equivocal sense (aequivoce), meaning only that they are kept in motion by separated substances alive with intellective life.

It should be noted that St Thomas was refreshingly empirical in his reasoning as to why the heavenly bodies should be regarded as imperishable by nature (corpora incorruptibilia per naturam): no change or alteration of any sort apart from uniform local motion that is circular has ever been observed anywhere by people in respect of the heavenly bodies (the sun, the moon, the planets, the ‘fixed’ stars). On the other hand, the four elements, and the bodies made up of some or other combination of them, move locally in various contrary ways, and are subject to a range of alterations and substantial changes. Basing himself on these observational data, Thomas endorsed the generally held view that the heavenly bodies were free of the elements that made up sublunary bodies, were composed of a fifth element which was called ‘ether’ (aether) [see the last paragraph of article 7, note 1, *infra*], and were by nature imperishable.

However, in a remarkable statement regarding the imperishability of the heavenly bodies in one of his last works (his commentary on the *De caelo et mundo* of Aristotle), St Thomas had this to say:

Nec tamen hoc est necessarium sed probabile. Quanto enim aliquid est diuturnius, tanto maius tempus requiritur ad hoc quod eius mutatio deprehendatur; sicut transmutatio hominis non deprehenditur in duobus vel tribus annis, in quibus deprehenditur transmutatio canis, vel alicuius alterius animalis brevioris vitam habentis. Posset igitur aliquis dicere quod, etsi caelum sit naturaliter corruptibile, est tamen tam diuturnum quod totum tempus cuius memoria potest haberi non sufficit ad deprehendendam eius transmutationem.

(*In 1 De caelo*, lect.6, no.76, 6)

(We’re not dealing with necessity here but with probability.)

The more long-lasting something is, the greater the amount of time required for discovering alteration in it. The changes in a human being, say, aren't comprehended in a matter of two or three years, as may be the case for changes in a dog or some other animal with a short life span. So it's perfectly open for someone to say that, yes, what's in the sky is *perishable* by nature, only it's so long-lasting that the total stretch of time that memory can record doesn't suffice for detecting alteration in it.)

This insight of St Thomas would put him in the position of being able to appreciate subsequent developments and refinements in the observation of celestial objects that employ sophisticated instruments such as optical and radio telescopes, and the advanced techniques connected with spectroscopy. Were St Thomas in a position to be offered evidence of what modern astrophysicists call 'stellar evolution', he would see this as confirmation of his view that assertions that the heavenly bodies are 'imperishable by nature' have no claim to absolute truth.

Whether he would also regard as open to challenge his account of the 'life' of the heavenly bodies, which he believed to consist in their being moved in circular paths by separated substances themselves alive with intellective life, would depend on what he came to think about issues to do with the principles of Newtonian and/or relativistic mechanics.

11. The phrase 'natural form' (*forma naturalis*) refers to the substantial form that, by its union with first matter (*materia prima*), inwardly determines or "moulds" the nature of a material thing, making it to be whatever it essentially is, and thereby determining the 'good' that achieves or fulfills this nature.

12. Throughout Article 6 I have taken it that Thomas's Latin phrase "motus caeli" is his elliptical equivalent of some such phrase as "motus alicuius in caelo". Therefore the frequent translation of "motus caeli" as "the movement of what's in the sky", with the subordinate phrase "what's in the sky" referring, of course, to a 'corpus caeleste' ('heavenly body').

13. This difficult passage of St Thomas is explained as follows by Leo Keeler in a footnote, p.77, in his critical edition of the *De spiritualibus creaturis* text:

Angelus motor, intelligens atque desiderans aliquod bonum superius (sive Deum sive angelum superiorem), id agit ut sese assimilet illi bono sua operatione, producendo perfectissimum motum sui orbis, i.e. circulem, quo motu processus generationis et corruptionis in hoc mundo sublunari promovetur, et praesertim generatio et evolutio hominum, ut numerus electorum impleatur.

(An angel that is intellectually conscious of, and attracted to,

some higher good (whether God or a higher angel), and that moves a heavenly body, does this in order to make itself like that good by its activity. This consists in producing an altogether perfect movement of its sphere - a circular movement - by means of which the process of generation and decay in the sublunary world is promoted; and, in particular, the generation and development of human beings so that the number of the elect may be completed.)

In connection with the idea that heavenly bodies are involved in processes of change in the sublunary world, it is worth noting the comment of St Thomas in the *Quaestio disputata de anima*, art. 8, 'to 17':

Dicendum quod corpus caeleste, licet sit causa particularium quae generantur et corrumpuntur, est tamen eorum causa ut agens commune; propter quod sub eo requirunt determinata agentia ad determinatas species. Unde motor corporis caelestis non oportet quod habeat formas particulares sed universales, sive sit anima sive motor separatus.

(It should be said that, although a heavenly body may be the cause of particular things that are generated and perish, nonetheless it brings them about only as an agent cause of a *general* character. Hence the need for determinate agent causes under it for producing determinate kinds of things. Accordingly, the mover of a heavenly body should have not particular, but general, conceptions of things, whether it's a soul or something separate.)

14. The Gregory mentioned by St Thomas is St Gregory 1 ("Gregory the Great"), who was born c.540 AD, and was Pope from 590 until his death in 604. Regarding the *Dialogues*, the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* notes on p.707: "The 'Dialogues' (c. 593; traditionally and almost certainly correctly attributed to him) relate the lives and miracles of Italian saints, incl. St Benedict; they provided models of holiness for Gregory's contemporaries taken from saints close to them in time and space."

15. Two passages from St Thomas throw further light on what he says in 'to 2'. The first passage is from the *Summa Theologiae* 1a, question 70, article 3, ad 2um:

Dicendum quod nihil prohibet aliquid esse nobilius simpliciter, quod tamen non est nobilius quantum ad aliquid. Forma ergo caelestis corporis, etsi non sit simpliciter nobilior anima animalis, est tamen nobilior quantum ad rationem formae; perficit enim totaliter suam materiam, ut non sit in potentia ad aliam formam; quod anima non

facit. Quantum etiam ad motum, moventur corpora caelestia a nobilioribus motoribus.

(It should be said that nothing prevents a thing from being generally speaking more excellent [than something else], whilst not being more excellent in some particular respect. So the form of a heavenly body, though in general terms *not* more excellent than the soul of a sentient being, is nonetheless more excellent than it *relative to the idea of 'form'*; for it so completely actualises its own matter that this is not in potentiality to any other form - something the soul doesn't do. And in relation to *movement* as well, the heavenly bodies are propelled by more excellent movers.)

The second passage is from article 8, ad 3, of the *Quaestio disputata de anima*:

Hoc igitur pro firmo tenentes quod corpora caelestia ab aliquo intellectu moventur, saltem separato... dicamus aliquam substantiam intellectualem esse perfectionem corporis caelestis ut formam, quae quidem habet solam potentiam intellectivam, non autem sensitivam ut ex verbis Aristotelis accipi potest in 11 *de Anima*, et in X1 *Metaph.*, quamvis Avicenna ponat quod anima caeli cum intellectu etiam habeat imaginationem. Si autem habet intellectum tantum, unitur tamen corpori ut forma, non propter operationem intellectualem, sed propter executionem virtutis activae, secundum quam potest adipisci divinam similitudinem in causando per motum caeli.

(Holding as firmly established that the heavenly bodies are moved by an intellect - at the very least, a separate one - let's say that some intellectual substance perfects a heavenly body as form. This substance has intellective power only, and no sense powers - a position derived from what Aristotle says in book 2 of his *De anima (On the soul)*, and in book 11 of the *Metaphysics*; though Avicenna asserts that the soul of a heavenly body has imaginative powers in addition to intellect. Now, if this substance has intellect only, nonetheless it's united to a heavenly body as form, not for the sake of intellectual activity, but for the sake of exercising causal agency. It's this exercise of causal agency in moving what's in the sky that gains for it a measure of likeness to God.)

16. The "Against that position" arguments were put forward by the *baccalaureus respondens* - the student delegated to respond on behalf of the master who was holding an academic disputation. These arguments would have been introduced during the course of

the first day of the disputation, with a view to rebutting at once objections coming from the floor against the thesis the master was to defend. The master's formal *determinatio* or resolution of the question that was the subject of the disputation, i.e. his defence of a particular thesis, took place on the second (usually the following) day. This defence included the master's arguments supporting his thesis, and his own responses to the objections raised against the thesis on the first day. The master subsequently prepared for publication a text of the disputation, basing himself on his own notes and recollections, on the notes and recollections of the *baccalaureus respondens*, and on the record of the disputation made by a scribe or scribes. This text included the subject of the disputation (usually formulated as a question introduced by the interrogative adverb 'utrum'), the objections to the thesis the master was to defend, arguments against the objections ('Sed Contra') offered by the *repondens*, the formal *determinatio* of the question by the master, and his own replies - one by one - to the objections. It must be kept in mind, however, that the disputations in published form were what I.T. Eschmann, OP, called "elaborate and stylized compositions which the Master wrote on the basis of these scholastic performances" (in Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St Thomas Aquinas*, p.389). The work of editing, documenting, and writing, was often undertaken quite some time after one of these "scholastic performances".

From time to time St Thomas would include in the published text - Article 6 of the *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis* is a case in point - some clarifications or amendments of the 'Against that position' ('Sed Contra') arguments originally introduced by his *baccalaureus respondens*. These clarifications or amendments were then included in the text for publication following the master's replies to the objections.

In order to gain some idea of the extent to which the "elaborate and stylized compositions" prepared by the master, and subsequently published, differed from the original disputations, scholars draw attention to instances of records of actual disputations that were not subsequently edited for publication. A good example of the *genre* is to be found in the *Gregorianum* (a journal published by the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome), volume 36 (1955), pp.618-625, in which the Jesuit scholar Friedrich Pelster provides the unedited text of a disputation conducted by St Thomas on the topic 'Utrum anima coniuncta cognoscat seipsam per essentiam (Does the [human] soul when united [to the body] know itself through its own essence or nature?)'.

17. For Gregory, refer note 14 *supra*.

18. The reference here should be to book 8 of the *Physics*, not to book 4. The Bekker notation supplied by Keeler is correct.

## ARTICLE 7

The seventh issue to be considered is this: **Is any spiritual substance united to a body made of air?**

It seems so:

1. According to Augustine in book 3 of his *Super Genesim ad litteram* (*Commentary on Genesis*) and book 4 of his *De civitate Dei* (*The City of God*), devils have bodies made of air. Yet devils are spiritual substances. So a spiritual substance is united to a body made of air.
2. Again, in his book *De divinatione daemonum* (*On divination by devils*) [PL 40, 584], Augustine states that devils evade human sense-powers by the fineness of their bodies made of air. But this would not be the case unless their very natures required union with such bodies. There are, then, spiritual substances united to bodies made of air.
3. Further, no mean or middle point is at variance with its extremes. But, according to those claiming that the heavenly bodies are alive, life is found in the region occupied by the heavenly bodies. Moreover, in the region occupied by the Earth, life is found in animals and plants. So life must be found in the intervening or middle region - the region occupied by the air. And it won't do just to refer this region to the life of birds, because birds rise above the Earth into only a small part of air's space; and it would be inappropriate for all the rest of air's space to remain devoid of life. It seems necessary, then, to maintain that there are some living *aerial* beings there; from which it follows that some spiritual substances are united to bodies made of air.
4. A more noble body calls for a more noble form. But air is a more noble body than [the element] earth - it is, after all, closer to form and finer. So, if a spiritual substance - in this case the soul - is united to a body made of earth, namely to the human body, even more so should a spiritual substance be united to a body made of air.
5. Moreover, things are more easily united when they're more adapted to each other. But air seems more adapted to a soul than does a body such as the human body which is a mixture of elements: as Augustine points out in his *Super Genesim ad litteram* (*Commentary on Genesis*), soul controls body through air. So a soul is better fitted for union with a body made of air than with a body made of a mixture of elements.
6. Again, Averroes says in his *De substantia orbis* (*On the world's substance*) that "Movement in a circle is distinctive of the soul." This is so because the soul is, of itself, indifferent as far as movement of any particular sort is concerned. Now this seems also to accord with air, which moves gently when movements are gentle, and strongly when movements are strong. So it's abundantly clear that soul is united to air.

**But against that position:**

The soul is the actualising principle of an organic body. Now a body made of air can't be organic since, given that it isn't defined by boundaries proper to it, but only by the boundaries of other things, it can't have a shape of its own. So a spiritual substance such as the soul can't be united to a body made of air.

**Response:**

It's impossible for a spiritual substance to be united to a body made of air. Three reasons can be given for this:

First, amongst all bodily substances, the simple bodily substances that are the elements (1) are the least perfect, since they're only the stuff from which all other bodily things are made. So, in accordance with the idea of an order or ranking of things, it's inappropriate for a simple elemental body to have united to it a spiritual substance as its form.

The second reason is that air is a physical substance that's always similar, whether taken on the whole, or taken in any part of it. So a spiritual substance united to some part of the air is, at a stroke, united to all of it - likewise for any other elements. And the absurdity is manifest.

The third reason is this: a spiritual substance is found united to a body in one or other of two ways. In the first way, the purpose is to impart movement to a body - we've said this for the union of spiritual substances with heavenly bodies. In the second way, the idea is for the spiritual substance to be aided by the body for its distinctive activity which is to think (intelligere) - the human soul is the example here: it's united to a body in order to acquire knowledge through body-dependent senses. Now a spiritual substance can't be united to air for the purpose of moving it; for air has its own natural movement in consequence of its natural form, nor can any movement be found either in the whole of the air, or in any part of it, which can't be explained by invoking some *physical* cause. So there's nothing in air's movement to call for a spiritual substance to be united to the air. Nor is a spiritual substance united to a body made of air for the sake of achieving intellectual activity: Aristotle shows in book 3 of the *De anima (On the soul)* [434b 10] that no simple bodily substance can be the material apparatus of a sense power. It follows that a spiritual substance is in no way united to a body made of air. (3)

**So:**

to 1: Whenever Augustine says that devils have bodies made of air, he mustn't be taken as putting forward his own view, but the opinions of others. So he says in book 21 of the *De civitate Dei (The City of God)* that "It has seemed to learned people that even devils have bodies of some sort, formed from dense and damp air.... On the other hand, if there were people asserting that the devils didn't have bodies at all, this wouldn't be an issue to be worked through by painstaking inquiry, or fought over in contentious debate."

This reply also answers the second objection.

to 3 The lower region, namely the region near the Earth, is the place where the elements are found mixed together. But the more that bodies made of mixed elements reach a point where the mixture is balanced, the more removed they are from the contrary qualities of the elements that compose them. In this way they gain a sort of resemblance to the heavenly bodies, which lack all contrariety. This makes it clear that there is better reason for life to exist in the higher and lower regions than in the region in between - something especially obvious given that, amongst things in the lower region, a body is the more ready to take on life, the closer it is to [having] a balanced mixture of the elements in it.

to 4: A body made of air is more noble than one made of earth. But a body having a balanced mixture [of the elements] is more noble than both of them because more removed from contrary qualities; and only this sort of body is found united to a spiritual substance. Nonetheless, in this sort of body the lower elements must be the most abundant material, if a balanced mixture is to be produced, owing to the excess of active power in the other elements.

to 5: The soul is said to control its body by means of air in connection with movement; for air is more susceptible of movement than are other bodily substances, given their density.

to 6: Air isn't indifferent to all movement; rather, it's gentle in respect of some movements, and strong in respect of others. But this provides no basis for its being actualised by soul.

### Notes

1. The doctrine of fundamental *elements* was first advanced by the Greek philosopher Empedocles (c.490 - 430 BC). His attempt to provide a comprehensive account of the workings of the physical world led him to postulate a 'via media' between acknowledging the existence of no end of material substances, and asserting the absolute unity of substance along the lines of Parmenides (c.515 - c.445 BC) and Zeno of Elea (fl. c.450 BC).

Empedocles' 'via media' involved affirming four primary substances as the ultimate physical components of the world. These substances were earth, water, air, and fire - the "four elements". All of the things found in the world disclosed to us in sense-experience were combinations or "mixtures" of these elements in various proportions or ratios. Bone, for example, consisted of two parts earth, two parts water, and four parts fire. Love and Strife were declared by Empedocles to be the two agents responsible for mixing and separating the elements. The importance of proportion or ratio in the combining or mixing of the elements suggests the influence on Empedocles of Pythagoras (fl. 530 BC)

and his School.

Empedocles also took the view that our capacity for perception involved interaction between a particular element in our body and the same element existing in an object in the external world. This interaction required the passages of our sense organs to be the right size for receiving the “effluxes” which things constantly give off.

Empedocles’ doctrine of the four elements was endorsed in general by Aristotle and, later, by St Thomas. It was a scientific or physical account of matter, which extended to discussion of opposed pairs of qualities - hot and cold, wet and dry - which, in diverse combinations, characterised each of the elements; for example, fire was hot and dry, and water cold and wet. These qualities enabled the elements to interact, and combine or mix.

Aristotle and St Thomas also offered a philosophical account of matter in terms of its composition from the ontological principles of *first matter* (*materia prima*) and *substantial form* (*forma substantialis*). In Appendix 4, volume 10, of the Blackfriars *Summa Theologiae*, W.A. Wallace, OP, provides the following succinct statement of this ‘hylomorphism’ (from the Greek *hule* - matter, and *morphe* - form):

In addition [to being composed of the elements], bodies were regarded as essentially or entitatively composed of two principles, primary matter and substantial form. Primary matter, for Aristotle, is the basic substrate, or proto-matter, of the universe; in itself it is pure potentiality, completely devoid of all determination. Its correlative and actualizing principle, which unites with it in a most intimate union to form corporeal substance, is substantial form. Whereas primary matter is common to all natural bodies, substantial form is a differentiating or specifying principle and thus accounts for the body belonging to one or other determinate species.

Primary matter is so called because it is the first or basic material underlying all natural change. By analogy with it, the substance that results from the union of primary matter and substantial form is referred to by Aristoteleans as secondary matter. Just as primary matter is actuated and specified by substantial form, so secondary matter is actualized and determined by accidental form. A change in accidental form, the substance remaining, is known as an accidental change. On the other hand, a change in substantial form, the primary matter remaining, is referred to as a substantial change.

The coming-to-be, or production, of a natural substance from

primary matter is termed ‘generation’. The ceasing-to-be of a natural substance, on the other hand, is called ‘corruption’, the opposite of generation. Since primary matter is a mere principle of substance and not a complete substance in itself, it can have no actual existence except when united to a substantial form. Moreover, substantial change is instantaneous, so that when one substantial form leaves primary matter it is immediately succeeded by another substantial form. This being so, there can be no corruption of one substance without an immediate generation of another substance.

It should be noted that Aristotle and St Thomas argued that, whereas the four elements of earth, water, air, and fire were the physical components of all bodies on Earth - of all “sublunary” bodies - the heavenly bodies (*corpora caelestia*) were physically composed of a different type of element called “aether”. This was the *fifth essence* (*quinta essentia*). This fifth essence or element was not subject to qualitative alteration, nor to the generation-corruption process through which new substantial entities were brought about. The uniform motion, and essential changelessness, of the heavenly bodies were taken to point to their being made up of such an element or substance, quite unlike the four elements involved in the endless qualitative and basic changes that affected bodies in the sublunary world. (Refer St Thomas’s commentary on the *De caelo* of Aristotle: *In De Caelo*, book 1, lect. 4-6; book 3, lect.1; and his commentary on the *Meteorologica* of Aristotle: *In Meteorologica*, book 1, lect.2..) St Thomas provides an important discussion of the differences between sublunary bodies and the “*corpora caelestia*” in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, question 66, article 2, where he addresses the question whether there is only one sort of matter, thought of as prior to form (*materia informis*), for all bodily realities.

2. Refer article 6 *supra*, particularly the response, and replies to objections 1, 4, 7, 8, 9, 12, and 13.

3. By an apparent oversight, Keeler’s text omits the adjective “aereo” needed to qualify the noun “corpori” in the final sentence of the Response. The adjective is to be found in the Marietti edition of the text.

## ARTICLE 8

The eighth issue to be considered is this: **Are all the angels specifically different from one another?**

It seems that they aren't:

1. In chapter 29 of the *Enchiridion (Handbook)* Augustine comments that "Though the rational nature that was in human beings had totally perished due to sin and punishment, yet [it warranted] being partially restored." On this basis it can be argued as follows: if all the angels differed from one another in terms of specific nature then, given that a number of angels fell into sin without chance of restoration, a number of specific natures would have been irreparably destroyed. But divine Providence wouldn't allow a rational nature to be irreparably destroyed, as is clear from the authority cited. So it's not the case that all angels are different from one another in terms of specific nature.
2. Moreover, the closer created things are to God, in whom no differences are found, the less different are they from one another. Now, in accordance with the ordering of natures, angels are closer to God than human beings are. But things differing both numerically and specifically differ more from one another than do things that differ numerically but agree in species. So, since human beings don't differ from one another in species but only numerically, it seems that angels don't differ in species either.
3. Further, the agreement of things in respect of formal principle or form makes them the same in respect of species; whereas difference in respect of material principle or matter brings about numerical difference only. Now in angels be-ing (*ipsum esse*) is a formal principle in respect of an angel's essence, as was pointed out above (1). Accordingly, since all angels agree in having be-ing but are different on the score of essence, it's clear that angels aren't specifically different, only numerically so.
4. Again, every created subsistent entity is an individual thing contained under some common specific nature. If the individual thing is composite, the specific nature is predicated of it on the basis of the thing's being composite; if the individual thing is simple, the specific nature is predicated of it on the basis of the thing's being simple. But an angel is a created subsistent entity; and whether it's composed of matter and form, or whether it's simple, it must be contained under some specific nature. Now, containing a

number of complete substances (supposita) under it takes nothing away from a specific nature; likewise, having other things equal to itself in the same species takes nothing away from an individual thing contained under that species. So it seems quite possible to have a number of angels of the one species. But recall Aristotle's "In things that are permanent, being actual and being possible don't differ" (*Physics*, book 3, 203b 30). So, amongst the angels there are many individuals of the one species.

5. Besides, perfect love exists amongst the angels. Nothing, then, concerning the fullness of love is to be denied of them. But having a number of members of the one species concerns the fullness of love, since all living things of the one species have a natural love for one another, according to *Ecclesiasticus* [chapter 13, verse 19]: "Each living thing loves its own kind." Amongst the angels, then, there are many of one species.

6. Further, according to Boethius (2) only a species can be defined; so things that agree under a definition appear to agree in species. But all the angels agree under the definition provided by Damascene (3) in book 2 of his *De fide orthodoxa* (*On correct belief*) [PG 94, 866]: "An angel is an intellectual substance, always active, endowed with free will, non-bodily, serving God, taking on immortality by grace (not nature)." So all the angels are of one species.

7. Besides, as far as the order of nature goes, angels are closer to God than human beings are. Yet in God there are three Persons of one nature *numerically* (secundum numerum). Since, then, for humankind there are many persons of one nature *specifically* (secundum speciem), it's plain that even more so for the angels are there many persons at one in their *specific* nature.

8. Further, in the thirty-fourth of his *Homilies on the Gospels* [PL 76, 1255c], Gregory (4) remarks that, in the heavenly homeland where the fullness of goodness is found, even though certain gifts have been given in surpassing fashion (excellenter), nonetheless nothing is possessed exclusively (singulariter). For everything is found in everyone, though not equally - some possess more excellently than others do the gifts that all share. So there's no difference between the angels except in terms of 'more' and 'less'. And, since 'more' and 'less' don't issue in diversity of species, it follows that angels aren't specifically different.

9. Again, things resembling one another in what is most excellent in them resemble one

another in species; for what situates something in a species is more excellent than what situates it in a genus - the differentiating characteristic is *form-like* (*formalis*) in respect of genus. But all the angels resemble one another in what is most excellent in them, namely their intellectual nature. So all the angels resemble one another in species.

10. Moreover, if any genus is divided by two differentiating characteristics one of which is less perfect than the other, the less perfect one is more able to be multiplied than the more perfect one. The differentiating characteristic 'non-rational', say, is multiplied across a number of species; the differentiating characteristic 'rational' isn't. Now spiritual substance is divided into 'what-can-be-united-to-body' and 'what-can't-be-united-to-body'; and what-can-be-united-to-body is less perfect amongst spiritual substances. So, since spiritual substance able-to-be-united-to-body, namely the human soul, isn't divided into many species, there's an even stronger case for spiritual substance that-can't-be-united-to-body, namely angelic substance, not being multiplied across many species.

11. Further, Pope Boniface (5) indicates (*Epistulae*) (*Letters*) [PL 65, 43-44] that ministrations in the Church militant follow the pattern of the heavenly militia in which angels differ in rank and power. Yet, in the Church militant differences of rank and power don't mark specific differences between human beings. Therefore neither do angels in Heaven's angelic militia differ in species, even those of different orders or hierarchies.

12. Again, as the world of the lower elements is adorned with plants and other forms of life, and the starry sky with constellations and the sun and moon, so likewise is the empyrean heaven (6) adorned with angels. But amongst plants and other living things there are found many of the same species. In similar fashion, all stars seem to be of the same species, because they share in that most noble of forms - the form of light. Therefore, it seems by parity of reasoning that either all the angels, or some of them, agree in being of one species.

13. Further, if it's denied that a number of angels agree in being of one species, this is only because there's no matter in them. But absence of matter takes away not only a plurality of individuals but each thing's individual unity as well. This is so because an individual thing belongs under a species thanks only to matter, since matter is the principle of individual unity. If, then, we're compelled to affirm that angels are individual entities, we're compelled by similar reasoning to affirm that there are many of them in

one species.

14. Besides, “In things without matter, what thinks and what is thought are the same”, as Aristotle notes (*De anima*) (*On the soul*) [430a 3]. If, then, angels were without matter, an angel thinking would be the same as an angel being thought about. But any angel at all thinks about any other angel whatsoever. And the upshot of this would be that only one angel existed - a falsity. So it can't be claimed that angels are without matter, nor can it be claimed that all angels are specifically different.

15. Moreover, number is a species of quantity, and it doesn't exist without matter. If, then, there were no matter in the angels, you couldn't have a *number* of angels, which is false. So the same conclusion as before.

16. Besides, there's no multiplying of things without matter except in terms of 'causing' and 'being caused', as Rabbi Moses (7) points out (*Dux neutrorum sive dubiorum*) (*Guide for the perplexed*) [Part 1, chapter 79]. If angels, then, are without matter, either they're not multiplied, or one causes another - and both options are false. So the same conclusion as before [No.14].

17. Further, created things are brought into being by God in order that divine goodness may be displayed in them. But divine goodness is displayed more perfectly in one angelic species than in one human species. No call, then, for proposing many species of angels.

18. Besides, different species differ, and get set opposite one another, due to 'differentiating characteristics'. But you can't designate enough 'differentiating characteristics' to cover the whole multitude of angels. It's not the case, then, that all angels are specifically different.

**But against that position:**

1. If any angels were the same *vis-a-vis* species, this would seem to be especially true of angels belonging to the one order. But angels belonging to the one order are not the same as far as species goes: in the same order are “first, middle, and last” angels, as Dionysius states in chapter 10 of his *Angelicae hierarchiae* (*Hierarchy of angels*) [PG 1, 194a], and 'species' isn't predicated of individual things under it on the basis of what's first and

what's later (*secundum prius et posterius*) - Aristotle affirms this in book 3 of the *Metaphysics* [999a 6]. So there aren't a number of angels of one species.

2. Again, it's apparent that only things that are perishable are multiplied numerically within one species - the specific nature, at risk in just one thing, is kept safe through its being in many. Now angels are imperishable. So there aren't many angels of one species.

3. Besides, the multiplying of individuals within one species comes about through the dividing up of matter (*per divisionem materiae*). Angels, however, are non-material: Augustine points out in book 13 of his *Confessions* (8) that, whereas matter is "near to nothingness", the angels are "near to God". Accordingly, for the angels there's no multiplying of individuals in the same species.

### **Response:**

People have expressed quite diverse views about the question before us. Some have stated that all spiritual substances are of one species. Others that all angels are of one hierarchy, or even of one order (9). Others again that all angels differ from one another in species. This last view seems correct to me for three reasons.

The first is based on *the nature of angelic substance*. One must say that angels are either simple forms existing in their own right without matter - the position endorsed above [article 1] - or that they're forms themselves composed of matter and form. Now, if an angel is a simple form separated from matter, it's impossible even to pretend ( *fingere*) that a number of angels belong to one species. This is so because any form at all, however matter-dependent and low in the scale of things, can't but remain one in a single species if it is affirmed as separated from matter either in reality or conceptually. Think, for example, of whiteness existing on its own apart from any subject: it won't be possible to maintain that there are several 'whitenesses', since we're well aware that *this* whiteness differs from *that* whiteness only by being in *this* or in *that* subject. And the situation would be similar if *human nature* were thought of in abstraction [from *human beings*]: it would be one only.

On the other hand, if an angel is a substance composed of matter and form, one is bound to say that the instances of matter of different angels are in some way distinct. Now, only two ways are found of distinguishing one instance of matter from another. One is based

on the characteristic idea of ‘matter’ and is in terms of matter’s relationship to differing actualisations (*secundum habitudinem ad diversos actus*); for, since matter’s characteristic idea is that of being *in potentiality*, and potentiality is understood in relationship to *actuality* (*ad actum*), it’s necessary that any distinctions amongst potentialities and instances of matter be acknowledged as relative to *actualisations* (*secundum ordinem ad actus*). For example, the matter of lower-level bodies, which is a potentiality for [new forms of] *being*, differs from the matter of the heavenly bodies, which is a potentiality for [new] *positions* (*ad ubi*). The second way of distinguishing [one instance of matter from another] is in terms of division based on quantity, in that matter existing under *these* dimensions is distinguished from matter existing under *other* dimensions.

Now, the first way of distinguishing [one instance of matter from another] causes diversity with respect to *genus*. According to Aristotle in book 5 of the *Metaphysics* [1024b 10], things diverse in terms of matter are different on the score of *genus*. The second way of distinguishing [one instance of matter from another] gives rise to diversity of individual things in the same species.

Now this second way can’t hold good in the case of different angels, since angels are non-corporeal and altogether free of quantitative dimensions. So it remains that, if there are numerous angels composed of matter and form, the first way of distinguishing the matter of one from the matter of another is found in them - and it follows that they differ not just in species but in *genus*.

The second reason [for holding to specific differences between angels] is taken from *the order of the universe*. It’s clear that the good of the universe is twofold: one that is separated, namely God, who is like the head of an army; and one included in things themselves, and this is the order or arrangement of the parts of the universe, rather as the order or arrangement of the parts of an army is the army’s good. Accordingly, the apostle [Paul] declares in chapter 13 [verse 1] of his Letter to the Romans that “Whatever things are from God are ordered.”

Now it’s a principle that the higher parts of the universe share more in the good of the universe that is its order or arrangement. But things amongst which there’s an order based on what they essentially are (*per se*), share more perfectly in the universe’s order or arrangement than do things amongst which there’s an order based only on what’s non-

essential (per accidens). Now it's clear that, amongst all the individual things belonging to one species, there's an order based only on what's non-essential: these things are at one as far as specific nature is concerned, but differ in respect of individuating factors and incidental features, which have a non-essential connection with the specific nature.

On the other hand, things that differ in species have an order based on what they are and their essential features (*ordinem habent per se et secundum essentialia principia*). For, amongst species of things, you have one transcending another, as also happens in the case of numbers - Aristotle reminds us of this in book 8 of the *Metaphysics* [1043b 36].

Now, amongst lower-level things - things that are producible and perishable, that make up *the least excellent part* of the universe, and participate least in [the universe's] order or arrangement - not all of them that are different are found to have an order based on what they are essentially. Some have an order based only on what is non-essential (per accidens) - individual things of the one species are like this. In *the higher part* of the universe, however, i.e. amongst the heavenly bodies, there's no non-essential order to be found, only the sort based on what-things-are (*solum per se*). For all the heavenly bodies differ from one another in species, and you don't find amongst them numerous individuals of the one species - there's only one sun and one moon, and it's the same for all the rest. Much more so, then, will *the highest part* of the universe be free of things ordered to each other through what's non-essential and not through what-they-are (*non per se*). So we have the situation for all the angels: they differ from each other in *species* in accordance with their greater or lesser excellence as forms pure and simple, having greater or lesser resemblance to God, who is actuality only and of infinite excellence.

The third reason [for holding to specific differences between angels] is drawn from *the perfection of angelic nature*. A thing is described as *perfect* when nothing that should belong to it is lacking. And the grade or level of any perfection can be determined from the contrasts (*ex extremis*) between things: God, who is at the very summit of ontological excellence, lacks nothing belonging to the entire scope of being in that He contains in Himself all the perfections of all things, simply and most excellently, as Dionysius notes (*De divinis nominibus*) (*Divine Names*) [chapter 5].

In contrast, any individual thing in the least excellent part of the universe - the region containing producible and perishable things (*generabilia et corruptibilia*) - is found to be perfect thanks to its having whatever belongs to it as *this individual thing*, not thanks to

its having all that belongs to *specific nature*, given that the specific nature (*natura suae speciei*) is found in other individual things as well. Clearly, this shows up *lack* of perfection, apparent not only in living things that are generated, one of which needs another of its species for sharing life, but also in all animals generated in any way at all from semen, in which the male requires the female of the species for procreating. And it extends further to all producible and perishable things for which a large number of individuals of the one species is needed to conserve through many things a 'specific nature' (*natura speciei*) that can't be conserved indefinitely through one thing, due to such a thing's liability to perish.

A more advanced grade or level of perfection is found in the higher part of the universe in which one individual thing - the sun, for example - is perfect in such a way that nothing at all belonging to the particular species is lacking to the individual thing. All the matter belonging to the species is confined within the one individual thing. And it's like this for the other heavenly bodies as well.

In the highest part of the created universe, which is the part most like God (*Deo propinquissima*) - the angels, in other words - it's even more the case that this perfection of having in one individual reality absolutely everything belonging to a whole specific nature (*ad totam speciem*) is to be found, with the consequence that there aren't a number of individual things in the one species.

God, however, who is at the very summit of ontological excellence, is to be equated with nothing else, not in terms of species or of genus or of any other univocal predicate at all.

**So:**

to 1: Augustine is speaking about angelic nature and human nature, not in relation to their natural being, but as oriented to bliss (*ad beatitudinem*). In this sense, some bearers of each nature have been lost. In connection with orientation to bliss, human nature is separated from every instance of angelic nature because every instance of angelic nature is fitted to attain to bliss, or irreparably fall short of it, in only one way: immediately upon its first choice. On the other hand, human nature [is fitted to do this] over the course of time. So Augustine talks about all the angels being of one nature on account of their having one mode of orientation to bliss, in spite of their differing in specific nature.

to 2: When we inquire about difference or agreement in respect of species, things are being considered in terms of their very natures (*secundum naturas ipsarum*). In these terms, one should not be speaking about all the angels being of one nature ‘very close’ (*propinquissima*) to God. On this basis, only the first angel was a nature very close to God - a [level of] nature in which there’s virtually no diversity, whether relative to species or relative to number.

to 3: Be-ing (*ipsum esse*) is related as actualising principle (*ut actus*) to both composite and non-composite natures. In composite natures, species is not determined by be-ing but by [substantial] form - ‘species’ is predicated in terms of what-a-thing-is (*quid est*), whereas ‘be-ing’ manifestly relates to the question whether-a-thing-is (*an est*). Nor in angelic substances is species determined by be-ing: it’s determined by non-composite forms existing in their own right, differences between which are based on an order of ontological excellence (*secundum ordinem perfectionis*), as was said [in the Response].

to 4: Just as a form which exists in a subject or in matter is individuated through its being in this, so is a separated form individuated in virtue of its *not* being fitted to exist *in* something. Just as *to be in this* [subject] excludes the commonality of a universal, which is predicated of many things, so does *not to be able* to be in some or other [subject]. To illustrate: *this whiteness* is not prevented from having under it many individual [white] things by reason of *whiteness*, which belongs to the idea of ‘general kind’, but by reason of its being in *this* [subject], which belongs to the idea of ‘individual’. Just so, the nature of *this* angel is not blocked from being in many things by reason of its being a *nature* in such-and-such an order of reality - this belongs to the idea of ‘general kind’ - but by reason of its *not* being fitted to be received in some or other subject (the ‘being fitted’ that belongs to the idea of ‘individual’).

to 5: Since affection follows knowledge, the wider the knowledge the more the affection following it relates to the general good; whilst the more special the knowledge, the more the affection following it relates to the particular good. Accordingly, amongst human beings the love of individual things is based on sense knowledge, whereas love of the general and unconditional good springs from intellective knowledge. Because, then, the higher angels are, the more universal their knowledge - Dionysius notes this in chapter 12 of his *Angelicae hierarchiae (Hierarchy of angels)* [PG 1, 298] - on that account their love overwhelmingly relates to the general good. So, if they differ in species, which pertains more to the perfection or good of the universe (as was said ), they love one

another more than [they would] if they were the same in species, when [love] would relate to the particular good of one species.

to 6: Our united-to-a-body sort of mind can't comprehend the separated substances in terms of their very essences so as to know *what* they are. This is because these essences surpass the kinds of sense-perceptible natures, and analogies based on them, from which our minds derive their knowledge. So the separated substances can't be defined by us properly, only by negations or by some activity of theirs. In this manner Damascene defines "angel", not by a definition getting down to the ultimate specific note (ad speciem specialissimam), but using a broad subordinate genus, itself admitting of 'genus' and 'species', thus enabling [some sort] of definition.

to 7: Difference of essence or nature plays no part in the way in which the divine Persons are distinguished [from one another]. Created natures can't accommodate this. So no inference can be drawn from it regarding creatures.

to 8: The phrase "more and less" is taken in two ways. Taken in one way it refers to a diverse mode of participating in one and the same form - something *more white*, for example, is said to be brighter than something *less white*. And, taken in this way, "more and less" doesn't imply diverse species. In the second way, the phrase "more and less" refers to a ranking of diverse forms, as *white* is said to be brighter than *ruby* or *green*. And, taken in this way, "more and less" does imply diversity of species. It's in this sense of "more and less" that angels are diverse in their natural spiritual gifts.

to 9: What constitutes something in a species is more excellent than what constitutes it in a genus, since the determinate [is more excellent] than the indeterminate - the two are related as actualising principle to potentiality (ut actus ad potentiam). But this mustn't be taken as meaning that what constitutes something in a species is always of a higher nature. This is clear from the species of non-rational animals. Species of the non-rational sort are not constituted through the addition of some X of a kind higher than sentient nature, which is what is most excellent in them, but through what determines them in respect of various levels of that nature (ad diversos gradus in illa natura). And one ought to speak in similar fashion about the intellectual nature that is common to the angels.

to 10: It doesn't seem to be a general truth that the less perfect [specific] difference of a

genus is found multiplied into many species. *Body*, for example, is divided into *living* and *non-living*; and there seem to be more species of living than of non-living bodies, particularly if the heavenly bodies are alive, and all the stars are specifically different from one another. And in plants and animals there's a vast diversity of species.

To get to the truth here, note that Dionysius seems to propose a view contrary to that of the Platonists. For the Platonists say that the closer substances are to the originating One, the fewer they are in number. On the other hand, in chapter 14 of his *Angelicae hierarchiae (Hierarchy of angels)* [PG 1, 322] Dionysius states that angels transcend in number the entire multitude of material things.

However, anyone can see from material things the truth in both these accounts because, amongst these things, the more excellent a body is found to be, the less does it have of matter, though it's more extended in terms of quantity (10). Now, number is in some sense the cause of continuous quantity, according as a unit constitutes a point and points [constitute] a line (to speak as the Platonists do). This scenario is continued across the whole sweep of reality (in *tota rerum universitate*) in that the more excellent some beings are, the greater their number as based on *form*, a fact noted relative to distinctions between species (11), which safeguards the opinion of Dionysius; and the smaller their number as based on *matter*, a fact noted relative to distinctions between individuals in the same species. This protects the opinion of the Platonists.

That there is only one species of rational animal, whereas there are many species of non-rational animals, arises from the following: the rational animal is constituted on the basis that bodily nature at its peak borders on the nature of spiritual substance at its lowest. And the highest level of a nature, as well as the lowest level [of another nature], is one only (although, from the standpoint of someone claiming that the heavenly bodies were alive, it could be said that there were numerous species of live rational beings).

to 11: Human beings belong amongst perishable creatures, which make up the least excellent part of the universe - the part in which things are found ordered not only on the basis of what they essentially are, but also of what is non-essential to them. So, in the Church militant, differences in terms of power and order don't bring about different species. It's otherwise, however, with the angels: they make up the most excellent part of the universe, as was said. In human beings, of course, there's an imperfect resemblance to angels, and what this is like has already been indicated. [See the Response, and

‘to 3’, ‘to 6’, ‘to 10’]

to 12: Things adorning the earth and the waters are perishable so require many instances of the same species, as was said. The heavenly bodies, however, form diverse species, as was also said. For light isn’t their substantial form: it’s an essentially perceptible quality - which can’t be said of any substantial form at all. Moreover, light isn’t of the same nature in every instance, as is clear from the fact that rays coming from different higher bodies bring about diverse effects.

to 13: Individuation amongst the angels isn’t due to matter but to the fact that they are subsistent forms in their own right, not destined to exist in a subject or matter, as was said.

to 14: Earlier philosophers asserted that the knower ought to be of the nature of the thing known. So Empedocles said [Aristotle, *On the soul*, 404b 13] that “Earth we know by Earth, and Water by Water.” To rule out this account, Aristotle proposed [*On the soul*, 429a 21] that any cognitive capacity in us, *qua* in potentiality, totally lacked the nature of the things knowable by it, as the pupil [of the eye] lacked colour. However, the sense *as actualised* (sensus in actu) is what-is-sensed *as actualised* (sensatum in actu), in virtue of the sense power’s being in actuality through being activated by the presentative form of what-is- perceptible (per hoc quod informatur specie sensibili). On the same basis, the intellect *as actualised* is what-is-thought-about *as actualised*, in virtue of its being activated by the presentative form of what-is-thinkable (in quantum informatur per speciem intelligibilem). “For stone is not in the mind, but the presentative form of stone (species lapidis)”, as Aristotle points out [*On the soul*, 431b 29] (12). Now something is actually-able-to-be-thought-about (est aliquid intelligibile in actu) through its being separated from matter. So Aristotle tells us [*On the soul*, 430a 2] that “In things that are without matter, what thinks is the same as what is thought about” (13). It’s not necessary, however, that an angel actually thinking [about an angel] be identical *in substance* with the angel-being-thought-about, on the ground that both are non-material. What *is* necessary is that the intellect of one be activated (formetur) through a [presentative] likeness of the other.

to 15: Number that comes about through dividing a continuum is a kind of quantity. It exists only in material substances. In the case of non-material substances, there’s a notion of ‘multitude’ going beyond any limits (quae est de transcendentibus), according

as the notions of ‘one’ and ‘many’ are found across the whole of being. Multitude in this sense results from distinctions based on *form*.

to 16: Some claim that a difference in terms of *cause* and *caused* has a multiplying effect amongst the separated substances. Their point is that diverse ranks or levels arise amongst them according as something *caused* ranks below its *cause*. If, then, we affirm diverse ranks or levels amongst non-material substances, due to [these substances] being placed in an order by the causal action of divine wisdom, the rationale for distinctions between them will remain the same, even though one of them isn’t the cause of another. (14)

to 17: Because any created nature you like is finite, it won’t as effectively reveal divine Goodness as will an array of [finite] natures. After all, what’s contained in God in unitary manner calls for a manifold of [finite] natures that possess it piecemeal. There had, then, to be lots of natures in the universe, even amongst the substances that are angels.

to 18: ‘Perfect’ and ‘less perfect’, or ‘surpassing’ and ‘surpassed’, are the conceptual currency for dealing with those oppositions that essentially differentiate the species of angels. It’s the same story for numbers, for ‘living’ and ‘non-living’, and for other things of this sort.

### Notes

1. Refer the second argument of the Response in article1, *supra*.
2. Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius (c.480-c.524AD) was an Italian statesman, and noted writer in the areas of logic, philosophy, and theology. He translated, and commented on, Aristotle’s *Perihermeneias* (*On interpretation*) and *Categories*, and commented on the Latin translation by Victorinus of Porphyry’s *Isagoge* (*Introduction* [to Aristotle’s works on logic] ). The writings of Boethius on conditional syllogistic reasoning were a major contribution to early developments in propositional logic. His most famous work was the *De consolazione philosophiae*, written during his imprisonment at Pavia whilst awaiting execution on a false charge of treason against Theodoric, the Ostrogoth king who ruled Italy from 493AD until his death in 526 AD.

In theology, he made a powerful contribution to debates about the Trinity and the Person

of Christ, and defended the established orthodox position against the Arians. This was not without political implications since the court of Theodoric at Ravenna was strongly Arian.

Boethius formulated three definitions that have become classical in philosophical and theological reflection: (1) the definition of “person” as “rationalis naturae individua substantia” (“an individual substance of a rational nature”) [*De duabus naturis Christi*, chap. 3, PL 64, 1343]; (2) the definition of “eternity” as “vitae interminabilis tota simul et perfecta possessio” (“the simultaneous and perfect possession of boundless life”) [*De consol. phil.*, book 5, prose 6, PL 63, 858]; (3) the definition of happiness (beatitudo) as a state: “status omnium bonorum aggregatione perfectus” (“the condition of possessing all goods perfectly combined”) [*De consol. phil.*, book 3, prose 2, PL 63, 724].

The *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* comments that “Like Porphyry, [Boethius] bequeathed to medieval philosophers an indecisiveness whether universals are real apart from the concrete existents in which they are embodied; the distinction between Being and Existence; and the reconciliation of providence with freedom by the doctrine that what is contingent to us is not so to God, who is timeless....Boethius was a major educator of the medieval west, initially as a logician and always as the author of *De consolatione philosophiae*.” (p.219)

3. For Damascene, refer article 1, note 6, *supra*.

4. For Gregory, refer article 6, note 14, *supra*.

5. According to the editors of the Marietti edition of the *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis*, the Pope Boniface mentioned in the objection is Boniface 11, Pope from 530AD to 532AD.

6. St Thomas discusses the idea of an ‘empyrean heaven’ in the *Summa Theologiae* 1a, question 66, article 3, after asking the question “Utrum caelum empyreum sit concreatum materiae informi” (“Whether the empyrean heaven was created at the same time as formless matter?”). (He also discussed this question in his *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, book2, distinction2, question 2.)

Thomas answers the question in the affirmative, but reveals a certain cautiousness

regarding the notion of an ‘empyrean heaven’. He attributed the idea to St Bede (c.673-735AD), the great Anglo-Saxon teacher, historian, and biblical exegete, and to Strabo (c.808-849AD), a scholar and monk originally from Reichenau, and also allowed for some earlier input from St Basil (c330-379AD).

Bede and Strabo postulated the empyrean heaven as the “locus Beatorum” - the “place where the Blessed are”. According to these authors (as reported by Thomas), “statim factum, angelis est repletum” - it was “filled with angels immediately upon being created.” St Thomas indicates that Bede and Strabo affirmed an empyrean heaven as part of their exegesis of the early verses of chapter 1 of *Genesis*. The empyrean heaven was created by God on the first day, with the “caelum sidereum” - the “starry firmament” - being created on the second day. St Basil, however, had been motivated to introduce the empyrean heaven when he was interpreting the text of *Genesis*, in order to avoid the idea that God’s creative work began from primeval darkness. “There was darkness over the deep”, as *Genesis* chapter 1, verse 2, states. Basil wanted to stop the Manichees using this text to claim that the God of the Old Testament was the “god of darkness”.

St Thomas was not impressed by anything said by Basil, Bede, or Strabo on this matter. “Hae autem rationes non sunt multum cogentes” were his words (“But these ideas are scarcely compelling”.) (See also, *op. cit.*, 1a, question 68, article 1, ad 1, for further discussion.). He took the following line in 1a, question 66, article 3:

Potest autem convenientior ratio sumi ex ipsa conditione gloriae. Expectatur enim in futura remuneratione duplex gloria, scilicet spiritualis, et corporalis, non solum in corporibus humanis glorificandis, sed etiam in toto mundo innovando. Inchoata est autem spiritualis gloria ab ipso mundi principio in beatitudine angelorum, quorum aequalitas sanctis promittitur (Lc 20, 36). Unde conveniens fuit ut etiam a principio corporalis gloria inchoaretur in aliquo corpore, quod etiam a principio fuerit absque servitute corruptionis et mutabilitatis, et totaliter lucidum; sicut tota creatura corporalis expectatur post resurrectionem futura. Et ideo illud caelum dicitur empyreum, idest *igneum*, non ab ardore, sed a splendore.

(A more appropriate idea can be drawn from the very condition of glory. In a future situation of reward, two sorts of glory are expected, namely spiritual and corporeal, with the latter not being confined to the glorification of human bodies, but extending to the renewal of the entire world. Spiritual glory was initiated at the very outset of the world in the bliss of the angels, equality with whom is promised to the saints (Luke 20, 36). So it was appropriate that, also from the very outset, corporeal glory get under way in something bodily which, from the outset, was not subject to break up and change, and was totally light-filled. This is what the whole corporeal creation is expected to be like after the resurrection. So that heaven is called “empyrean”, meaning “filled with fire”, not from flame, but from splendour.)

7. Moses Maimonides (1138-1204) was the greatest medieval Jewish philosopher and theologian, and also a Rabbi. He was born in Cordova, but eventually settled in Cairo where he became head of the Jewish community. He wrote both in Hebrew and in Arabic. His philosophical masterpiece, the *Guide for the perplexed*, originally written in Arabic and translated into Latin as *Dux neutrorum sive dubiorum*, was studied by St Thomas. The work influenced Thomas’s own thinking on such issues as the creation of the universe in time, arguments for the existence of God as the universe’s First Mover and First Cause, and God as ‘necessary being’.

In addition to arguments for God’s existence, *Guide for the perplexed* dealt with related questions such as the concept ‘God’, the problem of evil, and the ultimate purpose or *telos* of creation.

8. The reference here should be to book 12, not book 13, of St Augustine’s *Confessions*. The “near to nothingness” and “near to God” citations are taken from the text towards the end of chapter 7 of book 12.

9. It is sufficient to note here that talk about ‘hierarchies’ and ‘orders’ in relation to the angels is based on Scripture (e.g. Isaiah 6, 2; Ezekial 28,14; Ephesians 1, 21; Colossians 1,16), and on the systematising theological work of Pseudo-Dionysius (fl.c.500AD) in his

*Peri tes ouranias hierarchias (On the celestial [or angelic] hierarchy).* (For Pseudo-Dionysius, refer article 1, note 8, *supra*.)

According to Pseudo-Dionysius, the angels were constituted in three *hierarchies*, each containing three *orders*. The highest of the hierarchies contained the orders of Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones. The middle hierarchy contained the orders of Dominations, Virtues, and Powers. The lowest hierarchy contained the Principalities, Archangels, and Angels.

St Thomas provides a brilliant analysis of what Scripture and Pseudo-Dionysius have to say about the angels in his *Summa Theologiae* 1a, question 108, articles 1-8. His early reflections on this topic are to be found in his *Scriptum super Libros Sententiarum* book 2, distinction 9, *passim*.

10. St Thomas seems here to be drawing on what he accepted about the four elements. This included accepting that air, for example, was “more excellent” than earth or water because it had less matter, and was more “extended”, i.e. had greater scope and facility of movement.

11. Thomas connects the argument of this sentence to the argument of the previous sentence by assuming that *number* is a formal cause or form.

12. For use of the phrase “the presentative form of what-is-thinkable” to translate “species intelligibilis”, occurring in the Latin text in the phrase “per speciem intelligibilem” (with an analogous translation of “species sensibilis”, which occurs in the Latin text in the ablative form “specie sensibili”), refer note 7 of article 2, *supra*.

13. In the course of replying to objection 14, St Thomas follows Aristotle in pointing out that something is actually intelligible (intelligibile in actu), i.e. actually able-to-be-thought-about, in function of its being separated from matter (a materia separatum). This separation from matter is a feature an object has either intrinsically through its being non-material, e.g. the ‘separated substances’ or angels; or through the object’s being conceptually disengaged or abstracted from matter and material conditions - the object thought about being made present to the mind through a *universal* concept or idea.

Behind this position of Aristotle and St Thomas is their view that matter is *of itself* the

root principle of *indeterminacy* in things - it is of itself, literally, *a-morphous* or *form-less*, and must take on substantial form to constitute this or that material thing. On the other hand, only what is *determinate* can exist (the principle of identity requires this), whether in reality through *esse naturale*, or in the mind through *esse intentionale*. On this basis, *knowing* of whatever kind calls for the ‘leaving behind’ of matter in some or other way. And the extent of this ‘leaving behind’ - less in the case of the senses, more in the case of the intellect - determines the sort of knowing or awareness that takes place.

The other side of the same coin - the coin that is *cognition* - is that things are able to engage in the activity of knowing only to the extent to which they are free from the essentially limiting effects of matter.

. A Thomistic ‘locus classicus’ on this point is the perspicuous analysis offered by St Thomas in the *Summa Theologiae* 1a, question 14, article 1, where he asks “Utrum in Deo sit scientia” (“Is there knowing in God?”):

Considerandum est quod cognoscentia a non cognoscentibus in hoc distinguuntur, quia non cognoscentia nihil habent nisi formam suam tantum; sed cognoscentia natum est habere formam etiam rei alterius, nam species cogniti est in cognoscente. Unde manifestum est quod natura rei non cognoscentis est magis coarctata et limitata; natura autem rerum cognoscentium habet maiorem amplitudinem et extensionem. Propter quod dicit Philosophus, 111 *De anima*, quod *anima est quodammodo omnia*. Coarctatio autem formae est per materiam. Unde et supra (q.7, aa.1, 2) diximus quod formae, secundum quod sunt magis immateriales, secundum hoc magis accedunt ad quandam infinitatem. Patet igitur quod immaterialitas alicuius rei est ratio quod sit cognoscitiva; et secundum modum immaterialitatis est modus cognitionis. Unde in 11 *De anima* dicitur quod plantae non cognoscunt, propter suam materialitatem. Sensus autem cognoscitivus est, quia receptivus est specierum sine materia, et intellectus adhuc magis cognoscitivus, quia magis separatus est a materia et immixtus, ut dicitur in 111 *De anima*. Unde, cum Deus sit in summo immaterialitatis, ut ex superioribus (q.7, a.1) patet, sequitur quod ipse sit in summo cognitionis.

(It should be noted that beings that are aware or know are marked off from beings that aren't aware or able to know in that beings in this latter category have nothing beyond their own form or nature; whereas the 'knower' is so constituted as to take in the form or nature of something else as well, for the form (species) of what is known is in the knower. So it's clear that the nature of a thing incapable of knowing is more confined and restricted; on the other hand, the nature of 'knowers' has greater range and reach. For this reason,

Aristotle comments in book 3 of his *On the soul* (431b 21) that the mind is, in a sense, *everything*. The confining of form or nature, however, is due to matter. Accordingly, we said above (qu.7, arts 1&2) that, the more free of matter forms are, the more they approach a sort of infinity. It's plain, then, that a thing's freedom from matter (immaterialitas) is the reason why that thing is capable of knowing; and its mode or manner of knowing is correlative to its mode of being free from matter. So, in book 2 of *On the soul* (424a 18) it's stated that plants are not 'knowers' on account of their materiality. Sense, on the other hand, is able to know because it's receptive of forms without matter; and intellect is even more able to know because it's even more separated or distinct from matter, and unmixed with it, as indicated in book 3 of *On the soul* (429a 18). Since, then, God is at the utmost extreme of freedom from matter, as was shown above (qu.7, art.1), it follows that He is also at the utmost extreme of awareness or knowing.)

14. The basis of distinguishing separated substances or angels from one another remains the same in that it remains one of *specific differences* between them, arising ultimately from the causal activity of divine Wisdom.

## ARTICLE 9

The ninth issue to be considered is this: **Is the receptive intellect (1) one in all human beings?**

It seems that it is:

1. Augustine affirms in his book *De quantitate animae* (*On the soul's greatness*) [PL 32, 1073] that "If I were to say that there are many souls, I should laugh at myself." It seems laughable, then, to speak of there being many souls with intellects.
2. Again, in things that exist without matter, there's only one individual in each species, as was shown [article 8]. But the receptive intellect, or intellective soul, is a spiritual substance not composed of matter and form, as was shown earlier [article 1]. Therefore there is only one intellective soul, or receptive intellect, in the entire human species.
  - But [the respondent] said that, although the intellective soul didn't have matter *from which* it was made, it did have matter *in which* it existed, namely a body, and that intellective souls were multiplied on the basis of their bodies being multiplied. On the contrary:
3. When a cause is removed, so is its effect. Accordingly, if multiplying bodies is the cause of souls' being multiplied, then, when these bodies are removed, it's not possible for *many* souls to remain.
4. Further, individuation involves a further determining of essential principles - it is, for example, of the nature of *human being* that it be made up of soul and body, and of the nature of Socrates that he be made up of *this* soul and *this* body, as Aristotle makes clear in book 7 of his *Metaphysics* [1035b 29]. But *body* is not of the essence of *soul*. It's impossible, then, that a soul be individuated by a body; so souls won't be multiplied due to bodies' being multiplied.
5. Moreover, Augustine (2) states in the *Contra Felicianum* (*Against Felicianus*) [PL42, 1167] that, "If we inquire into the origin of the power that imparts life (*animantis potentiae*), note that the soul is first in the mother, and appears to arise anew in the offspring."; and he is speaking about "the soul through which the mother is made alive", as he immediately adds. From this it's evident he's saying that it's the *same* soul in both mother and child - and his reasoning can be widened to cover all human beings.
6. Besides, if the receptive intellect were one thing in me and another thing in you, it would be necessary for what-is-thought-about to be one thing in me and another thing in you, since what-is-thought-about is in the intellect. And, on that basis, what-is-thought-about would be numbered off through the numbering off of individual human beings. But things that are numbered off through the numbering off of individuals have a thought-about-feature common to all of them. The consequence will be a thought-about-feature of the prior thought-about-feature *ad infinitum*. But this is impossible. So there

isn't one receptive intellect in me and another in you.

7. Again, given that knowledge is caused in the student by the teacher, if it were not the case that there is one receptive intellect for all human beings, it would be necessary either that numerically the same knowledge which is in the teacher would flow into the student; or that the teacher's knowledge would cause that of the student, just as the fire's heat causes heat in bits of firewood; or that to learn something would be nothing else than to recollect it. For, if the student possesses *ahead of learning it* the knowledge he/she 'learns', then 'to learn' is 'to recollect'. On the other hand, if the student doesn't first possess that knowledge, then either he/she acquires it as existing *in* someone else first, namely in the teacher, or not as existing in someone else first, in which case it must be caused in the student as something completely new (*de novo*) *by* someone else.

However, these three options are impossible: Knowledge is an incidental feature or *accident*, so numerically the same knowledge can't pass across from subject to subject - Boethius pointed out [*Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, book 1, PL 64, 173] that accidents can be destroyed, but can't be transposed. Likewise, it's impossible that the teacher's knowledge cause knowledge in the student, both because knowledge isn't a causally active quality, and because the teacher's words do no more than awaken the student to do his or her own thinking, as Augustine remarks in the *De magistro (On the teacher)* [*passim*]. And to assert that 'to learn' is 'to recollect' contradicts Aristotle in book 1 of the *Posteriora analytica (Later analytics)* [71a]. So there aren't different receptive intellects in human beings.

8. Further, every cognitive power embodied in matter knows only those things which have a natural affinity with the matter in which it is embodied; sight, for example, knows only colours - they have an affinity with the eye's pupil which takes in colours on account of its transparency. But the receptive intellect doesn't take in only those things which have an affinity either with the whole body or with some or other part of it. So the receptive intellect isn't a cognitive power existing in bodily matter, neither in the body as a whole nor in any part of it. There's no question, then, of its being multiplied on the basis of bodies' being multiplied.

9. Besides, if the intellective soul or receptive intellect is multiplied on the basis of bodies' being multiplied, this is only because it is the form or actualising principle of the body. But it can't be the form of the body since, as many claim, it is composed of matter and form, and what is composed of matter and form can't itself be the form of anything. So the intellective soul or receptive intellect can't be multiplied by reason of there being a multitude of bodies.

10. Moreover, as Cyprian (3) remarks [*Letter to Magnus*, PL 3, 1143], the Lord ordered his disciples not to enter the region of the Samaritans because of their sin of schism - the ten tribes had withdrawn from the kingdom of David, afterwards establishing for themselves in Samaria a capital and a kingdom. However, at the time of Christ, the same population was there as had been before. Now, population is related to population as human being to human being and soul to soul. So, by parity of reasoning, there's one

soul in the [population] that first existed, and in another which followed later; and, by the same reasoning, one and the same soul in all human beings taken severally.

11. Again, a non-essential feature or accident depends more on its subject than form does on matter, since it's form that imparts be-ing to matter absolutely (simpliciter), whilst an accident doesn't impart be-ing to its subject absolutely. But one accident can belong to many subjects, just as one time does to many movements, as Anselm notes [*Dialogue on truth, chap.14*, PL 158, 486]. Therefore, even more so can one soul belong to many bodies - and there's no need for many receptive intellects.

12. Besides, the intellective soul is more powerful than the merely activating soul. Yet this latter soul is able to activate something outside the body whose form it is - Augustine argues in book 6 of his *Music* [chap.8, 21] that visual rays are brought into action by the soul of someone seeing and, though produced at a distance, reach all the way to the thing seen. Therefore, even more so can the intellective soul bring into actuality other bodies in addition to the body in which it exists.

13. Further, if the receptive intellect is multiplied on the basis of bodies' being multiplied, it must be the case that the-presentative-forms-of-what-is-thinkable (species intelligibiles), which are in the receptive intellect both in me and in you, are also multiplied on the basis of bodies' being multiplied. But a general idea (intentio communis) can be abstracted from all the forms multiplied on the basis of the multiplication of bodies. So, from forms thought about by the receptive intellect, some or other general idea can be framed. And, by the same reckoning, since that thought-about idea is multiplied according as the receptive intellect is multiplied, yet another thought-about idea will be abstracted *ad infinitum*. Since this is impossible, we're bound to say that there is one receptive intellect in everyone.

14. Besides, all human beings agree on first principles (consentiunt in primis principiis). But this would not be so unless that by which they know first principles were one ability, shared by all human beings. But we're talking here about the receptive intellect. So there's one receptive intellect in everyone.

15. Again, no form *qua* individual and multiplied by matter is actually able to be thought about. But the receptive intellect *qua* actually thinking is an intellect in the actualised state (intellectus in actu); and an intellect in the actualised state is identically the thing-thought-about in an actualised state, as Aristotle points out in book 3 of the *De anima* [431a 1] - just as a sense in the actualised state is what-is-sensed in the actualised state. So the receptive intellect is neither made individual nor multiplied by matter and, therefore, is one in all human beings.

16 Besides, what's received is in the recipient in a way attuned to the recipient (per modum recipientis). Now, the-presentative-form-of-what-is-thinkable (species intelligibilis) is received in the intellect as something actually thought about, and isn't made individual by matter. So the receptive intellect isn't made individual by matter, either; and neither is it multiplied through the multiplication of matter in bodies.

17. Further, the receptive intellect of a Socrates or a Plato is aware of its own nature, since intellect is self-reflective. Accordingly, the very nature of the receptive intellect is something actually thought about. But no form *qua* individual and multiplied by matter is actually able to be thought about. Therefore, the receptive intellect is neither made individual nor multiplied by matter - so it remains that there's one receptive intellect for all human beings.

**But against that position:**

1. Chapter 7, verse 9, of the *Apocalypse* [of John] records that "After these things, I saw a vast crowd that no one was able to count." Now that crowd wasn't of human beings enjoying bodily life, but of souls separated from the body. Therefore there exist many intellectual souls, not only now when they are united to the body, but also when separated from the body.

2. Moreover, in the *Contra Felicianum (Against Felicianus)* [PL 42, 1166], Augustine (4) says "Let's pretend - as many actually hold - that there is a general soul in human-kind." And adds after that: "When we propose such things, we're proposing things that must be fought against." So the position that there is one soul for absolutely everybody is not to be endorsed.

3. Again, the intellectual soul is more closely united to the human body than the mover of a heavenly body to the heavenly body. But, in commenting on book 3 of [Aristotle's] *De anima (On the soul)*, Averroes remarks that, were there many bodies being moved, there would be many movers in each heavenly sphere. Even more so, then, are there many intellectual souls, since there are many human bodies - and not just one receptive intellect for the lot.

**Response:**

It should be said that, in order to clarify what's involved in this question, one must first understand what's intended by the terms "receptive intellect" and "agent intellect". It has to be noted at the start that Aristotle [*De anima (On the soul)*, 429a 13] was disposed to consider the intellect by analogy with the senses. Now, as far as the senses are concerned, at one time we're found to be only potentially perceiving things, at another time, actually perceiving them. So we're bound to acknowledge in ourselves some *sense capacity* in virtue of which we are *potentially* perceiving things, and which must be in potentiality to the forms of perceptible things (*ad species sensibilium*), and have none of these forms in an actualised state *in its own nature*; otherwise, were the senses to possess [by nature] in an actualised state what's perceptible, as earlier philosophers had claimed, it would follow that we were incessantly *actually* perceiving things.

In similar fashion, at one time we're found to be *actually* thinking, at another time only *potentially* doing so. So, again, we're bound to acknowledge some *capacity* in virtue of which we're thinking *in potentiality* - a capacity whose essence or nature has in it noth-

ing of the natures of perceptible things that we're able to think about (5). It's in a state of receptivity relative to all of them and, for this reason, is called the *receptive* intellect; just as any of the senses, insofar as it's in potentiality, could be called a *receptive* sense.

Any sense, however, that is in potentiality is brought into an actualised state through actually perceptible things which exist outside the mind. So there's no need in this case to posit an *agent* sense. Similarly, there would be no need to posit an *agent* intellect if *universal* objects - these are *actually* thinkable - existed in their own right outside the mind, as Plato asserted they did. Aristotle, on the other hand, argued that they had no existence apart from perceptible realities; that they were not, then, *actually* thinkable; and that it was necessary to posit some capacity or power that would make things *potentially* thinkable become *actually* thinkable, by abstracting the forms (species) of things from matter and individualising conditions. This capacity or power is designated the *agent* intellect.

In commenting on book 3 of Aristotle's *De anima (On the soul)*, Averroes, when dealing with the *receptive* intellect, reckoned that it was some kind of substance ontologically (secundum esse) separated from the embodied being of humans, but that it was continuous with us human beings through the play of our images (per phantasmata). Moreover, there was just one receptive intellect for all of us.

Now, that this position is at variance with [Catholic] faith is easy enough to see: for it does away with the notion of rewards and punishments for individuals in a future life. What has to be shown, however, is that this position is impossible on its own terms in light of the true principles of philosophy. For it was established above [article 2], when the union of spiritual substance with body was under discussion, that, if one went along with this position, the upshot would be that no *individual* human being would *think about* anything. But, allowing for the sake of argument that some or other individual person were able to think by means of an intellect separated in the suggested manner, three difficulties would follow, given the proposal that this separated intellect is *one* receptive intellect for all of us, by means of which all of us do our thinking.

In the first place, because it's not possible for one capacity or power to have several actions at the same moment and together (simul et semel) in respect of the same object: It may happen that two human beings at the same moment and together think about one and the same thinkable object (unum et idem intelligibile). If, then, each of them thinks by means of just *one* receptive intellect, it would follow that numerically one and the same intellectual action would be the intellectual action of both of them. It's as though two people were seeing by means of *one* eye, in which case the seeing of *each* of them would be the *same* seeing - a rank impossibility (6). Nor can it be objected that *my* actual thinking is different from *your* actual thinking, due to there being a different play of imagery in each case. The reason is that the play of imagery is not what's actually thought about. What's actually thought about is *what is abstracted from the play of imagery*, and this is the *conceptual expression or word* (verbum). So the difference in terms of imagery lies outside the intellect's action, and can't serve to make it different [in different people] (7).

Secondly, because it's impossible for what imparts a specific nature to individual things of the same species to be *numerically* one in them. If two horses, say, were *numerically* the same in respect of what gave them the specific nature 'horse', it would follow that they were *one* horse (full stop!), and that's simply impossible. For this reason, it's stated in book 7 of the *Metaphysics* [1035b 30] that the inner causes (principia) giving rise to a specific nature give rise to an *individual* [of the species] according as they are made determinate. For example, if the notion 'human being' is of something composed of soul and body, the notion of '*this* human being' is of something composed of *this* soul and *this* body (8). So it is that the inner causes of any specific nature at all must be numerically multiplied (plurificari) when there's a plurality of individuals of the same species.

Now, what imparts a specific nature to something is known from the distinctive activity consequent upon that specific nature - rather as we decide about a lump of gold's being genuinely gold from its having what is characteristic of gold. The distinctive activity of the human species, however, is *to think* (intelligere). Accordingly, in book 10 of the *Ethics* [1178a 5-8], Aristotle construes our ultimate happiness or bliss in terms of this activity. But the source of this activity is not the *passive* intellect (intellectus passivus), i.e. the cogitative power (vis cogitativa) (9), or any sentient appetitive capacity - powers sharing in some fashion in rationality - since the activity of these powers is the activity of a bodily structure; whereas *to think* simply can't be the activity of a bodily structure, as Aristotle shows in book 3 of his *De anima* (*On the soul*) [429a 8 - 430a 8] (10). So it remains that it's *receptive* intellect in virtue of which *this* human being takes on a specifically human nature, not the *passive* intellect, as Averroes makes out [in commenting on book 3 of the *De anima*]. Therefore, what also remains is the impossibility of there being just *one* receptive intellect in all human beings.

Thirdly, it would follow that the receptive intellect would not take in any forms abstracted from our play of imagery (a phantasmatus nostris), if there were just one intellect for all human beings, those currently alive and those who once were alive. The reason is that many human beings have gone before us - people who thought about no end of things. And the consequence, in respect of all those things these people knew, would be the receptive intellect's being *in an actualised state*, and not in potentiality, relative to taking in these things - nothing, after all, takes in or receives what it *already* possesses (11). A further consequence would be that, if we're thinking and knowing (intelligentes et scientes) by means of the receptive intellect, this wouldn't really amount to fresh *knowledge* in us, only to *recall*. Moreover, it's altogether unacceptable that, if the receptive intellect is ontologically a separated substance, it be brought into actuality by the play of imagery, since what's more excellent amongst realities isn't in need of what's less excellent to bring it to fulfillment. For, just as it would be unacceptable to say that heavenly bodies are brought to actual fulfillment by taking on something from bodies on a lower level, in similar fashion (and even more so) is it impossible for any separated substance to be brought to actual fulfillment by taking on something from the play of imagery.(12)

It's also plain that this position [of one intellect for all human beings] is inconsistent with

Aristotle's own words. For, when he begins to inquire about the receptive intellect, he describes it from the outset as a *part of the soul*, saying [book 3 of the *De anima*, 429a 10]: "Now, regarding the *part of the soul* by which the soul both knows and understands...". However, wishing to investigate the *nature* of the receptive intellect, he raises a sort of doubt, namely whether the intellective part is separable from other parts of the soul in itself, as Plato claimed, or only conceptually. He puts this as follows [429a 11]: "...whether it exists as something separable [from other parts of the soul], or is inseparable in terms of nature, but separable conceptually." And from this it is apparent that, whichever of the options is adopted, the view he holds about the receptive intellect will stand. On the other hand, if the position under discussion were true, the option of the receptive intellect's being only *conceptually* separable would not stand. So the position under discussion is not that of Aristotle. Later he adds also [429a 23] that the receptive intellect is "that by which the soul thinks and supposes", and there are many other remarks of this sort. And from all of these he clearly gives it to be understood that the receptive intellect is something belonging to the soul, and isn't a separated substance.

**So:**

to 1: What Augustine regards as laughable is maintaining that there are many souls belonging to different human beings, in the sense that these souls differ numerically and *specifically*; and especially the opinion of the Platonists who assert one common subsistent reality above all the individuals that belong to one species.

to 2: Angels don't have matter *from which* they are, and they also don't have matter *in which* they are. Souls, on the contrary, do have matter *in which* they are. So angels can't be multiplied within the one species, but you can have as many souls as you like within the one species.

to 3: The relationship the body bears to the be-ing (esse) of the soul extends to the soul's individual identity - after all, each thing's oneness and being spring from the same source. The soul, however, acquires its be-ing on the basis of being united to a body, with which it jointly constitutes one nature of which each is a component. Nonetheless, because the intellective soul is a form surpassing the capacity of a body, it possesses its be-ing in a way transcending the body; so the soul's be-ing survives the body's destruction. In similar fashion, souls are multiplied thanks to bodies, but removal of the latter doesn't imperil multiplication of the former.

to 4: Although body is not of part of the nature of soul, nonetheless soul is essentially *related* to body, due to its being essential to soul that it be the form of a body; so it is that, in defining 'soul', 'body' must be mentioned. Accordingly, just as it belongs to the concept 'soul' that soul be the form of body, so likewise does it belong to the concept of '*this* soul', insofar as it's *this* soul, that it be related to *this* body.

to 5: Augustine is supposing the position of those claiming that there is a general soul for everyone. What precedes his statement makes this clear.

to 6: Averroes seems to grant special force to this objection. According to him, if the receptive intellect were not one in all human beings, what-is-thought-about (*res intellecta*) would be individuated and numbered off through the individuating and numbering off of particular human beings, and so would be something only *potentially*, not actually, thought about. So the first thing to be shown is that these difficulties follow no less for proponents of the ‘one receptive intellect for all’ thesis than for proponents of the ‘receptive intellect multiplied in many’ thesis.

In connection with individuation, first of all, it’s clear that a form existing in some individual subject is made individual by that subject in the same way, whether the subject is only one in the one species, as the sun is, say; or many in one species, as pearls are. In both cases individuation [of form] is obvious. And it has to be said that the receptive intellect is a single individual ‘something’ (*quoddam individuum singulare*) - actions, after all, spring from the single individual. Whether, then, the receptive intellect is only one in the one species, or many, what-is-thought-about will be made individual in it on the same basis.

In connection with multiplication [of what’s-thought-about], it’s evident that, if there aren’t many receptive intellects in the human species, it’s still the case that there are many intellects in the universe, and many of these think about one and the same object. The same doubt will remain, then, whether what-is-thought-about is one or many in diverse intellects. So [Averroes] can’t establish his position this way since, granted this position, the same difficulties will remain.

Accordingly, to solve the problem before us, it must be noted that, if it’s appropriate to talk about the intellect in terms paralleling those we use about the senses - the tactic Aristotle adopts in book 3 of his *De anima (On the soul)* - one should say that what-is-thought-about isn’t related to the receptive intellect as a presentative-form-of-what is thinkable (*species intelligibilis*). Such a form is that *by which* the receptive intellect is actualised, and is related to it only as the formal or specifying principle of its thinking. On the other hand, what-is-thought-about is something arranged (*constitutum*) or prepared (*formatum*) through an intellectual process, whether this process involves a simple quiddity or nature, or whether it involves a propositional affirmation or negation.

Aristotle identifies two activities of the intellect in book 3 of the *De anima (On the soul)*. He calls one of them ‘the thinking of indivisibles’ (*intelligentiam indivisibilium*), by which the intellect grasps the ‘what-it-is-to-be’ of some or other thing (*quod quid est alicuius rei*) - what the Arabic philosophers call ‘forming up’ or ‘imagining through the intellect’. He regards the other as the affirming and negating activity of mind - the Arabs call this ‘disposition to believe’ (*credulitatem*) or ‘belief’ (*fidem*).

For both of these activities, however, a presentative-form-of-what-is-thinkable (*species intelligibilis*) is first required, by which the receptive intellect is brought from potentiality to actuality. The receptive intellect can, of course, be active only to the extent to which it is in actuality; just as sight’s seeing calls first for its being in actuality through a presentative-form-of-what-is-visible (*per speciem visibilem*). Now the presentative-form-of-

what-is-visible doesn't present itself as *what* is seen, but as that *by which* something is seen. The situation is similar for the receptive intellect, except that the receptive intellect can reflect on itself and its presentative form - something sight can't do.

So a-thing-thought-about by two intellects is in a certain fashion one and the same, and also in a certain fashion multiple - in relation to *what is known* it's one and the same, and in relation to the *actual knowing* it's multiple. This is like two people staring at a wall: on the side of *what's seen* it's one and the same object, whilst on the side of the acts of staring, there's multiplicity. Now the situation would be altogether like this in relation to the intellect if - as the Platonists insisted - what someone is thinking about were to subsist in the same way outside the mind, just as something that's seen does.

In Aristotle's view, however, a considerable difficulty is raised by this, although careful consideration shows some common ground. The difference between Aristotle and Plato lies in Plato's positing that *what* someone is thinking about has *outside the mind* the same mode of existing it has in the intellect engaged with it - it's something abstract and shareable (*communis*). For Aristotle, *what* someone is thinking about exists outside the mind but differently: it's thought about *abstractly*, but exists *concretely* (concrete). But, just as Plato accepted that the thing itself that's being thought about exists outside the mind, so also did Aristotle.

Evidence for this comes from the fact that neither of them maintained that our systematic knowledge or science deals with what is found in our minds, as with what is substantially real. But Plato, of course, saw our systematic knowledge or science as dealing with separated forms, whilst Aristotle, on the contrary, saw it as dealing with the quiddities or natures of things existing in these things. Now 'the state of being universal' (*universalitatis*), which involves shareableness and abstraction, is a consequence only of our mode of thinking, in that we think abstractly and generally. However, Plato has it that it's a consequence of the very mode of existing of separated forms; so he maintained that universals subsist in reality, something Aristotle rejected.

On this basis it should be clear how a multiplicity of intellects is prejudicial neither to the 'being universal', nor to the shareableness, nor to the oneness of what-is-being-thought-about..

to 7: A teacher's causing knowledge in a student is not at all like a fire's causing heat in bits of firewood - its like a doctor's causing health in a patient: he does this in as much as he supplies certain aids which nature draws on to bring about health. On that account, we say that the doctor proceeds along the same lines as nature itself in the domain of healing. Now, just as it's the inner nature [of the patient] that's principally involved in the healing process, likewise the element principally involved in causing knowledge is something interior, namely the illuminating power of the agent intellect (*lumen intellectus agentis*) (13). It's by means of this power that knowledge is caused in us when we apply general principles to particular objects that we learn about as we meet with them experientially (*per experientiam*). In similar fashion, a teacher draws on general principles to reach specific conclusions; so Aristotle says in book 1 of the *Posteriora analy-*

*tica (Later analytics)* [71b 18] that “a demonstration is a syllogism productive of systematic knowledge.”

to 8: This line of reasoning tripped up Averroes: he thought that, because Aristotle said the receptive intellect was ‘separate’, the meaning was that the receptive intellect had separate real existence (*separatus secundum esse*), consequently excluding multiplicity based on the multiplicity of bodies. But Aristotle’s meaning was that the receptive intellect was a power of the soul, and wasn’t the actualising principle of any bodily structure at all, in the sense of having its activity through a bodily structure as, say, the power of sight has in being an organic power operative through a bodily structure. So, since the receptive intellect’s activity isn’t undertaken through a bodily structure, there’s no demand that its knowing be restricted only to things that have an affinity either with the body as a whole or with some part of it.

to 9: The opinion that the soul is composed of matter and form is totally false and unacceptable. There would be no question of its being the form or actualising principle of the body were it composed of matter and form. Of course, if the soul were the form of the body only *vis-a-vis* its *form*, it would follow that one and the same form would be actualising different matter of diverse sorts, namely the soul’s own ‘spiritual’ matter, as well as physical matter. But this is impossible, since a distinctive actualising principle is correlative to a distinctive potentiality (*cum proprius actus sit propriae potentiae*). Moreover, the composite of matter and form wouldn’t be the soul either, only its form. For, when we talk about ‘soul’, we understand by this something that is the *form* of the body. But, if the form of the soul [assuming the soul to be composite] were the body’s form, with its distinctive [spiritual] matter as intermediary, then, just as colour is an actualising factor of a body with the body’s surface as intermediary, so also the whole [composite] soul could be called the form of the body. Yet this must be ruled out since we understand by ‘matter’ something that involves potentiality only; and what involves potentiality only can’t be the actualising principle of anything - and this is precisely what a *form* is. Of course, were someone to use the term “matter” to designate some or other actualising principle, this should be disregarded: there’s nothing to stop what *we* call an actualising principle being called ‘matter’ by someone else, just as what we call a *stone* can be called by someone else a *donkey*.

to 10: The river Seine is not *this* river because of *this* water flowing down it, but because of *this* source and *this* river bed; so it’s always regarded as the same river in spite of different water flowing down it (14). And it’s like this for a population: it’s the same population, not because of any sameness of soul or of persons, but because of the same dwelling place; or, even more, because of the same laws and the the same style of living, as Aristotle explains in book 3 of his *Politics*.

to 11: Time is related to only one movement as non-essential feature or accident to subject, namely to the movement of the first moved-and-moving sphere (*ad motum primi mobilis*) (15), by which all other movements are measured. Time is related to all other movements as measure to measured, rather as an ell (16) is related to a wooden rod as its subject, but to a piece of cloth measured by the rod-measure as to something that’s

measured only. So it doesn't follow that one non-essential feature or accident can exist in many subjects.

to 12: The truth of the matter is that seeing is not brought about through rays projected outside the body: Augustine merely put this out as the opinion of others (17). However, with this said, the soul might still bring into action rays going in all directions outside the body, not as totally extraneous items but as having continuity with the originating body.

to 13: From what has already been said it's clear that what-is-thought-about is made individual or multiple only in relation to the activity of the intellect. Now, there's nothing problematic about directly abstracting from something-thought-about (*qua* thought-about) something *further* that's thought about - we do this when, say, from 'someone who's thinking' we abstract just 'capacity to think' (*intellectus*). And this scarcely undermines the notion of 'being universal': it's quite incidental to 'human being' or to the idea of 'species' that it's being thought about by *me*. Indeed, it doesn't matter at all whether I or someone else does the thinking when 'human being' or 'species' is being thought about.

to 14: Consensus regarding first principles isn't brought about by oneness of receptive intellect but by the likeness of nature in virtue of which all of us tend towards the same things. It's like all sheep being of one accord in regarding the wolf as dangerous - but no one goes on to assert there's only one mind for the lot of them.

to 15: Being-something-individual doesn't as such clash with being-actually-thought-about. Separated substances, after all, are actually-thought-about even though they're *individual* realities - which they must be to be active, since actions belong to individual things. But being something *material* clashes with being-actually-thought-about (18); so individual forms made individual through matter are not *actually*, only *potentially*, able to be thought about. But the intellectual soul isn't made individual in this way through matter so as to become an [intrinsically] matter-dependent form. This point has special reference to intellect, in terms of which the intellectual soul transcends the whole range of physical matter (19). Rather, it's made individual by physical matter, as we've said, insofar as it has a *disposition* to be the form of *this* body. Of course, this does nothing to stop the receptive intellect of *this* person from being something-actually- thought-about nor, similarly, all that's received into this intellect.

- What has just been said indicates the solution to the remaining two objections.

## NOTES

1. In the language of St Thomas, the intellect is said to be ‘in potentia’ to taking in all sense-perceptible things - “ad omnia [sensibilia]” - and, hence, by a play on the Latin words, is called the ‘intellectus *possibilis*’, i.e. the ‘be able’ intellect - the intellect with the ‘potentia’, i.e. the potentiality or capacity, to be-able-to-be (noetically) all perceptible things. The English terms “receptivity” and “receptive” capture the point of the word play involving “potentia” and “possibilis”, and “receptive” avoids any ambiguity that might arise from using the English word “possible”.

In his *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* Brian Davies opts for “receptive intellect” in preference to the (perhaps ambiguous) transliteration “possible intellect” for “intellectus possibilis” (see, e.g. pp.125-126).

It is surprising, however, to see Davies go on to endorse what he calls “Anthony Kenny’s neat phrase”, namely “the storehouse of those ideas once abstracted [by the agent intellect]” (see p.69 of Kenny’s *Aquinas*) to describe the role of the receptive intellect. The static connotations of the term “storehouse” do little justice to the vitality or dynamism of the receptive intellect in its active response to reception of the ‘species intelligibilis’ - the presentative-form-of-what-is-thinkable - which is produced by the *agent* intellect in disengaging intelligible content from sense-experience. See note 6 of article 2, *supra*, and note 18 of the present article, *infra*.

Related statements such as Brian Davies “...the agent intellect abstracts from sense-experience of particular things to form universal *ideas*” (*op. cit.*, p.126, my italics), and Anthony Kenny’s “It was the agent intellect which was the human capacity to abstract universal *ideas* from particular sense-experience” (*op. cit.*, p.69, my italics) are questionable. They introduce confusion into these authors’ accounts of what St Thomas has to say about the workings of the human intellect. (It might be added that there is nothing in what Kenny has said in his later work *Aquinas on Mind* to indicate any dispelling of that confusion. See in particular p.43 and pp.46-7.)

Why make this charge? In Thomas’s philosophical psychology, the role of the agent intellect is to ‘de-contextualise’ from the material context offered through the senses an intelligible or ‘thinkable’ content or object which is made present to the *receptive* intellect as the ‘species intelligibilis’ - the presentative-form-of-what-is-thinkable (see notes 6 and 7 of article 2, *supra*). This is in no sense an ‘idea’, as Davies and Kenny propose. The production of an *idea* or *concept* is the vital response of the *receptive* intellect to its ‘reception’, or taking in, of the ‘species intelligibilis’. This idea or concept is the receptive intellect’s *actually thinking about* the object made present to it in an appropriately ‘de-contextualised’ way, i.e. in a way that prescind or abstracts from the individuating material conditions affecting the thinkable object in the world disclosed through the senses (see note 13 of article 8, *supra*).

The distinction being drawn here (a distinction apparently missed by Davies and Kenny) is the distinction Thomas and the Thomistic school draw between the ‘species intelligibilis *impressa* intellectus’ and the ‘species intelligibilis *expressa* intellectus’. The *impress-*

*ed* presentative form is the term of the agent intellect's prior readying process for the receptive intellect's response to what-is-thinkable in terms of an *expressed* presentative form, i.e. a *concept* or *idea*. The 'expressed' form - the concept or idea - is the receptive intellect's *actually thinking about* X, where 'X' goes proxy for whatever 'thinkable' object is actually engaging the noetic subject's attention.

To elaborate: for Thomas and the Thomistic school (i) the diverse data of sense experience are unified and 'summarised' in sense images (the products of central common sensitivity, including sense memory, imagination, and cogitative power [for this last, see note 9, *infra*] ) - Thomas calls them 'phantasmata' - that are the *perceptual counterparts* of individual material things such as cats, trees, and stars existing in the extra-mental world. (ii) The agent intellect 'illuminates' in these sense images the *nature* of the thing or object engaging the knowing subject's awareness by disengaging or abstracting from individuating features and conditions *what is essential or necessary* for the thing or object to be the *kind* of thing it is (for a cat, say, it is necessary to be substantial, material, alive, sentient). A rough comparison here might be with an appliance producing x-rays that show up the bone structure within the body while not showing up soft tissue. (In volume 1 of his *A Companion to the Summa*, Walter Farrell, O.P., remarks that "We have a faculty of intellect called the active [agent] intellect, whose sole work is to throw light on the sensible image or phantasm to make the universal stand out from the particular *as a spotlight makes one girl stand out from a chorus* " (*op. cit.*, pp.330-331; my italics). He goes on to add that "This light, focused on the specific nature in the phantasm, enables the intellect to concentrate on its proper object, the universal nature of the thing, to the disregard of the particularizing elements of it" (*ibid.*, p.331).) (iii) The nature of the thing or object, in its acquired *noetic* state of being completely free from all material individuating features and conditions, is the presentative-form-of-what-is-thinkable - the 'species intelligibilis' - that is received or 'impressed' into the *receptive* intellect (intellectus possibilis): it is the 'species intelligibilis *impressa* intellectus'. The vital response of the receptive intellect is what it *expresses* cognitively about the thing or object made present to it by means of the impressed presentative form, i.e. its *actually thinking about* cats, say, or trees or stars: the 'species intelligibilis *expressa* intellectus' which, with the impressed presentative form, is the *conceptual* or *intellective counterpart* (St Thomas's 'quaedam similitudo') of what exists in the extra-mental world.

What St Thomas and the Thomistic school have done is provide an analysis of the play of factors involved in our knowledge of 'what-it-is-to-be-a-cat' or 'what-it-is-to-be-a-tree' or 'what-it-is-to-be' any kind of thing at all.. That what we are actually knowing through the intellect (albeit indirectly by a sort of 'doubling back' on to sense experience) is *this* cat or *that* tree is due to particular sense data 'summarised' in sense imagery (in the 'phantasmata'). That what we are actually knowing through the intellect (directly as the intellect's proper object) is *this cat* or *that tree*, i.e. *what-it-is-to-be* a cat or a tree (Thomas's 'quod quid erat esse') is due *preparatively* to the agent intellect's disengaging or abstracting the nature or quiddity of 'cat' or 'tree' from the individuating conditions of sense imagery, and *formally* to the vital response of the receptive intellect to the relevant presentative-form-of-what-is-thinkable in the receptive intellect's actually thinking about 'cat' or 'tree'.

In the final resolve, St Thomas and the Thomistic school are inviting us to acknowledge that the human mind, with its intermeshed sensory and intellectual capacities and activities, just *is* the distinctive way in which human beings fit into the world - as, say, 'being responsive to the strong nuclear force' just *is* the distinctive way in which hadrons are marked off from leptons. To go on to ask why there should be entities having such a cognitively-based 'fit' *vis-a-vis* the world is, of course, to raise a question the answer to which would go well beyond the scope of philosophical psychology.

2. The *Contra Felicianum* is not a work of Augustine but of Vigilius, a North African bishop banished from Africa in 484AD by the Arian king, Huneric. Vigilius fled from his diocese of Thapsus to seek refuge in Constantinople. He wrote several major works directed against the Arians, in particular his *De Trinitate*. It appears that he also wrote other works against the teaching of the Arians, but under various names in order to escape hostile responses from the followers of Arius.

3. The Cyprian mentioned in this objection is Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, who was born c.210AD and martyred in September, 258AD. He was a pagan rhetorician who, on the basis of sustained study of the Scriptures and the writings of the African Church Father, Tertullian (c.160 - c.225AD), converted to the Christian religion in 246 and became bishop of Carthage two years later. He published a wide range of short theological treatises, and his extensive correspondence contained much valuable theological and pastoral material.

4. Refer note 2 *supra*.

5. St Thomas's comment on the human capacity to think - the 'intellect' - that it is "a capacity whose essence or nature has in it nothing of the natures of perceptible things that we're able to think about" ("...quae [virtus] quidem in sua essentia et natura non habet aliquam de naturis rerum sensibilium quas intelligere possumus") is not dwelt on by him here, but it is in other texts. See in particular his *Quaestio disputata de anima*, article 14, Response, and the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, question 75, article 2, Response.

The point of Thomas's comment is that the activity of *knowing* requires analysis in terms of *being*. In addition to the natural being (*esse naturale*) that things have as parts of the world, they may also take on *intentional* being (*esse intentionale*), which is the mode of being distinctive of them when they 'tend into' the cognitive subject or knower to *re-exist* within the awareness or consciousness of this subject - my existence *as someone actually knowing a tree* is that tree's existence *as actually known by me*; and this new existence takes place within me, not within the tree.

On this basis, a being that can know has greater range or scope - "habet maiorem amplitudinem et extensionem" is how Thomas puts it (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, question 14, article 1, Response) - than one that can't. Put differently, it has the capacity for *more existence* than a non-knower. And, for St Thomas, a being endowed with intellect (not a being confined to sense knowledge only) is in principle cognitively open to 'everything

about everything' simply in virtue of its having intellect.

This position is contained in the declaration of the Thomistic school that the object of the intellect is "ens in quantum ens", a formula in which the term "ens" first occurring is a noun denoting *beings* (entia) - all of them and all modes of them - and "ens" second occurring is a verbal noun or gerund denoting *having be-ing* (habendum esse), applicable to each one of them. So 'beings *qua* having be-ing' is the meaning of the Thomistic formula identifying the object of the intellect. In this connection, Thomas notes in the *Contra gentiles*, book 2, chapter 83, that "Naturaliter intellectus noster cognoscit ens, et ea quae sunt per se entis in quantum huiusmodi." ("Of its very nature the human intellect knows being, and all that belongs *per se* to being as such.") This puts St Thomas sharply at variance with American philosopher John D. Caputo when the latter comments in his recent book *More Radical Hermeneutics: On Not Knowing Who We Are* that "We are not hard-wired [sic] to Being Itself" (*op. cit.* p.1), when by "Being Itself" Caputo means being simply *qua* being.

St Thomas also notes in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, question 86, article 2, Response) that "Nunquam intellectus noster tot intelligit quin possit plura intelligere." ("A point is *never* reached when our intellect knows so much that it can't go on to know more.").

For St Thomas, this unlimited capacity of the intellect would be impossible were the intellect to be in itself a capacity having some or other material nature. Any such material nature would hedge the intellect about with restrictions. He puts the issue this way (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, qu.75, a.2, Response):

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.

(It's obvious that a human being can, through the use of intellect, know the natures of all material things. Now what is able to know things of this sort must have nothing of their nature in its own, since what was [already] in it by nature (naturaliter) would obstruct the knowledge of other things. We notice how, for example, someone sick with a fever, and whose tongue is affected with a bitter taste, can't perceive anything sweet; for that person everything

tastes sour. Accordingly, if the source of intellectual activity (principium intellectuale) had in itself the nature of anything material or bodily, it would be unable to know all material things. Indeed, anything material or bodily has some sort of restricting nature. It's impossible, therefore, that the source of intellectual activity [the intellect] be anything material or bodily.)

For St Thomas, then, the intellect is, as reported above, “a capacity whose essence or nature has in it nothing of the natures of perceptible things that we're able to think about”.

It might be added that Thomas's position that the intellect is, in principle, cognitively or noetically ‘open to everything about everything’ echoes Aristotle's profound dictum (*De anima*, book 3, 431b 21): “He psukhe ta onta pos esti panta.” (“The mind is in some sense *everything*”). And Thomas's point about the restrictions that would be placed on the intellect's capacity to know, were it to have some or other material nature, is also to be found in Aristotle (*op. cit.*, 429a 15): “Because the intellect thinks all things, it is necessary that it be unmingled [with matter]...For an internal form or structure would block and obstruct what comes from the outside [world]; hence, it can have no nature of its own except this: to-be-in-potentiality.” (My translation).

In a note to this text (*De anima*, 429a 15) in his *Aristotle: De Anima (On the Soul)* p. 246, Hugh Lawson-Tancred remarks:

Another important asymmetry between sense and thought is that there is with thought nothing corresponding to the five special senses. It is for this reason that Aristotle requires the faculty of thought to be ‘unmixed’, i.e. to have no intrinsic character which might diminish its receptivity to thoughts of some objects.

6. St Thomas uses a similar line of argument in his *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas* written in Paris in 1270. In section 90 we find the following:

Si omnes homines intelligunt uno intellectu, qualiter eis uniatur, sive ut forma sive ut motor, de necessitate sequitur quod omnium hominum sit unum numero ipsum intellegere quod est simul et respectu unius intelligibilis: puta, si ego intelligo lapidem et tu similiter, oportebit quod una et eadem sit intellectualis operatio et mei et tui. Non enim potest esse eiusdem activi principii, sive sit forma sive sit motor, respectu eiusdem objecti nisi una numero operatio eiusdem speciei in eodem tempore: quod manifestum est ex his quae Philosophus declarat in V *Physicorum*. Unde,

si essent multi homines habentes unum oculum, omnium visio non esset nisi una respectu eiusdem obiecti in eodem tempore.

(If all human beings think using the one intellect - however united to them, whether as form or mover - it necessarily follows that all of them would have numerically the one act of thinking which would be simultaneous for all, and would bear on the one thinkable object. For example, if I'm thinking about a lump of stone and you're doing likewise, it would be inescapable that my intellectual activity and yours would be one and the same. The same active principle or source, whether it's form or mover, can have numerically only *one* activity of the same sort, at the same time, and in respect of the same object - a fact clearly indicated by Aristotle in book 5 of the *Physics* [227b 21 - 228a 3]. So, were many human beings to have only the one eye, the seeing of all of them would be only the one act of seeing in respect of the same object at the same time.)

7. St Thomas has this to say in section 91 of his *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas*:

Phantasmata...praeambula sunt actioni intellectus, sicut colores actioni visus: unde per eorum diversitatem non diversificaretur actio intellectus, maxime respectu unius intelligibilis; secundum quae tamen ponunt diversificari scientiam huius a scientia alterius, in quantum hic intelligit ea quorum phantasmata habet et ille alia quorum phantasmata habet. Sed in duobus qui idem sciunt et intelligunt, ipsa operatio intellectualis per diversitatem phantasmatum nullatenus diversificari potest.

(The play of imagery is a preamble to the intellect's action, as colours are to the action of seeing. Accordingly, it's not diversity on the score of imagery that gives rise to diversity on the score of intellect's action, above all when there's question of only one thinkable object. Yet there are people who want to mark off the knowledge of *this* person from the knowledge of *that* person only on the basis that *this* one thinks about those things whose images he or she has, and *that* one thinks about different things since having images related to them. But the truth of the matter is that when two people are conscious of, and thinking about, the same thing, this intellectual activity can't in any way at all take on diversity because of diversity in the play of imagery.)

8. It should be noted that the Latin conjunction "et", and its English equivalent "and" are

not employed in the sort of context in which they are here employed to assist in performing a merely *additive* function. The semantic function to which they contribute in this sort of context is an *explicative* one in the sense that they are used to connect words *explicating* or *unfolding* the relationship between a part - the actualising principle or soul - and a whole, the body, understood as a 'parcel' of matter actualised in the mode of *being alive* by the part or component that is the soul. This use of "and" (and "et") is not like the use of "and" in the phrase 'apples *and* oranges', for example. It is more like the use of "and" in the sentence 'A triangle is a plane figure having three sides *and* three internal angles.' The phrase 'three internal angles' explicates or unfolds what is involved in 'being a plane figure having three sides'. The conjunction "and" performs a supportively explicative role.

In the light of this bit of theory, one might perhaps hesitate to endorse Peter Geach's remark that St Thomas "creates obscurity by continuing to talk in this way", i.e. to talk of 'body *and* soul' (G.E.M. Anscombe and P.T. Geach *Three Philosophers*, pp.98. The section on Aquinas is by Geach.)

9. Joseph Gredt has this to say about the cogitative power (*vis cogitativa*):

Cum homo sit animal, etiam in eo invenitur vis aestimativa, quae tamen potentia in homine dicitur *cogitativa*, quia propter coniunctionem ad intellectum operandi modum altiore sortitur, quatenus suo modo sensiliter repraesentat id, quod intellectus cognoscit abstracte et universaliter.

(Since a human being is a sentient being, an estimative or evaluative power is also found in the human being. However, in the human being the estimative power is called 'cogitative', due to its having a higher mode of activity arising out of its connection with the intellect, expressed in its making present in sensory fashion what the intellect knows in abstract and universal fashion.)

*Elementa Philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae*, vol.1,  
p.423.

In his *Philosophy of the Human Person*, p.86, James Reichmann, S.J., remarks that

What in animals we call the evaluative sense is commonly referred to in the human as the *cogitative* sense, or the particular reason. Like other sensory powers it is organic. Yet owing to its proximity to the intellective power in the human, its activity transcends that of the evaluative sense in the animal.

For Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas the cogitative sense shares in a certain overflow of the intellective act into the region of the senses and is guided and directed by it. It is thus the cogitative power

which directly funnels the intelligibility perceived organically by the senses to the intellect, making possible a universal understanding of the singular, sensed thing.

In his challenging study *Karl Rahner: The Philosophical Foundations*, Thomas Sheehan elaborates as follows (pp.241-242):

For Rahner, the cogitative sense is the unified center of spirit and sensibility. As a sense power it is the ‘particular reason’ which grasps particular individual intentions, while on the other hand “it is the point where spirit breaks through into sensibility, or better said, the first emanation from spirit to sensibility.” As a continuation of spirit into sense, it sees the individual in its common nature and thus “offers [for intellection] an already differentiated unity of the individual as such and the universal....” Thereby it makes the sensible “more powerful” (*virtuosior*) and “suitable” (*habilis*) for intellection - these being but other terms for abstraction....In cogitative sense, as Aquinas puts it, “the mind...mingles with individuals” (*De Veritate*, 10, 5, c.). Rahner comments, “Hence, when Thomas says that the intellect knows the individual with the help of the cogitative sense, that can be meant only in this way: that in the cogitative sense the individuality and the common nature are given in a differentiated unity for the intellect, which keeps the cogitative sense with itself as *its* power and by that very fact always knows what is given in it.”

(The citations from Rahner in this passage are from William Dych’s English translation of Rahner’s *Geist in Welt* entitled *Spirit in the World* [New York, Herder and Herder, 1968], pp.272, 271, 273 respectively.)

10. The principal references to St Thomas’s arguments that thinking cannot be the activity of a bodily structure are *Quaestio disputata de veritate* question 10, article 8; *Summa contra Gentiles*, book 2, chapters 55, 66, 67; *Quaestio disputata de anima*, article 14; *In De Anima* 111, lectio 7; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, question 75, article 2.

11. St Thomas makes this same point succinctly in section 94 of his *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas* (see notes 6 and 7 *supra*):

Si ergo per aliquem praecedentium hominum [intellectus possibilis] factus est in actu secundum aliquas species intelligibiles, et perfectus secundum habitum scientiae, ille habitus et istae species in eo remanent. Cum autem omne recipiens sit denudatum ab eo quod recipit, impossibile est quod per meum addiscere aut invenire illae species acquirantur in intellectu possibili.

( If, through any one of the human beings who went before us, [the receptive intellect] had been activated by some presentative forms of what is thinkable, and perfected through the settled tendency to acquire knowledge systematically, both this settled tendency and these presentative forms would persist in it. But, since every recipient starts off without, or deprived of, what it is to receive, it becomes impossible for *my* learning or discovering something to be a source of the receptive intellect's receiving or acquiring those presentative forms.)

12. It is surprising, to say the least, to find James Weisheipl, O.P., offering in some eleven lines of English (in his *Friar Thomas D'Aquino: His Life, Thought, and Works*, p.214) a would-be summary of Thomas's three anti-Averroist arguments that can only be regarded as a caricature of the actual arguments that the Angelic Doctor takes fifty six lines of tersely economical Latin to develop so cogently in (the Keeler text of) article 9 of the *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis*. Weisheipl then goes on to put forward the also surprising view that "Thomas's arguments here are weaker than those later proposed" (presumably in the *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas*).

13. Refer Article 10 *infra, passim*.

14. It is worth noticing that St Thomas's reference here to the river Seine occasioned some scholarly controversy in the 19th century, and into the early part of the 20th century, over the place and time of the composition of the *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis*.

Recent and current scholarly opinion, however, is unwavering in its assignment of the work to a time during Thomas's sojourn in Italy between late 1259 and November 1268 - a sojourn that was between his two periods as Regent Master in theology in Paris which were from September 1256 to July 1259, and from January 1269 to April 1272. Both James Weisheipl, O.P., (*Friar Thomas D'Aquino: His Life, Thought, and Works*) and Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., (*St Thomas Aquinas, vol. I: The Person and his Work*) - both of whom are recognised authorities regarding the chronology of the writings of St Thomas - agree in assigning the *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis* to the years 1267-68 in Italy, while disagreeing about its chronological relation to the cognate text *Quaestio disputata de anima* (this latter *Quaestio* being assigned to Italy, 1265-66, by Torrell; to Paris, 1269, by Weisheipl).

15. St Thomas refers as follows to the 'primum mobile' (1a, question 68, article 2, ad 3):

...primum mobile, quod revolvit totum caelum motu diurno, ut operetur per motum diurnum continuitatem generationis.

( ...the first moved-and-moving sphere, which revolves the whole sky with a daily motion, in order to bring about

through this daily motion on-going processes of generation.)

William Wallace, O.P., whose translation has just been used, provides a useful brief note on this text:

The ‘*primum mobile*’ was understood to be the outermost sphere of the universe, which was the first to be given movement (thus *primum mobile*), and then served to transmit movement to all lower spheres.

(St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol.10, 1967, footnote K, pp.82-3.)

16. An *ell* (from “*ulna*”, the Latin word meaning ‘elbow’) was a former English unit of length equal to 45 inches (approximately 1.14 metres).

17. Keeler comments in a footnote to p.116 of his critical text of the *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis* that “*Haec videtur etiam esse opinio ipsius Augustini.*” (“This opinion [i.e.that *seeing* is brought about by rays projected outside the body] seems also to have been held by Augustine.” The reference he provides to chapter 23, section 43, of Augustine’s *De quantitate animae* (*On the soul’s greatness*) fails to support this comment. Neither in section 43 nor in section 44 (in both of which Augustine and Evodius are discussing ‘*visus*’ (‘seeing’)) does Augustine express this opinion, although - with no mention of ‘*radii*’ (‘rays’) - Evodius says “*Visu, inquam, porrecto in eum locum in quo es, video te ubi es: at me ibi non esse confiteor.*” (“When seeing reaches out to that place where you are, I see you where you are: but I admit that I myself am not there.”).

However, both of the references that Keeler gives to Augustine’s *De Genesi ad litteram* (*Commentary on Genesis*) do support his comment. Book 1, chapter16, section 31, notes that “*Iactus enim radiorum ex oculis nostris, cuiusdam lucis quidem est iactus.*” (“The projecting of rays from our eyes is indeed the projecting of a sort of light.”). Book 4, chapter 34, section 54 adds “*...sed quantacumque [oceanis magnitudo] sit, prius oportet aerem qui supra est, transeant radii nostrorum oculorum.*” (“...but, however great be the size of an ocean, it’s first necessary that the rays from our eyes traverse the air above this ocean.”). The reference Keeler gives to book 9, chapter 3, section 3, of Augustine’s *De Trinitate* is equally clear about the eyes emitting rays in order to see.

It must be kept in mind, however, that the reference to one of St Augustine’s works included in the objection to which St Thomas was replying did involve a passage in which St Augustine was setting out other peoples’ opinions - a passage to which Thomas was confining himself in his reply.

18. Behind this claim of St Thomas is the following schema: being-actually-thought-about occurs in the intellect, which is a cognitive power intrinsically independent of matter, i.e.immaterial or *spiritual* in the strong sense of the term (refer note 10, *supra*). Since, in the reception of A into B, due account must be taken of the nature of B (the Scholastic tag is “*quidquid recipitur ad modum recipientis recipitur.*”), whatever is received into the intellect must be appropriately disengaged from the conditions of matter,

i.e. must be, for the purposes of intellectual knowing, ‘de-materialised’. Given that this is so, it is necessary to say that a thing’s being material clashes with the possibility of its being-actually-thought-about.

Within the Aristotelian philosophy of mind drawn on by St Thomas, it will be the role of the *agent intellect* (‘intellectus agens’) to disengage from material conditions the objects made present to the cognitive subject, initially made present by the special senses (sight, hearing, touch, etc.) and elaborated by the internal senses (co-ordinating sense, cogitative sense, imagination, sense memory). The agent intellect, acting on the content of sense experience, produces a non-material form - the presentative-form-of-what-is-thinkable - by which the receptive intellect (the ‘intellectus possibilis’) is activated, and to which it responds vitally with its *concept* or *idea* bearing on the general, shareable, and thinkable ‘whatness’ or nature (the ‘quod quid erat esse’) of the object made present through the activity of the special and the internal senses. In this way, the state of being-actually-thought-about is acquired by what actually exists under material conditions in the sense-perceptible world. It remains to note, of course, that this acquired noetic state exists within the cognitive subject’s receptive intellect, and under the non-material conditions of this receptive intellect (refer also note 1, *supra*). It also remains to note that this acquired noetic state is the intermediary in virtue of which the *knower* is identically the *known* within a single instance of *esse intentionale* which is, in effect, the active non-material presence of the known within the knower.

19. See the final paragraph of the Response in article 2, *supra*.

## ARTICLE 10

The tenth issue to be considered is this: **Is there one agent intellect for all human beings?**

It seems that this is so:

1. To enlighten human beings is something characteristic of God. John, chapter 1, verse 9, shows this: “[The Word] was the true light which enlightens all who come into the world...”. But this belongs to the agent intellect, as Aristotle makes clear in book 3 of the *De anima* (*On the soul*) [430a 15]. The agent intellect, then, is God. But there is only one God. So there’s only one agent intellect, too.
2. Again, nothing separated from what is bodily is multiplied on the basis of bodies’ being multiplied. But the agent intellect is separated from what is bodily - book 3 of the *De anima* [430a 22] affirms that. Therefore the agent intellect is not multiplied on the basis of bodies’ being multiplied; so not on the basis of the multiplication of human beings, either.
3. Moreover, in the human soul there’s nothing that’s thinking all the time. Yet ‘thinking all the time’ is proper to the agent intellect - book 3 of the *De anima* [430a 22] says that it’s not the case that “[The agent intellect] is now thinking, now not”. So the agent intellect is not something belonging to the soul; nor is it multiplied on the basis of any multiplication of souls and people.
4. Further, nothing brings itself from potentiality into actuality. But the receptive intellect is brought from potentiality into actuality by the agent intellect - book 3 of the *De anima* [430a 14] makes this clear. Hence it is that the agent intellect is not set into the essence of the soul, as is the receptive intellect. So the same conclusion as before.
5. Besides, any instance of multiplication is consequent upon some or other distinction. But the agent intellect can’t be distinguished by matter - it’s separated from that. Nor can form do the trick, because this would give rise to a specific difference. So the agent intellect isn’t multiplied in human beings.
6. Again, what brings about separation is itself the most separate. But it’s the agent intellect that brings about separation when it disengages presentative forms (species) from matter. It’s separated, then, and isn’t multiplied on the basis of the multiplication of human beings.
7. Further, no power whose functional range increases the more it’s actually in action has a boundary set to its action. The agent intellect is like this: book 3 of the *De anima* [429b 2] notes that “When we think about something extremely thinkable, we’re more, not less, able to think.” Therefore the agent intellect has no boundary set to its action. However, anything created does have a boundary set to its action, since its power is finite. Accordingly, the agent intellect isn’t anything created, so there’s only one.

8. Moreover, in his book *Eighty Three Questions* [PL 40, 13], Augustine comments: “Whatever a bodily sense comes in contact with is instantaneously changed... What is instantaneously changed can’t be comprehended. So don’t expect any sound truth from the bodily senses.” And he quickly adds: “It’s not possible to distinguish between what’s truly perceptible from what falsely resembles it...Nothing, however, can really be perceived when it’s not to be distinguished from what’s false. So no true judgment can rest on sense knowledge.” In this way he proves that we can’t judge the truth about things through perceptible objects, both because they’re changeable, and because they have objects falsely resembling them. But this state of affairs affects any created thing at all. So we can’t draw on any created thing to judge the truth about things. Yet we draw on the agent intellect to judge such truth. The agent intellect, then, isn’t anything created; and we can conclude as we did before.

9. Besides, Augustine says in book 4 of the *De Trinitate (On the Trinity)* that impious people “rightly censure and rightly praise many things in people’s behaviour. Now, by what rules do they pass judgment on those things, if not by those in which they discern how each human being ought to live, even though they themselves fall short of living in that same fashion? Where do they detect *those* rules? Not in their own character, since it’s plain that their minds are variable, whilst these rules are invariable... Nor in their mental outlook - we’re dealing with the rules of *justice*, yet their minds are obviously *unjust*... Where are they written, then, if not in the book of that light that is called *truth*?” From all this it’s clear that to pass judgment on what is just or unjust belongs to us in virtue of a light which is above our minds. But a judgment, whether speculative or practical, is within our power thanks to the agent intellect. It follows that the agent intellect is a sort of light surpassing our mind - with no question of its being multiplied on the basis of any multiplying of souls and human beings.

10. Again, in chapters 31 and 32 of his book *De vera religione (On true religion)* Augustine declares that, when we confront two things neither of which stands out, we can’t judge which one of them is better than the other except through something else more excellent than both of them. Indeed, we judge that an angel is better than a soul, with neither of them standing out. So it’s necessary that this judgment be made through something else more excellent than both of them - and this can’t be anything other than God. Since, then, judgment engages the agent intellect, there is evidence that the agent intellect is God; and we can conclude as we did before.

11. Further, Aristotle states in book 3 of the *De anima (On the soul)* [430a 12] that the agent intellect is related to the receptive intellect “as a skill is related to the matter it uses.” But in no area of skilled activity does a skill and the matter it uses coincide; nor does any general agent and the matter it uses share numerical identity - Aristotle notes this in book 2 of his *Physics* [198a]. Therefore the agent intellect isn’t something residing in the soul’s nature as is the receptive intellect. So it’s not multiplied in accordance in any multiplication of souls and human beings

12. Moreover, in book 3 of his *De libero arbitrio (On free will)* [PL 32, 1251] Augustine affirms that “the idea and reality (*veritas*) of number are ready to hand for all who compute or calculate.” But the idea and reality of number are something single. It’s necessary, then, to have something single that makes them ready to hand for everybody. This is the agent intellect, by the power of which we disengage from things their universal principles. So

there is a single agent intellect for all of us.

13. Besides, it's said in the same book that "If the highest good is one for everybody, it's inescapable that the truth in which it is discerned and possessed - that is, wisdom - is common to everybody." But the highest good is discerned and possessed by us through the intellect, and especially the agent intellect. It follows that the agent intellect is one in all of us.

14. Again, it's the same sort of cause that's structured to give rise to the same sort of effect. Now the universal idea is just one thing in all of us. So, since it's up to the agent intellect to give rise to the universal idea, it seems that the agent intellect is just one in all of us.

15. Moreover, if the agent intellect belongs to the soul, there's necessarily a dilemma: *either* it's created already filled with presentative forms (*impletus speciebus*) - and then it sets these forms before the receptive intellect, and doesn't need to abstract presentative forms from the play of images; *or* it's created bereft of presentative forms - in which case it will be useless for abstracting forms from images because it won't know which form it's looking for when it's doing the abstracting, unless it *already* has some idea of it. This resembles the case of someone looking for a slave who's on the run: he won't know the slave when he encounters him unless he already has some knowledge of what the slave looks like. So the agent intellect doesn't belong to the soul and, consequently, isn't multiplied in terms of souls and human beings.

16. Besides, when a cause sufficient to produce an effect is affirmed, it's superfluous to affirm an additional cause to produce the same effect. But God is all you need as an extrinsic cause to illuminate human minds. Don't, then, postulate as something-within-the-human-soul an agent intellect charged with illuminating minds - and don't multiply it, either, in terms of souls and people.

17. Further, if an agent intellect is asserted to belong to the human soul, then it has to be of some use to a human being: there's nothing idle and pointless in realities created by God. Yet the agent intellect contributes nothing to a human being in connection with *knowing* - the claim is that it "illuminates" the receptive intellect. The receptive intellect, after all, is self-sufficient vis-a-vis activity once it swings into action thanks to a presentative form (*per speciem intelligibilem*). In like fashion, the agent intellect contributes nothing on the score of "lighting up" images - the claim is that it abstracts presentative forms from them. The point is that, just as a presentative form received in a sense power goes on to impress its likeness on the imagination, so also, it appears, can a form present in the imagination - where it's more removed from matter, and thus more perfect - go on to impress its likeness on a higher power, namely the receptive intellect. So the agent intellect isn't some feature of the soul - nor is it multiplied in human beings.

### **But against that position:**

1. Aristotle is quite clear in book 3 of the *De anima (On the soul)* [430a 13]: the agent intellect is part and parcel of the soul, and therefore is multiplied on the basis of souls' being multiplied.

2. Further, Augustine says in book 4 of his *De Trinitate (On the Trinity)* that philosophers are no better than anybody else when it comes to considering intellectually in their highest and changeless principles those objects that they have argued about across the ages (historice disseruerunt). Hence it's manifest that they have considered these objects in a sort of light connatural to their minds. But the light in which we survey reality is the agent intellect. Therefore the agent intellect is part and parcel of the soul - so we repeat what's said above.

3. Besides, according to Augustine in book 12 of the *De Trinitate* "One must accept that the nature of the intellect has been determined in such a way...that it sees things made present to it by means of a sort of incorporeal light of a special kind (sui generis); rather as the bodily eye catches sight of things round about it by means of actual physical light". Now that light in which each of our minds does its thinking is the agent intellect. So the agent intellect pertains to the nature of the soul - and therefore is multiplied as are souls and persons.

### **Response:**

One ought to say, in line with Aristotle, and in agreement with what has already been said [Article 9], that an *agent intellect* must be affirmed. Aristotle's position was that the natures of sense-perceptible things didn't exist in their own right apart from matter, hence being actually thinkable, so there was need for some power making them actually thinkable by disengaging them from individual matter. This power is called the 'agent intellect'. Some people have claimed that it's a sort of 'separated substance', not multiplied on the basis of there being a large number of human beings. Others, however, have insisted that it's an identifiable power of the soul, multiplied numerically in human beings. To some extent, both accounts are true.

First of all, it's necessary that, above the human soul, there be some intellect on which the soul's activity of thinking is dependent. This can be shown by three arguments. The first is this: Whatever belongs to something by participation is first found in something else essentially. If a lump of iron, say, is ignited, there must be in actual existence (in rebus) something that is fire by its very substance and nature. Now the human soul possesses intellect (est intellectiva) by participation - it doesn't *think* in virtue of any part or feature you care to name, only in virtue of its highest part or feature. It must be the case, then, that there exists something higher than the soul that is *intellect* taken to its highest strength (secundum totam suam naturam). It is from this reality that the intellectual nature (intellectualitas) [1] of the soul is derived, and on which its activity of thinking depends.

The second argument is this: Prior to every instance of what's changeable there's found something unchangeable in respect of the relevant change (secundum illum motum). Above things subject to alteration, say, there's something unalterable, namely a heavenly body; for every movement is ultimately brought about by something not subject to movement (ab aliquo immobili). Now the human soul's very activity of thinking is in the style of movement or change. For the soul does its thinking by moving from effects to causes, and from causes to effects, from similar things to more of the same, and from contrasting things to further contrasts. So, above the soul, there has to be some intellect whose activity of thinking is immovable and motionless - free from any of the to-ing and fro-ing just described.

The third argument is this: It is inescapable that, although in one and the same thing potentiality is prior to actuality, absolutely speaking there is actuality preceding potentiality somewhere else (in altero). Likewise, prior to everything that is imperfect there must be posited something that is perfect. Now, take the human soul: It is found at the outset to be in potentiality to what is thinkable; and it is found to be imperfect in its thinking activity, because in this life it will never attain all truth about whatever is thinkable (2). Therefore, transcending the soul there must be an intellect existing without trace of potentiality (semper in actu existentem), and having an exhaustive grasp of truth.

However, it shouldn't be said that this higher intellect immediately makes objects actually thinkable in us, without some power to do this that our soul derives from that intellect. For we commonly find even in physical things that lower-level realities possess specific active powers directed to determinate effects, over and above universal active powers - higher animals, for example, aren't generated only by the universal power of the sun, they also need the specific power of the male seed; certain less perfect life forms, of course, are generated by the sun's power, without male seed, though even in this case there isn't lacking the action of a specific power concerned to alter and dispose matter.

On the other hand, the human soul is the most excellent amongst lower-level realities. From this it must follow that, besides the universal power of the higher intellect, the human soul shares in a power specific, so to speak, to this determinate effect: making objects actually thinkable. That this is so is experientially apparent. For any particular person - Socrates, say, or Plato - makes objects actually thinkable at will, namely by disengaging the universal from the particular when, for example, he separates what is *common* to all individual human beings from what is *distinctive* of them taken one by one (*propria singulis*). In this manner, then, is the action of the agent intellect - the action of disengaging the universal - the action of *this* human being, as is weighing up or judging about some common nature or feature, which relates to the receptive intellect.

Now anything that carries out any sort of activity possesses structurally (formaliter) as part of itself the power or capacity that is the source of that activity. So, just as it's necessary that the receptive intellect be something structurally present in a human being (formaliter inhaerens homini) - we've already shown this (3) - so is it necessary that the agent intellect be something structurally present in a human being. And continuity on the basis of the play of images (4) - Averroes' piece of fantasy - falls far short of what's required, as was shown above in connection with the receptive intellect (5).

It is obvious that this was the view of Aristotle since he says in book 3 of the *De anima* (*On the soul*) [430a 13] that "No less in the soul must these different factors be found", namely both receptive and agent intellects. And he adds [430a 15] that the agent intellect is "like a lamp", which is a participated light. On the other hand, Themistius (6) notes in his paraphrase on the '*De anima*' [book 3, chap.5] that Plato paid attention to the notion of intellect as 'separated' - which he compared to the sun - and not to the idea of the soul's having its own share in this power.

But we ought to consider just what is that separate intellect on which the human soul's activity of

thinking depends. Some have said that this intellect is the least excellent of the separated substances, which by its intellectual light is continuous with our souls. But the truth of faith rules this out for several reasons. First, since that intellectual light belongs to the nature of the soul, it is from that being alone by whom the soul's nature is created. Only God is the soul's creator, not some or other separated substance that we would call an 'angel'. So it's significant that *Genesis, 2,7*, says that God himself "breathed the breath of life into the face of man". It remains, then, that the light that is the agent intellect isn't caused in the soul by any other separated substance but immediately by God.

The second reason is that the ultimate fulfillment of every active being is something that relates to its principle or source. Now the ultimate fulfillment or bliss (*beatitudo*) of a human being lies in intellectual activity - a point noted by Aristotle in book 10 of his *Ethics* (7). If, then, the principle and cause of the intellectual nature of human beings were some separated substance other [than God], it would be necessary for the ultimate bliss of a human being to be found in that created substance. And this is exactly what is asserted by those who put forward this position; for they propose that the ultimate bliss of a human being consists in union with a [separated] active intelligence (*continuari intelligentiae agenti*) (8). But true faith affirms that a human person's ultimate bliss is found only in God, as John, chapter 17, verse 3, states: "Eternal life is this, to know You, the only true God."; and, as pointed out in Luke, chapter 20, verse 36, human beings sharing in this bliss are "equal to the angels."

The third reason is that, if a human being were to share in thought-making light (*lumen intelligibile*) from an angel, it would follow that a human being would not be, with respect to *mind* (*secundum mentem*), in the image of God himself but in the image of angels, which flies in the face of what's said in *Genesis*, chapter 1, verse 26: "Let us make man in our image and likeness", that is, in the image common to the Trinity [of divine Persons], not in the image of angels (9).

Accordingly, we affirm that the light of the agent intellect about which Aristotle speaks is something immediately introduced into us by God; and, by means of this, we mark off the true from the false, and good from evil. And this is said in *Psalms* 4, verses 6 & 7: "Many say, who reveals good things to us? The light of your face has been impressed upon us, oh Lord"; that is to say, through this, good things have been made known to us. So, in this way, what brings about in us - after the fashion of participated light (*per modum luminis participati*) - objects that are actually thinkable, is something belonging to the soul, which is multiplied on the basis of there being very many souls and human beings. On the other hand, what makes objects actually thinkable - after the fashion of the sun giving off light (*per modum solis illuminantis*) - is that unique separated reality which is God. So it is that Augustine states in the first of his *Soliloquies* that "Reason promises that it will disclose God to my mind, as the sun is disclosed to my eyes; for the soul's knowing-powers (*sensus animae*) are like the eyes of the mind. All the best known objects of the fields of learning are such as to be like things that are lit up by the sun so that they can be seen...but it is God himself who lights up [the mind]."

However, this unique separated Principle of our knowing can't be understood as the 'agent intellect' of which Aristotle speaks - Themistius (10) points this out [in his paraphrase of book 3, chapter 5, of the *De anima*]. God, after all, isn't contained within the soul's nature, whereas

the agent intellect is referred to by Aristotle as a light from God possessed in our soul (11). On this basis, it is left for us to say that the agent intellect isn't just one in all human beings.

**So:**

to 1: It's characteristic of God to light up human minds by imparting to them the natural light of the agent intellect and, on top of this, the light of grace and glory. The agent intellect, in turn, lights up sense imagery (phantasmata), as a light imparted by God.

to 2: Aristotle says that the agent intellect is 'separated', not as though it were a kind of substance having existence outside the body, but because it's not the actualisation (actus) of any part of the body, with its activity brought about through a bodily organ. This has already been argued for the receptive intellect (12).

to 3: Aristotle isn't here talking about the agent intellect but about *intellect in an actualised state*. First of all he spoke about the receptive intellect, after that about the agent intellect, and finally he spoke about intellect in an actualised state when he said [book 3 of the *De anima*, 430a 20] that "The *same* actualised state embraces the knowing and the known" (Idem est autem secundum actum scientia rei).

Aristotle distinguishes the intellect *in an actualised state* from the intellect *in potentiality* in three ways. First way: the intellect in potentiality *isn't* the-thing-potentially-thought-about, whereas the intellect in an actualised state, or actually knowing, *is* identically the thing *qua* actually thought about or known. In the same fashion, when speaking about the sense powers he had said that the sense power in potentiality and the potential sense object were different.

Second way: contrasting the intellect in an actualised state with the intellect in potentiality reveals that the intellect in potentiality is temporally prior in one and the same subject to the intellect in an actualised state; that is, a temporal priority attaches to the intellect that is in potentiality as over against its being in an actualised state. On the other hand, actuality enjoys a priority of nature (naturaliter) over potentiality. And, absolutely speaking, one is required to affirm even a temporal priority of *intellect in an actualised state* over *intellect in potentiality*, given that the latter is brought into an actualised state (reducitur in actum) by some intellect already in an actualised state. Aristotle himself adds the point [*De anima*, 430a 21] that "Although knowledge in the state of potentiality has temporal priority in a particular individual, in the overall scheme it doesn't have temporal priority." And this is a contrast between potentiality and actuality in general that he uses in book 9 of the *Metaphysics* [1049b, *passim*], as well as in a number of other places.

Third way: Aristotle brings out the difference by noting that the potential or receptive intellect is now engaged in thought, now not engaged in thought. But this can't be said about the intellect *qua* being in an actualised state. Compare this with the power of sight: now it's seeing, now it's not; but sight in an actualised state (visus in actu) is in the very act of seeing. And Aristotle says this [430a 22]: "It is not the case that now the intellect is engaged in thought, now not." Then adds: "Taken in its separate state, the intellect just is that which it is" (Separatum autem hoc solum quod vere est). But this last statement can't be understood just of the agent intellect, or

just of the receptive intellect, since each of the two has already been described as ‘separate’. It has to be understood of all that’s required for the intellect to be in an actualised state, that is, of the whole intellectual component [of the soul]. Accordingly he adds [430a 23]: “And this alone is immortal and everlasting.” Now, if this statement were explained as referring to the agent intellect, it would follow that the receptive intellect was perishable - a point noted by Alexander (13), but clean contrary to what Aristotle had already said about the receptive intellect.

To offer here an exegesis of these words of Aristotle was called for, in case they became for anyone an occasion of falling into error.

to 4: There’s nothing to prevent any two things, when compared to each other, being related in such a way that each may be both potential and actual in respect of the other under diverse aspects - as a fire, say, is potentially cold and actually hot, and water the other way round. On this basis, natural agents are simultaneously acted upon and active (*simul patiuntur et agunt*). So, if the intellectual component [of the soul] is compared to the play of sense imagery, in one respect it will be related to it as something potential, in another respect as something actual. Now a sense image has a noetic sameness (*similitudinem*) to a determinate nature; yet that noetic sameness to a determinate nature is in the sense image as something potentially abstractable from material conditions. In the intellectual component it’s the other way round: this latter doesn’t have in an actualised state the noetic samenesses of distinct things; it does have in an actualised state a non-material light (*lumen immateriale*) having the capacity to abstract [from the sense images] what is potentially abstractable [in them]. So it is that nothing precludes there being found in the very essence of the soul a *receptive* intellect, which is in potentiality in respect of presentative forms (*respectu specierum*) which are abstracted from sense images, and an *agent* intellect which abstracts the presentative form from sense images. It’s a bit like one and the same body’s being transparent, so existing in potentiality in relation to all colours, whilst actually lighting up colours when it gets possession of some light, as apparently happens in some fashion in the eye of a male cat.

to 5: The illuminating power of the agent intellect is immediately multiplied through souls’ being multiplied - souls share in the illuminating power (14) of the agent intellect. Souls, however, are multiplied on the basis of bodies’ being multiplied, as was argued above (15).

to 6: The fact that the illuminating power of the agent intellect is not itself the activity of some bodily organ through which it acts suffices for its being able to separate the presentative forms of what is thinkable (*species intelligibiles*) from sense images. Nor is the separation [from sense images] of presentative forms which are taken in by the receptive intellect greater than the separation [from a bodily organ] of the agent intellect itself.

to 7: The line of reasoning used relates more to the receptive intellect than to the agent intellect - Aristotle concludes about the receptive intellect that, after thinking about what is most thinkable, its well able to think about lesser objects. However, regardless of which intellect is meant, it doesn’t follow from this that the intellectual capacity enabling us to think (*virtus intellectus quo intelligimus*) is infinite *simpliciter*, but that it is infinite in respect of some class [of objects]. After all, that a power or capacity, finite in itself, should have no boundary relative to some class [of objects] can’t be ruled out; whilst its having a boundary in that its range doesn’t extend to

higher level objects (ad superius genus) can be ruled in. There's the case of the power of sight which has no boundary relative to the class of 'coloured objects' since, multiply such objects to all infinity, and the lot of them would be detectable by sight; but sight can't detect objects on a higher level - universals, say. In similar fashion, our intellect knows no boundary relative to thinkable objects that match its nature (respectu intelligibilium sibi connaturalium), viz. those abstracted from sense-perceptible things. Yet it strikes a boundary when it's found wanting (deficit) relative to those-thinkable-objects-on-a-higher-level that are the separated substances. Its relation to those most manifest of realities is like that of "an owl to the light of the sun", as Aristotle puts it in book 2 of his *Metaphysics* [993b 9].

to 8: The line of reasoning introduced is not to the point. To judge about the truth *by using something* (aliquo) can be taken in two senses. The first is that of a *means* (medio), as when we judge conclusions by using principles as a means, or judge things to be straight by means of a ruler (per regulam). On that showing, Augustine's reasoning seems to be successful: what is changeable or has a false likeness [to something else] can't be an infallible criterion of truth (infallibilis regula veritatis). The second sense of judging about some truth *by using something* (aliquo) relates to the very *power to judge* (virtus iudicativa); and it is in this sense that we judge about the truth by drawing upon the agent intellect.

Nonetheless, in order to search out more deeply Augustine's intention, and to reckon with its truth, it must be recalled that certain earlier philosophers - people who affirmed that there was no other way of gaining knowledge apart from the senses, and no other realities over and above sense-perceptible things - stated that no certainty about what was true was available to us. There were two reasons for this. The first was their claim that sense-perceptible things were always in flux, with nothing stable in them at all. The second was their finding that people judged differently about one and the same thing - when, say, one of them was wide awake and the other drowsy, or one was ill and the other well. Nor was anything available for telling which of them was judging more truly, since [the view] of each one of them had some semblance of truth.

These are the two reasons Augustine touches on - reasons that moved earlier philosophers to declare the truth to be unattainable by us. So it was that Socrates, despairing of laying hold on the truth about what there is (desperans de veritate rerum capessenda) devoted himself totally to moral philosophy. His pupil Plato agreed with the earlier philosophers that sense-perceptible realities were always in flux, and that sense powers made no sure judgment about things. He sought to provide grounds for the certainty of knowledge (ad certitudinem scientiae stabiliendam) by a two-pronged approach: the natures or forms of things are separate from what is sense-perceptible and are changeless; and, in the human person, there is a cognitive power that surpasses the senses, viz. *mind* or *intellect*, which is 'lit up' by a kind of higher intellective 'sun', as sight is 'lit up' by the physical sun.

Now Augustine followed Plato, but within the limits prescribed by Catholic belief. He didn't maintain that there were the natures or forms of things existing in their own right. Rather, in their place, he located the principles or forms of things in the divine mind, and declared that we judge about everything through these principles or forms according as each one's intellect is illuminated by the divine light. Not, of course, in the sense that we catch sight of these principles or forms themselves - this would be impossible short of catching sight of the essence

of God - but in the sense that these highest principles or forms impart impressions on our minds (imprimunt in mentes nostras). It was the same thing for Plato. He affirmed that intellectual knowledge dealt with the separated natures or forms, not in the sense that they were caught sight of, but in the sense that our mind has intellectual knowledge about things to the extent that it shares in (participat) those natures or forms.

So it is that Augustine, in a kind of gloss on the text [of Psalm 11, verse 1] “Truth has been weakened by the sons of men”, says that, just as many reflections of one face shine back from a set of mirrors, so are the many truths in our minds reflections of the one First Truth.

On the other hand, Aristotle went down a different path altogether (per aliam viam perrexit). Firstly, he showed in many ways that there *was* stability associated with sense-perceptible realities. Secondly, (he showed) that sense discernment (iudicium sensus) was true in respect of the objects special to a sense, although mistakes were possible about objects common to several senses, and even more so about objects only incidentally sense-perceptible. Thirdly, (he showed) that, surpassing the senses there was an intellective power which judged about the truth, not through intelligible realities existing apart [from sense-perceptible realities], but through the light of the agent intellect which made things thinkable (quod facit intelligibilia). Nor does it help much to say [in this context] that thinkable things are so from their sharing in divine reality, or that the light making things thinkable does so.

to 9: Those rules which impious people discern are the first principles of human action. They are discerned by the light of the agent intellect shared from God, as also are the first principles of the speculative disciplines.

to 10: When it comes to judging which of two things is better (melius), the means of judging must be better than both if it is a *rule* and *standard*. White, say, is the rule and standard for all other colours, as God is for all beings whatsoever. This is the case because each thing is *better* to the extent to which it approximates to the *best*. However, when it comes to judging by means of a *cognitive power* that one thing is better than something else, there’s no call for the cognitive power to be better than both of them. Just so do we use the agent intellect to judge an angel to be better than a soul.

to 11: The solution [to this Objection] is clear from what has already been said (16): the agent intellect is compared to the receptive intellect as an active and moving cause is compared to the matter [on which it works]. This is due to its making actually thinkable (intelligibilia in actu) those objects to which the receptive intellect is in potentiality. It was also said how these two powers were grounded in the soul’s one substance.

to 12: There’s one idea of ‘number’ in all minds, just as there’s one idea of ‘stone’. And it’s one on the score of *what is thought*, not on the score of the *activity of thinking*, which isn’t included in the notion of *what is thought* - you don’t define ‘stone’ by mentioning that it may be thought about. It follows that this sort of conceptual oneness whether of numbers or stones or anything else has no bearing on [the issue of] the oneness of either the receptive intellect or the agent intellect. This was brought out at greater length above. (17)

to 13: That truth in which the highest good is possessed is common to all minds, either by reason of the object's oneness, or by reason of the oneness of that primary Light that flows into all minds.

to 14: The universal disengaged by the agent intellect is but *one object* in all those things from which it is disengaged. So different agent intellects don't arise from these things being individually different. They do arise, however, on the basis of there being different [receptive] intellects. This is so because the universal doesn't have its oneness thanks to its being thought *by me and by you* - being thought by me and by you is quite incidental to the universal. Different [receptive] intellects, then, don't block the oneness of the universal.

to 15: It's wrong-headed to talk about the agent intellect's being 'stripped of' or 'clothed with' presentative forms, or being 'filled with' or 'devoid of' them. To be 'filled with' these forms is the receptive intellect's brief; to produce them is the brief of the agent intellect. What's not to be said, of course, is that the agent intellect 'thinks' in separation from the receptive intellect. Rather, it's the *human being* who thinks by means of both - just as it's the human being whose sense powers provide *individual* knowledge of those objects grasped *abstractly* by the agent intellect.

to 16: It's not due to any lack on God's part that active powers are to be attributed to created things. Rather, they're to be attributed due to His transcendent fullness which supplies everything to everything.

to 17: The presentative form which is in the imagination is of the same kind as the presentative form in a sense power, since each makes present an individual object and is matter-dependent (*individualis et materialis*). But the form which is in the intellect is of a different kind since it makes present a *universal* object. So a form belonging to the imagination can't bring about a presentative-form-of-what-is-thinkable (*speciem intelligibilem*), whereas a presentative form in the senses can bring about one in the imagination. This is why an agent *intellective* power is required, though not an agent *sense* power.

## NOTES

1. The abstract noun "intellectualitas" is used only rarely by St Thomas.
2. Reading with the Marietti edition "*omnem intelligibilium veritatem*", in preference to the Keeler edition's "*omnium intelligibilium veritatem*". "Omnem" in agreement with "veritatem" seems here to capture the thought of St Thomas better than "omnium" in agreement with "intelligibilium".
3. Refer the Response in Article 9, *supra*.
4. The continuity that is being referred to is that between *this* human being and an allegedly

*separated* agent intellect.

5. See the Responses in Articles 2 and 9, *supra*.

6. Themistius (c.317AD to c.388AD) was a philosopher and, although a pagan, adviser to Christian emperors in the East. The concern of Themistius was to make available to educated people the writings of Plato and Aristotle by way of explanatory paraphrases of selected parts of their texts. He was highly regarded in the medieval period for his presentations of Aristotle. He also taught philosophy in Constantinople, and served as an administrator for that city.

7. Chapter 7 of book 10 of the (Nichomachean) *Ethics* (1177a 10 - 1178a 8) should be consulted. It is a challenging sketch by Aristotle of the role of intellectual activity in establishing the happiness or bliss (eudaimonia) of the human person.

8. St Thomas appears to have taken the phrase “intelligentiae agenti” straight from book 5, chapter 6, of Avicenna’s study of the soul, the Latin translation of which was well known to him. In a footnote on p.127, Keeler includes the following quotation from this work of Avicenna:

“Cum autem anima liberabitur a corpore et ab accidentibus corporis, tunc poterit coniungi intelligentiae agenti; et tunc inveniet in ea pulchritudinem intelligibilem et delectationem perennem.”

(“When the soul is freed from both the body and the body’s features, then will it be able to be united to the Agent Intelligence, and to experience in that Intelligence both intellectually satisfying beauty and everlasting delight.”)

9. St Thomas sees the use of first person plural expressions in the passage cited from *Genesis* as invoking the divine Trinity (“ad communem Trinitatis imaginem”). In a footnote on p.17, the *Jerusalem Bible* (English edition, Darton, Longman & Todd, London, 1966) comments that

“It is possible that this plural form implies a discussion between God and his heavenly court (the angels, cf. 3: 5, 22); our text was thus understood by the Greek version (followed by the *Vulg.*) of Ps 8:5....Alternatively, the plural expresses the majesty and fulness of God’s being: the common name for God in Hebrew is *Elohim*, a plural form. Thus the way is prepared for the interpretation of the Fathers who saw in this text a hint of the Trinity.”

10. See Note 6, *supra*.

11. It is not evident that the relevant text of Aristotle (*Peri psyches*, book 3, chapter 5) contains any statement about the *nous poietikos* - the agent intellect - being a “light from God” that is

possessed by our soul.

12. See the Response (*ad finem*) of Article 2, and Note 12 of that Article, as well as the Reply to Objection 8 in Article 9.

13. Alexander of Aphrodisias (fl. c.200 AD) was a major commentator on Aristotle in late antiquity. Later Greek philosophy, as well as Arabic philosophy, and Latin philosophy through to the Renaissance, were influenced by him. Of his numerous commentaries on Aristotle's works, few survive, the most notable being his commentary on the first five books of the *Metaphysics*. Alexander wrote an important treatise on the nature of life and mind - his *De anima* - based on Aristotle's work on the same topics. He took the view that the 'agent intellect' was to be identified with God, Who is imperishable, whereas the human intellect (both receptive and agent) perished with the human body.

14. Reading "lumen" with the Marietti edition, with which "ipsum" is in grammatical agreement, rather than "lucem" as in the Keeler edition (which would call for "ipsam", not "ipsum").

15. See the Responses in Articles 2 and 3, *supra*.

16. See Replies to Objections 3 and 4 in this Article (Article 10).

17. See Reply to Objection 6 in Article 9, *supra*.

## ARTICLE 11

The final issue to be considered is this: **Are the soul's powers identical with the soul's substance?**

It seems that they are:

1. In book 9 [chapter 4, section 5] of his *De Trinitate* (On the Trinity), Augustine says that "We are reminded that these things (namely, mind, knowledge, and love) appear in the soul...substantially or essentially, not as if they are in a subject, like colour or shape in a body, or any other quantity or quality."

2. Moreover, in the book *De spiritu et anima* (On spirit and soul) [PL 40, 789] (1) it's stated that "God is identically *all* that belongs to him, whereas the soul is identically *some* of what belongs to it", namely its powers; and is *not* identically some of what belongs to it, namely its virtues.

3. Again, differences grounded in *substance* aren't drawn from incidental features (ab aliquibus accidentibus). But 'being sentient' and 'being rational' are differences grounded in substance which are drawn from the sense and reasoning powers. So the sense and reasoning powers aren't incidental features or accidents and, by similar argument, other powers of the soul aren't either. Apparently, then, they belong to the soul's essence.

4. But [the respondent] said that the soul's powers are neither of the soul's essence nor are they incidental features (accidentia): they are the soul's natural or substantial *properties* - a sort of half-way house between substantial subject and incidental feature. On the contrary: there's nothing midway between Yes and No. But substance and incidental feature or accident are distinguished like Yes and No - an incidental feature or accident is what *is* in a subject, and a substance is what *is not* in a subject. There's no half-way house, then, between the essence or substance of a thing and an incidental feature or accident.

5. Besides, if the soul's powers are called 'natural or essential properties' there's a dilemma: *either* they're so called because they are parts of the soul's essence or nature, *or* they're so called because they are caused by the soul's essential principles. In the first case, they belong to the soul's essence or nature - the parts of a thing's essence or nature are, after all, found in that thing's essence or nature. In the second case, even incidental features or accidents may be called 'essential' because they're caused by the essential principles of a thing. It's necessary, therefore, that the soul's powers *either* belong to the soul's essence or nature *or* that they are incidental features or accidents [in the sense just indicated].

6. But [the respondent] said that, even though incidental features or accidents are caused by a thing's essential principles, not everything so caused is an incidental feature or accident [in the sense indicated]. On the contrary: what's at the midpoint has to be

different from both extremes. If, then, the soul's powers are at the midpoint between essence or nature and incidental feature or accident, they must be different from both of these. But nothing can be different from something else on the basis of what's common to both of them. Since, then, 'flowing from a thing's essential principles' - the reason for which powers are said to be 'essential' - is common to powers and to incidental features or accidents, it's clear that the soul's powers aren't different from incidental features or accidents [in the sense indicated above]. And it's also clear that there's no 'midpoint' between a substance and incidental features [in the usual sense of the phrase].

7. But [the respondent] said that powers are distinguished from incidental features or accidents because the soul can be thought about minus these features, whereas it can't be thought about minus its powers. On the contrary: everything is thought about as far as concerns its essence or nature (*per suam essentiam*), since the intellect's distinctive object is the 'what-a-thing-is' (*quod quid est*), as book 3 of [Aristotle's] *De anima (On the soul)* [429b 19] points out. It follows that anything minus which a thing can't be thought about belongs to that thing's essence or nature. So, if the soul-minus-its-powers can't be thought about, it has to follow that these powers are of the soul's essence or nature - and that they're not a halfway house between the soul's essence and its incidental features or accidents.

8. Further, Augustine remarks in book 10 [chapter 11, section 18] of the *De Trinitate (On the Trinity)* that memory, intelligence, and will are "one life, one mind, one substance." So it's manifest that the soul's powers are its very essence or nature.

9. Moreover, the relatedness of the whole soul to the whole body is continued in the relatedness of a part or power of the soul to a part of the body. But the whole soul is the body's substantial form. So a part or power of the soul - sight, say - is the substantial form of a part of the body - the eye, in this case. But the soul *in terms of its essence or nature* is the substantial form of the whole body and of each of its parts. Consequently, the power of sight is one with the soul's essence or nature and, on the same basis, so are all the other powers.

10. Besides, the soul is more excellent than a non-essential form (*forma accidentalis*). But a non-essential *active* form is its own power. Even more so, then, is the soul its own powers.

11. Again, Anselm comments in his *Monologion (Soliloquy)* [PL 158, 213] that nothing greater can be given to the soul than powers of recall, thought, and will. Yet, outstanding amongst all that belongs to the soul is its very essence or nature, which is God-given. It follows that the powers of the soul are the same thing as its essence or nature.

12. Further, if the soul's powers are distinct from its essence or nature, they must derive from the soul's essence or nature as from their source. But this is impossible: it would follow that what derives from this source would be less matter-dependent than the source. For the intellect - a particular power of the soul - isn't the actualising principle (*actus*) of

anything bodily, whereas the soul is, in terms of its very essence or nature, the actualising principle of a body. So the proposal, viz. that the soul's powers aren't its essence or nature, is unacceptable.

13. Moreover, it's especially characteristic of 'substance' that it be receptive of contrary features. Now the soul's powers are receptive of contraries - the will, say, of virtue and vice, and the intellect of knowledge and error. So the soul's powers make the grade as 'substance'. And, since there's no other substance here except the soul's substance, it follows that they're one with the very substance of the soul.

14. Again, the union of soul with body is immediate, not demanding some intermediary capacity or power. Now, *qua* being the form of the body, the soul imparts actualisation (aliquem actum) to the body. Of course, this actualisation isn't that of *be-ing* (esse) - the actualisation that's *be-ing* is found even in things in which there's no soul; nor, for that matter, is it the actualisation that's *being alive* (vivere) - an actualisation found in things in which there's no rational soul. It remains, then, that the soul imparts the actualisation that is *being capable of thought* (intelligere). But it's an *intellective power* that imparts this actualisation. Therefore an intellective power is the same thing as the soul's essence or nature.

15. Besides, soul is more excellent and perfect than primary matter. But primary matter is identically its own potentiality - it can't be said that matter's potentiality is non-essential to it, because then a non-essential feature would pre-exist substantial form, since potentiality in one and the same thing is prior in time to the thing's actualisation, as Aristotle said in book 9 of the *Metaphysics* [1049b 19]. Moreover, [this potentiality] isn't substantial form, since form is actualizing principle, which is set over against potentiality. Nor is it the composite of matter and form - this would involve the composite's being prior to form, which is impossible. So it remains that the potentiality of matter is one with the very nature of matter. Even more so, then, are the soul's potentialities or powers one with the soul's nature.

16. Further, an incidental feature or accident doesn't reach beyond the subject in which it's found (2). But the soul's powers reach beyond the soul itself - the soul, after all, is aware of, and committed to, not only itself but also things other than itself. So the soul's powers aren't incidental features of it. The consequence is that they're the soul's very substance.

17. Again, freedom from matter gives rise to a substance's having intellect, as Avicenna noted [Commentary on book 8, chapter 6, of the *Metaphysics*]. But the soul is by nature free from matter, so by nature intellectual. Intellect, then, is its very substance, and its other powers likewise.

18. Besides, "In the case of things not involving matter, what thinks is the same as what-is-thought-about (idem intellectus et intellectum)", according to Aristotle in book 3 of the *De anima* [On the soul, 430a 2]. But it's the soul's very substance that's thought about. It follows that it's the soul's very substance that's the power doing the thinking - and,

equally, the soul is all its other powers.

19. Again, the parts of something belong to its substance. But the powers of the soul are called its 'parts'. Therefore they belong to its substance.

20. Moreover, the soul is non-composite, as was said earlier, whereas it has several powers. If, then, its powers aren't its substance but are incidental features or accidents of it, it follows that a number of disparate features are found in something non-composite - an implausible conclusion. The soul's powers, therefore, aren't incidental features or accidents of it, but its very substance.

**But against that position:**

1. In chapter 11 of his *Celestial Hierarchy* [PG 1, 283D], Dionysius mentions that higher natures divide into substance, power, and activity. Even more so, then, in souls is *substance* one thing and *capacity* or *power* something different.

2. Further, Augustine says in book 15 [chapter 23, section 43] of his *On the Trinity* that the soul is called the 'image' of God rather as a painted tablet or panel [is called an image of some object] "because of the painting that's on it". But the painting isn't the very substance of the tablet or panel. Nor are the soul's powers - the features in terms of which God's 'image' is ascribed to the soul - the very substance of the soul.

3. Moreover, when things are numbered off in terms of what they are essentially, we're dealing with more than one thing. But the *three* features which form the image [of God] in the soul are reckoned up in terms of what they are essentially. So they're not the soul's substance, which is one.

4. Further, a power lies midway between substance and activity. Yet the soul's activity differs from its substance. So a power must differ from both, since it wouldn't lie midway between the two were it identical with either extreme.

5. Besides, a principal cause and its instrument aren't the same. But a power of the soul is contrasted with the soul's substance as an instrument with a principal cause - Anselm points out in his work *De concordia praescientiae et liberi arbitrii* [*On reconciling foreknowledge and free choice*, PL 158, 534] that the will, a power of the soul, is an instrument, as it were. This rules out the soul's being its powers.

6. Again, in the first chapter of his *De memoria et reminiscencia* [*On memory and recall*] Aristotle says that memory is a property or disposition involving sense and imagination. Now properties and dispositions are incidental features or accidents of things. Memory, then, is an incidental feature or accident of the soul as, on the same reasoning, are the soul's other powers.

**Response:**

It has to be said that certain thinkers have proposed that the soul's powers are nothing other than the soul's essence or substance. On this basis, one and the same soul-essence is called 'sense capacity', thanks to its being the source or principle of sense activity. And it's called 'intellect' in virtue of its being the source or principle of intellectual activity. And so on for other life activities.

They seem to have been moved to take up this position - as Avicenna notes [in his *De anima (On the soul)*, book 5, chapter 7] - because of the non-composite character of the soul. They regarded the soul's non-compositeness as incompatible with accepting so great a diversity of powers of the soul as actually appears to be the case. But their opinion is quite impossible.

In the first place, the nature of no created substance could possibly be identical with its power to act. For it's obvious that diverse actualisations (actus) relate to diverse subjects: the state of 'being actualised' is, after all, always symmetrical with *what* is actualised. Now, just as be-ing (ipsum esse) is the actualisation of an essence or nature (3), so activity (operari) is the actualisation of a power or capacity to act. Each of the two is in actuality as follows: essence or nature in terms of be-ing (secundum esse); a power or capacity in terms of activity (secundum operari). Accordingly, since in no created substance is its activity identical with its be-ing - this is proper to God alone - the upshot is that no created substance's power to act is identically its essence or nature. It's distinctive only of God to have identity of essence and power to act.

Secondly, in the case of the soul this impossibility is especially evident on three grounds. First, essence or nature is one, whereas *many* powers must be affirmed due to the diversity of their activities and objects - it's actualisations that diversify potentialities, since 'potentiality' makes sense only relative to 'actuality' (cum potentia ad actum dicatur). Second, the same thing is apparent from the differences between powers: some of them are the actualising principles of particular parts of the body - all the sentient and nutritive powers, say. And others aren't actualising principles of any part of the body at all - I mean the intellect and the will. But this couldn't be so were the soul's powers not other than the soul's substance: you simply oughtn't to say that one and the same thing can be the actualising principle of something bodily, yet exist apart (separatum) from it; you need different things for this. Third, the same point can be made from the order of the soul's powers, and their connection with each other. We find that one power moves another - mental awareness (ratio) moves our powers of aggression and desiring, and mind (intellectus) moves the will. And this just wouldn't take place were all these powers the soul's very essence, since nothing moves itself *qua* itself, as Aristotle proves (*Physics*, book 8, 257b 1 sqq.). The soul's powers, then, are not its essence or substance.

But some people have granted this, yet say [the soul's powers] aren't, each one, an incidental feature (accidens) of the soul. All are *essential or natural properties (proprieties)* of the soul. Now, taken one way this view warrants support; taken another way it's simply impossible.

To bring this out, recall that philosophers talk about 'incidental feature' (accidens) in two

ways. In one way, ‘incidental feature’ is set over against *substance* and contains under it the nine [non-substance] modes of being (4). Taking ‘incidental feature’ in this way, the proposed view is impossible. For then there’s no middle point between ‘substance’ and ‘incidental feature’ or ‘accident’: they are separated across reality like Yes and No (dividant ens per affirmationem et negationem). It is, after all, distinctive of ‘substance’ *not* to exist in a subject, and of ‘incidental feature’ or ‘accident’ to exist in one. So, if the soul’s powers aren’t its essence or substance (and it’s blatantly obvious they aren’t *other* substances), there’s no getting away from their being incidental features or accidents locatable in one of the nine [non-substance] modes of being. In fact, they’re located in the second species of *quality* (5) which involves natural *capacity* and *incapacity* (potentia vel impotentia).

Taking ‘incidental feature’ in a second way, we have Aristotle identifying it as one of the four modes of predication [*Topics*, book 1, 101b 25], and Porphyry (6) identifying it as one of the five ‘predicables’ [*Isagoge*, chapter 4] (7). Taken in this way, ‘incidental feature’ or ‘accident’ doesn’t denote something common to the nine [non-substance] modes of being. Rather, it denotes the non-essential connection (habitudinem accidentalem) of predicate to subject, or of some general notion to things contained under this notion. And, if this meaning were on all fours with the first, then, since ‘incidental feature’ or ‘accident’ taken in this way is set over against the notions of ‘genus’ and ‘species’ it would follow that nothing in the nine [non-substance] modes of being could be designated as ‘genus’ or ‘species’ - something manifestly false since ‘colour’ is the genus containing ‘whiteness’, and ‘number’ the genus containing ‘two’.

Now, by taking ‘incidental feature’ or ‘accident’ in this [second] way, there is a middle point between *substance* and *incidental feature* or *accident*, i.e. between a predicate applying substantially or essentially, and one applying incidentally or as an accident, to a thing. This is what is meant by *property* (proprium). Moreover, a property accords with a *substantial* or *essential* predicate in virtue of its being derived from the specific nature of a thing. So, by drawing on a definition indicating the thing’s nature, a property of that thing can be established (8). On the other hand, a property accords with a *non-essential* or *accidental* predicate in that it is neither the thing’s nature, nor part of the thing’s nature, but a feature lying outside that nature (praeter ipsam [essentiam] ). However, it differs from a non-essential or accidental predicate because this latter sort of predicate is not derived from the specific nature of a thing but attaches to an *individual* thing as a property does to a *species*, though in some cases it can be separated from the individual thing, in other cases not (9).

This is the way, then, in which the soul’s powers are a sort of half-way house between being the *essence* or *substance* of the soul and being an *incidental feature* or *accident* of it: they’re the soul’s natural or essential *properties*, the natural consequences of its essence or substance.

**So:**

to 1: Whatever may be said about the soul’s powers, no one (unless deranged) has ever

thought the soul's states (*habitus*) and actions are its very substance. It's obvious, moreover, that the knowledge and love Augustine talks about aren't a matter of *powers* but of *actions* or *states*. So Augustine doesn't intend to say that knowledge and love are the soul's very essence, but are present in it as related to its substance or essence. To get the sense of this, note that Augustine is there talking about mind or soul according as it is self-related by way of knowledge and love. Now knowledge and love can be related to the mind or soul either as to what-does-the-loving-and-knowing, or as to what-is-loved-and-known. It's in this second way that Augustine is talking. He says that knowledge and love exist substantially or essentially in the mind or soul for the reason that it's the very essence or substance that the mind knows and loves. So he adds later [*On the Trinity*, book 9, chapter 4, section 7]: "I don't see how these three aren't of the very same substance, since it's the mind/soul loving itself, and knowing itself."

to 2: The book *De spiritu et anima* (*On spirit and soul*) is spurious - we don't know who wrote it (10). Again, there's much in it that's either false or badly stated because whoever wrote the book didn't understand the words of the saintly people from whom he attempted to borrow. However, if the text must be rescued, start by noting that there are three kinds of 'whole'. One is a *universal* whole, which is found in any of its sub-classes in terms of its whole nature and scope; so it's appropriately predicated of these sub-classes, as when it is said that human beings are sentient beings. Another is an *integral* whole, which is not found in any of its component parts, whether in terms of its whole nature or in terms of its scope. In no way at all is it predicated of a component part - we don't, for example, say that a wall is a house. The third is a *potential* whole, which is midway between the first two. It's found in any of its functional parts in terms of its whole nature, but not in terms of its whole scope. When it comes to predicating X, then, there's a *via media*: it's sometimes predicated of its functional parts, though improperly. And, taken in this way, it's sometimes said that the soul is its powers, and the other way round.

to 3: Substantial forms aren't directly (*per se ipsas*) known by us, and we get to know them through the distinctive incidental features or accidents of things (*per accidentia propria*). We usually hit on the differences between substances by drawing on these incidental features or accidents of things, in place of the substantial forms themselves which are disclosed by features of this sort - features such as 'two-footed', say, or 'mobile', and others of this kind. It's in this way that 'sentient' and 'rational' stand for differences between *substances*.

Taking another tack, it could be said that 'sentient' and 'rational', *qua* differences, aren't derived from *sense* and *reason* understood as powers [of the soul], but from the *soul* itself understood as rational and as sentient.

to 4: The argument offered uses the notion of 'incidental feature' or 'accident' that is common to the nine [non-substance] modes of being. In this sense, there's no mid-point between *substance* and *incidental feature* or *accident*. It's the other sense [the sense of *non-essential relation of predicate to subject*] that's called for, as we said above.

to 5: The soul's powers can be called *essential properties*, not because they're parts of the soul's substance but because they derive from what the soul is. So they're not distinguished from incidental feature or accident understood as what is common to the nine [non-substance] modes of being. What they *are* distinguished from is any incidental feature or accident not derived from a thing's *specific nature*.

- The response 'to 5' also resolves the sixth difficulty.

to 7: Aristotle points out in book 3 of his *On the soul* [430a 26 sqq.] that intellect operates in two ways. The first way involves grasping what-a-thing-is (quod quid est) and, by intellectual activity of this sort, the essence or nature of a thing can be grasped, minus both properties and incidental features (sine proprio et sine accidente), since none of these enters the very essence or nature of a thing. (The objection draws on this idea.) The second way the intellect operates involves propositional judgment. In this way a substance can be thought about minus incidental features (sine accidentalibus praedicato), even when these features are factually inseparable from it. It's in this sense that a crow can be thought of as white since, in this case, there's no conceptual contradiction (repugnantia intellectuum), given that the contradictory [black] of the actual predicate isn't derived from the specific nature named by the subject term ["crow"].

But, when the intellect operates in this [second] way, a substance can't be thought of minus its properties (sine proprio): we can't think of 'being human', say, as 'not involving capacity for laughter', or of 'triangle' as 'not having three angles equal to two right angles'. In this case, there's conceptual contradiction because the contradictory [e.g. 'having three angles equal to two right angles'] is derived from the nature of the subject.

By its first way of operating, then, the intellect grasps the nature of the soul so as to understand what it is (quid est) minus its powers (absque potentiis); by its second way of operating, however, there's no chance of the soul's being understood apart from its powers.

to 8: Those three features ["memory, intelligence, and will"] are described as being "one life, one substance" *either* according as they're being referred to the soul's [one] essence as to their rationale [ut ad objectum], *or* according as a *potential whole* is predicated of its parts.

to 9: The whole soul is the substantial form of the whole body, not by reason of the sum total of all its powers (non ratione totalitatis potentiarum), but by reason of the soul's very nature (per ipsam essentiam animae), as was said above [Article 4, Response]. So it doesn't follow that the power of sight is the eye's substantial form. Rather, it's the very soul itself in virtue of its being the subject and source of this power.

to 10: A non-essential form (forma accidentalis) that is a source of action is itself the power or capacity of a substance that is in action. No infinite regress is touched off, however, in the sense that, for any such power, there has to be a prior power.

to 11: Essence or nature is a greater endowment (*maius donum*), so to speak, than a power or capacity, as a cause is more excellent than its effect. However, powers or capacities are in some sense better (*potiores*), insofar as they are more closely connected to the actions by means of which the soul achieves its purposes.

to 12: It is due to the soul's nature as something surpassing the range or scope of the body, as was said above [Article 2, Response; Article 9, 'to 15'], that it comes about that some or other power of the soul that's not the actualising principle of anything bodily is derived from the soul's nature. It doesn't follow, then, that a power may be less matter-dependent than the soul's nature, only that its independence of matter flows from the soul's independence of matter.

to 13: When it's question of incidental features or accidents, one is more immediately related to its subject than another - quantity, say, is more immediately related to [material] substance than is quality. It's on this basis that a substance takes on one incidental feature or accident by way of another - colour, for example, by way of surface, and knowledge by way of intellective power. That's the way in which a power of the soul is receptive of contraries, rather as a surface is receptive of black and white: it's really the substance that's taking them on, as we've explained.

to 14: It is insofar as it's the body's actualising principle or form in terms of its very nature that the soul imparts be-ing (*esse*) to the body: it's body's substantial form, after all. And it imparts [to the body] the sort of be-ing that is 'be-ing alive' (*vivere*), thanks to its being *this* sort of form, namely a *soul*. And it imparts a particular sort of 'be-ing alive', namely 'be-ing alive in an intellective nature', thanks to its being *this* sort of soul, namely an *intellective* one. Now, 'thinking' (*intelligere*) is sometimes taken for the relevant *activity* and, in that case, its principle or source is a power or condition (*habitus*). But it's sometimes taken for the *very be-ing of the intellective nature*, and, in this case, the principle or source of thinking is the nature of the intellective soul itself.

to 15: The potentiality of [primary] matter doesn't relate to action (*non est ad operari*), but to existing as a substance (*ad esse substantiale*). Accordingly, the potentiality of matter can be in the category of 'substance', but not so a power of the soul relating to action (*ad operari*).

to 16: As was said above ['to 1'], Augustine is relating knowledge and love to mind or soul according as it's mind or soul that's known or loved. But if *this* relationship [to an object] were taken to mean that knowledge and love were now in the mind or soul as in a *subject*, it would follow by parity of argument that they existed as in a *subject* in all cases of known and loved *objects*. We would then have the impossible situation of an incidental feature or accident going beyond its own subject. Besides, had Augustine intended to prove [in this way] that knowledge and love were the very essence of the soul, the proof would collapse: it's no less true of a thing's essence or nature that it doesn't exist outside the thing, than of an incidental feature or accident that it doesn't exist outside its subject.

to 17: All that follows from the soul's being independent of matter in respect of its nature is that it has an intellectual power, not that this power *is* its very nature.

to 18: Intellect taken in isolation isn't the intellectual power; rather, it's the *substance* [of the soul] acting through such a power. So, not only is a *power* thought about, but also a *substance*.

to 19: The soul's powers are called 'parts', not of the soul's essence or nature, but of its total capacity, as it might be said that the power of a military weapon is a 'part' of the total capacity of a king.

to 20: Several of the soul's powers are found not in the soul, but in the composite [of soul and primary matter], as their subject. And this multiplicity of powers is matched by the multiformity of parts of the body. Powers existing in the soul only as their subject are the agent intellect, the receptive intellect, and the will. And all that's required for this multiplicity of powers is some sort of actuality/potentiality composition affecting the soul's substance, as was argued above [Article 1, Response]. (11)

### Notes

1. For the book *De spiritu et anima (On spirit and soul)*, see note 1 of Article 2 *supra*.
2. In his critical edition of the *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis*, Leo Keeler includes in a footnote (pp.138-139) the following excerpt from St Augustine's *De Trinitate (On the Trinity)*, book 9, chapter 4, section 5:

Quidquid enim talis est [quantitas aut qualitas] non excedit subiectum in quo est. Non enim color iste, aut figura huius corporis, potest esse et alterius corporis. Mens autem amore quo se amat, potest amare et aliud praeter se. Item non se solum cognoscit mens, sed et alia multa. Quamobrem non amor et cognitio tanquam in subiecto insunt menti, sed substantialiter etiam ista sunt, sicut ipsa mens, quia etsi relative dicuntur ad invicem, in sua tamen sunt singula quaeque substantia.

(Whatever is of this kind [quantity or quality] doesn't extend beyond the subject in which it exists. For neither the colour nor the shape of *this* material object can exist in *another* material object. Mind, on the other hand, can embrace what is beyond itself on the strength of the love by which it embraces itself. In addition, the mind doesn't know only itself; it knows much else besides. Accordingly, love and knowledge aren't found in the mind as if in a subject. They have their own substantial existence, just as the mind itself does. This is so be-

cause, although they're described relatively to one another, each one of them is in itself a substance.)

3. Thomas has said this several times before. It is, e.g., a principle he has invoked to good effect in his Response in Article 1 where he tackled the question "Is created spiritual substance composed of matter and form?" The idea that be-ing (esse) is the actualising principle - the 'actus' - of an essence or nature that is ontologically distinct from it is a fundamental principle of his metaphysical account of the whole universe of finite beings, whether material or non-material.

It may be useful at this point to note initially what the Thomist tradition has in mind in distinguishing between *be-ing* (esse/existentia) and *essence* (essentia/natura) in finite beings. Joseph Gredt puts the matter succinctly:

Concipimus existentiam realiter distinctam ab essentia tamquam actum ultimum complementem et perficientem essentiam, et essentiam tamquam potentiam realem, quae recipit existentiam. Essentia et esse non sunt res seu entia, non se habent ut 'quod', sed ut 'quo': sunt principia entis creati.

(We understand *existence*, distinct in the real order from essence, as the ultimate actualising factor completing and fulfilling essence, and *essence* as the real potency or capacity that takes on existence. Essence and be-ing or existence aren't themselves 'things' or 'entities'; they don't present as 'that which' (quod) but as '(that) by which' (quo): they are the *fundamental components* of created being.)

*Elementa Philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae*, volume 2, p.119.

St Thomas has this to say about the distinction in chapter 5 of his *De ente et essentia*:

Quidquid non est de intellectu essentiae vel quidditatis, hoc est adveniens extra, et faciens compositionem cum essentia; quia nulla essentia sine his quae sunt partes essentiae intelligi potest. Omnis autem essentia vel quidditas potest intelligi sine hoc quod aliquid intelligatur de esse suo: possum enim intelligere quid est homo vel phoenix, et tamen ignorare an esse habeant in rerum natura. Ergo patet quod esse est aliud ab essentia vel quidditate, nisi forte sit aliqua res cuius quidditas sit ipsum suum esse; et haec res non potest esse nisi una et prima... Unde oportet quod, in qualibet alia re praeter eam, aliud sit

esse suum et aliud quidditas vel natura seu forma sua.

(What isn't included in the full understanding of an essence or quiddity is extraneous to it, though entering into composition with such an essence; whilst no essence can be fully understood minus those factors that form part of it. Yet any essence or quiddity at all can be fully understood without anything being grasped about its *be-ing* or existence: I'm perfectly able to understand what a human being is or a phoenix, and yet prescind from whether they have *be-ing* in reality. So it is clear that *be-ing* (esse) is other than essence or quiddity (aliud ab essentia vel quidditate). Perhaps, though, there may be something whose quiddity is its own very *be-ing* or existence (ipsum suum esse); and this thing could be only one and absolutely primary... Hence, it's inescapable that, in any other thing apart from this one, its *be-ing* or *existence* is one factor, and its *quiddity* or *nature/form* a different factor.)

(Leonine Commission, Rome, 1976; volume 43, p.376)

The central ontological implication of Thomas's distinction between 'esse' and 'essentia' is spelt out by him a little later in the *De ente et essentia*:

Omne autem quod convenit alicui vel est causatum ex principiis naturae suae, sicut risibile in homine, vel advenit ab aliquo principio extrinseco, sicut lumen in aere ex influentia solis. Non autem potest esse quod ipsum esse sit causatum ab ipsa forma vel quidditate rei, dico sicut a causa efficiente, quia sic aliqua res esset sui ipsius causa et aliqua res se ipsam in esse produceret: quod est impossibile. Ergo oportet quod omnis talis res cuius esse est aliud quam natura sua habeat esse ab alio. Et quia omne quod est per aliud reducitur ad illud quod est per se sicut ad causam primam, oportet quod sit aliqua res quae sit causa essendi omnibus rebus ex eo quod ipsa est esse tantum; alias iretur in infinitum in causis, cum omnis res quae non est esse tantum habeat causam sui esse, ut dictum est.

(Every feature belonging to something is either caused by the principles of that thing's nature, like a human being's capacity to smile, or comes from some extrinsic source, as daylight from the sun's causal activity. Now it can't be

the case that be-ing or existence itself is caused by a thing's form or nature (I'm talking here about *agent cause*) because then a thing would be the cause of itself and would bring itself into existence (*se ipsam in esse produceret*), which is impossible. So it's necessary that whatever is such that its be-ing or existence is other than its nature derives be-ing or existence from something else.

Now, because 'whatever derives be-ing from something else' is referred back to 'what possesses be-ing of itself' as to a first cause (*sicut ad primam causam*), there must be something that is the cause of be-ing for everything else, due to its being *be-ing* only. The alternative would be a regress to infinity in causes, since everything that isn't be-ing only has a cause of its be-ing, as was just said.)

(Op. cit., p.377)

In interpreting St Thomas's line of argument in the texts cited, it is of the first importance to remember that, for him, be-ing (*esse*) is to be thought of on the model of an *activity*. *Be-ing* - the *existing* of things - is what all realities are engaged in *doing*. They are actively differentiating themselves from plain blank 'nothingness' in virtue of this most basic of all activities. And, of these realities, those in which this activity differs from *what* they are, i.e. from their individual natures or essences, are being caused or 'empowered', as it were, at every moment to engage in the activity of *be-ing*. (An analogy here would be an electric light bulb which does the actual illuminating of a room, but which is being caused or 'empowered' at every moment to do so by the influx of an electric current.) For Thomas, of course, absolutely everything falls into this category, with the exception of the one reality which, due to its nature's being *be-ing* only, is absolutely self-sustaining on the score of be-ing, and is thus able to cause or 'empower' everything else to exercise the most basic of all activities - the activity Thomas refers to when he employs the infinitive "esse" as a noun, or uses the phrase "actus essendi".

On this basis, it's easy enough to see why St Thomas would regard the alternative scenario of a "regress to infinity in causes" as totally unacceptable as a way of accounting for the *be-ing* (and hence for the entire actual reality) of things in which *esse* differed from *essentia*: on this alternative scenario absolutely nothing at all would exist, since nothing at all would be able *ex se* to differentiate itself - or anything else - from plain blank nothingness.

In a paper bearing the extraordinary title "God is Underfoot: Pneumatology after Derrida", the American theologian Mark I. Wallace indicates that he wishes to move away from what he calls "the pseudo-security of a philosophical foundation" for theology toward what he describes as "Derridean Iconoclasm" and "Green Pneumatology" - the latter concerned to "position the Spirit outside of the philosophical question of being", and to understand God as "a healing and subversive *life-form* [Wallace's italics] - as water, dove, mother, fire, breath, and wind - on the basis of different biblical figurations

of the Spirit in nature” (*The Religious: Blackwell Readings in Continental Philosophy*, Blackwell, Massachusetts, 2002, edited by John D. Caputo, p.204). Interestingly, and from within his totally non-Thomistic orientation, Professor Wallace first produces a statement that resonates well with the ideas St Thomas has articulated in the passages cited above from the *De ente et essentia*:

The compatibility between metaphysical theology and philosophy stems from an agreement that genuine thought about God follows the classical trajectory of intellectual *ascent* [Wallace’s italics] beyond the plurality of everyday objects and experiences toward the One who grounds all things in itself. Philosophy and theology share the same metaphysical content, since both disciplines articulate the return path back to the Source who is above the created order: our destiny is our origin as we recover the reality of God as the ground and end of all existence.

(op. cit., p.199)

4. The “nine [non-substance] modes of being (novem rerum genera)” refers to all of the categories or classes identified by Aristotle in his treatise entitled *Kategoriai*, with the exception of the category of ‘substance’ (Aristotle’s ‘ousia’). St Thomas provides the following endorsement of the full schema of Aristotelian categories (including ‘substance’) in the course of his commentary on book 5 (study [lectio] 9, no. 891 sqq.) of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*:

Praedicatum ad subiectum tripliciter se potest habere. Uno modo, cum est id quod est subiectum, ut cum dico: Socrates est animal...Et hoc praedicatum dicitur significare *substantiam primam*, quae est substantia particularis, de qua omnia praedicantur. Secundo modo, ut praedicatum sumatur secundum quod inest subiecto: quod quidem vel inest per se et absolute ut consequens materiam, et sic est *quantitas*, vel ut consequens formam, et sic est *qualitas*; vel inest ei non absolute, sed in respectu ad aliud, et sic est *ad aliquid [relatio]*. Tertio modo, ut praedicatum sumatur ab eo quod est extra subiectum, et hoc dupliciter. Uno modo, ut sit omnino extra subiectum: quod quidem, si non sit mensura subiecti, praedicatur per modum *habitus*, ut cum dicitur: Socrates est calceatus vel vestitus. Si autem sit mensura eius, cum mensura extrinseca sit vel tempus vel locus, sumitur praedicamentum vel ex parte temporis, et sic erit *quando*, vel ex loco, et sic erit *ubi*, non considerato ordine partium in loco; quo considerato erit *situs*. Alio modo, ut id a quo sumitur praedicamentum, secundum aliquid sit in subiecto de quo praedicatur. Et si quidem secundum principium, sic praedicatur ut *agere*. Nam actionis principium in subiecto est. Si vero secundum terminum, sic praedicatur ut in *pati*, nam passio in subiectum patiens terminatur.

(A [real] predicate is connected with a [real] subject in one of three ways.

The first way is when the predicate just *is* the subject, as when I say “Socrates is a being having sentient life”... And “predicate” in this sense is said to designate a *first substance* (substantia prima), which is the individual substance of which every thing else is predicated.

The second way is when the predicate is taken as being *in* the subject. In this case, either it’s in the subject of itself and absolutely as resulting from matter - this is *quantity* (quantitas), whereas, if it results from form, then it’s *quality* (qualitas); or, on the other hand, it’s in the subject absolutely but relatively to something else, so we have *relatedness* or *relation* (relatio).

The third way is when the predicate is based on what lies outside the subject, and there are two approaches here. One is the predicate’s being based on what is totally outside the subject, and this, in turn, is twofold: first, a predicate that’s in no sense a situating or ‘measuring’ of a subject, but is attached to it in the style of *having something* (habitus), as when someone says that “Socrates is wearing shoes” or “Socrates is clothed.”; second, a predicate that involves a situating or ‘measuring’ of a subject, and this sort of external measuring involves either time (tempus) or place (locus). If the predicate is based on time, we’re dealing with the *when* (quando) of things; if based on place, we’re dealing with the *where* (ubi) of things. If we don’t disregard, but take into account, the ordering of a thing’s parts in place, then we have the further predicate that is *arrangement* (situs).

The second approach is the predicate’s being based on what is under some aspect (secundum aliquid) within the subject to which the predicate is attached. If this ‘aspect’ is a source or starting-point (principium) the predicate is that of *action* (agere/actio), since the source of action lies within the subject. If this ‘aspect’ is a term or stopping-point (terminus), the predicate is that of *reception* (pati/passio), since reception is completed within the receiving subject.)

St Thomas has endorsed Aristotle’s schema of categories by producing what might be described as a piece of *conceptual sculpture*. The material of this conceptual artefact is both the category of substance, and the categories covering the “nine [non-substance] modes of being (novem rerum genera)” - the nine incidental features or ‘accidents’ of things. The form is the arrangement of these categories as systematically deduced from the three ways in which predicates are connected with subjects (substances) in the real world.

The *content* of the categories is the natures or factors that in their characteristic, and analogous, ways, are the definable constituents of the ontological items that make up the

world of our experience. St Thomas has provided an ontological hermeneutic that also reaches beyond what is directly experienced, and accommodates *mutatis mutandis* the being and activity of the world of ‘separated substances’.

5. Aristotle considers *quality* as a category (*genos poiotes*) in chapter 8 of his treatise dealing with the ten categories, the *Kategoriai*. He returns to quality as a category in chapter 14 of book 5 of the *Metaphysics*.

In his *Summa Theologiae*, 1-11, question 49, article 2, in which he asks whether ‘habit’ is a determinate species of quality, Thomas provides in the course of his own reply, and in his replies to objections raised earlier in the article, a lucid summary of the Aristotelian teaching about the category of ‘quality’. This summary includes identifying the four species of quality recognised by Aristotle.

In agreement with Aristotle, St Thomas and the Thomistic tradition acknowledge the following four classes or species that make up the category or ‘genus’ that is *quality*:

i. *Habit* (*habitus*) and *disposition* (*dispositio*). These are qualities affecting or determining a subject or substance immediately in itself (e.g. health, illness, beauty), or in relation to its actions (skills, say, or virtues/vices). The idea here is that a subject or substance “bene vel male se habet”, to use the Thomistic tag; that is, that it be, and conduct, itself well or badly. ‘Habit’ is marked off from ‘disposition’ as being ‘*difficiliter mobilis*’ (well-established, hard to remove), whereas a disposition is “*facile mobilis*” (relatively easy to change).

ii. *Capacity* (*potentia*) and *incapacity* (*impotentia*). These are qualities affecting or determining a subject or substance as its *operational* potential. In relation to capacity or power, St Thomas has this to say:

Est autem duplex operatio: quaedam quidem transiens ab operante in aliquid extrinsecum, sicut calefactio ab igne in lignum; et haec quidem operatio non est perfectio operantis sed operati... Alia vero est operatio non transiens in aliquid extrinsecum sed manens in ipso operante, sicut intelligere, sentire, velle, et huiusmodi. Hae autem operationes sunt perfectiones operantis.

(Activity is twofold. One kind passes from the agent into something outside the agent, as heating passes from fire into a lump of wood. And this kind of activity isn’t the completing or fulfilling of the agent but of what-is-acted-upon... The other kind doesn’t pass into something outside the agent but remains within the agent itself, as to think or to sense or to intend, and so on. These activities are modes of fulfillment of the agent (perfectiones operantis). )

(*Quaestiones disputatae de*

For St Thomas, operational potential or capacity (*potentia*) is for activity that is either *transitive*, e.g. someone steering a yacht; or *immanent*, e.g. someone seeing a yacht. For him, someone doing a crossword puzzle, say, would involve an engagement in both sorts of activity.

*Incapacity* (*impotentia*) indicates operational potential or capacity that is weakened or flawed in some way, e.g. a capacity for seeing - eyesight - that is impaired.

iii. *Altered state* (*passio*) and *alterable feature* (*patibilis qualitas*). These are qualities affecting a subject or substance in respect of *alteration*. By “alteration” is here understood continuous change from one quality to another distinct from it, e.g. from being green to being red. Within this conceptual context, an *alterable feature* (*patibilis qualitas*) is one that tends to last for some time, e.g. a thing’s colour or flavour or the sound it makes; whilst an *altered state* (*passio*) is one that tends to change relatively quickly, e.g. blushing from embarrassment, as opposed to having a ruddy complexion. The Thomistic tags here are ‘*diu permanet*’ - ‘it lasts for a time’ - for an *alterable feature*, and ‘*cito transit*’ - ‘it passes rapidly’ - for an *altered state*.

It should be noted that the adjective “alterable” in the phrase “alterable feature” cuts two ways with regard to its meaning. It can mean either ‘that by reason of which an X can be altered’, e.g. an apple’s colour; or it can mean ‘that by reason of which an X can alter something else’, e.g. a proton’s electric charge.

iv. *Shape* (*figura*) and *form* (*forma*). The term “shape” (*figura*) is used to denote the incidental feature or ‘accident’ that results from a thing’s having a boundary or limit set to the quantity that affects it, relative to the positioning of its parts. The term “form” (*forma*) as here used is intended to convey the notion of due proportion or symmetry in the relation of parts to the whole. The thing in question is ‘finely formed’ or ‘beautiful’.

6. Porphyry (c.232/3 - c. 305 AD) was a noted third century AD polymath and one of the originators of Neoplatonism. Porphyry’s philosophical interests included logic, metaphysics, ethics, and the history of philosophy. His other intellectual interests took in grammar, rhetoric, literary theory, history, mathematics, physics, and the study of religion. He also had a great interest in vegetarianism, and his *Peri apokhes enphukhon* was an extended treatise of this topic in four books.

Porphyry is well known for his editing of the work of Plotinus (205 - 269/70 AD), the major participant in the creation of Neoplatonism in the third century AD. Porphyry had been a pupil of Plotinus in Rome from some time after 260AD. He edited the philosophical essays of Plotinus (essays arising out of seminars) into six *Enneads* or groups of nine, with the essays gathered more or less according to subject. The areas covered included ethics, aesthetics, cosmology, psychology, logic, epistemology, and metaphysics. An entry on Plotinus in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2nd edit., 1970, p.847) notes that “Though not systematic in intention, the *Enneads* form

in fact a more complete body of philosophical teaching than any other which has come down to us from antiquity outside the Aristotelian corpus.”

In connection with Aristotle’s logic, Porphyry produced his major work of commentary, namely his *Eisagoge eis tas kategorias* - a careful scholarly introduction to the Aristotelian schema of categories.

The *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, p.865, concludes an entry on Porphyry with the unflattering remark that “As a thinker he is unimportant: ‘in the whole extant work of Porphyry there is not a thought or an image which one can confidently affirm to be his own’ (Bidez).”

7. Joseph Gredt comments as follows on the ‘predicables’:

Quinque praedicabilia: genus, species, differentia, proprium, accidens, sunt quinque modi, quibus natura aliqua respicere potest inferiora tamquam in eis existens: formalis ratio universalis, - et praedicabilis de ipsis: propria passio universalis. Praedicabile igitur est ipsum universale formaliter sumptum, quod “praedicabile” denominatur a propria universalis passione, quae est praedicabilitas. Quare quinque praedicabilia sunt quinque universalia seu quinque modi universalitatis, quibus unum (una natura) esse potest in multis seu convenire eis et consequenter de eis praedicari.

(The five predicables - genus, species, [specific] difference, property, accident - are the five ways in which some or other nature can be linked to things as existing in them - the essential note of a universal - and predicable of them - the distinguishing characteristic of a universal.

A predicable, then, is the universal itself taken essentially, but getting its name ‘predicable’ from its distinguishing characteristic which is capacity-to-be-predicated (praedicabilitas). So it is that the five predicables are five universals - or rather, five ways of ‘being universal’, in terms of which one factor (one nature) is able to exist in many things, or identify with them, and, in consequence, be predicated of them.)

(Op. cit., p.133; cf. note 3 *supra*)

Gredt goes on to add that

Universale materialiter sumptum, i.e. natura cui affigitur universalitatis intentio, dividitur in decem praedicamenta.

(The universal taken in terms of its content, i.e. the nature to which the notion of ‘being universal’ is attached, is distributed across the ten categories [praedicamenta].)

(Loc. cit.; and cf. note 4 *supra*)

8. St Thomas's comment that "by drawing on a definition indicating the thing's nature, a property of that thing can be established" ("per definitionem significantem essentiam, demonstratur proprietas de subiecto") provides a crisp statement about what is central to the Aristotelian and Thomistic idea of *scientia propter quid*, i.e. causally grounded knowledge based on the essential nature of some or other thing, e.g. of a cat or an electron. Within a conceptual scheme that never loses touch with the intrinsic dynamism of reality, the Aristotelico-Thomistic tradition interprets the inner nature or essence of things as being a *cause* - the basic *formal* cause - of the distinguishing characteristics or properties (*propria*) of these things.

What would be called within this tradition 'scientia propter quid' accords extremely well with what happens in, say, inorganic chemistry when the molecular structure of iron sulphate is regarded as accounting for the properties of this compound; or within biology when the sequencing of amino acids in proteins is described as giving individual proteins their specific properties.

9. St Thomas makes a brief general statement about the incidental features or 'accidents' that belong to things in his *Quaestio disputata de anima* (*Disputed question on the soul*), article 12, reply to the seventh objection:

Tria sunt genera accidentium: quaedam enim causantur ex principiis speciei, et dicuntur *propria*, sicut risibile homini; quaedam vero causantur ex principiis individui. Et hoc dicitur quia, vel habent causam permanentem in subiecto, et haec sunt accidentia *inseparabilia*, sicut masculinum et femininum et alia huiusmodi; quaedam vero habent causam non permanentem in subiecto, et haec sunt accidentia *separabilia*, ut sedere et ambulare. Est autem commune omni accidenti quod non sit de essentia rei, et ita non cadit in definitione rei. Unde de re intelligimus quod quid est, absque hoc quod intelligamus aliquid accidentium eius. Sed species non potest intelligi sine accidentibus quae consequuntur principium speciei. Potest tamen intelligi sine accidentibus individui, etiam inseparabilibus; sine separabilibus vero esse potest non solum species, sed et individuum.

[The italics are those of the Marietti edition of the text.

The passage is excerpted from volume 2, p.327, of the *Quaestiones disputatae*, 1965, edited by P. Bazzi et al.]

(There are three sorts of incidental features or accidents. Some of them are caused by a thing's species-components, and they're called '*properties*' - the capacity to smile that human beings have is an example. Others are caused by the components belonging to a thing as an individual. This is said of individual things for either of two reasons: the first being that these features have a permanent basis or cause in the individual subject, and these are *non-separable* features or

accidents - being male or female, say, and other things like that; the second being that these features have no such permanent basis or cause in the individual subject - these are *separable* features or accidents, as, for example, being seated or walking around.

Now, it's common to any incidental feature or accident at all that it forms no part of a thing's essence (*quod non sit de essentia rei*), and hence doesn't fall within the strict definition of a thing. So it is that we think about what-a-thing-essentially-is (*quod quid est*) without any thought at all as to its incidental features or accidents. But a species can't be properly understood apart from the incidental features or accidents that are consequent upon the species-components. It can, of course, be properly understood even though no account be taken of the incidental features or accidents belonging to an individual thing, including the non-separable ones. In addition, not just a species but even an individual thing can exist minus particular separable features or accidents.)

10. Refer note 1 of Article 2, *supra*.

11. In a footnote on p.140 of his critical edition of the *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis*, Leo Keeler includes the following comment of St Bonaventure about the issue dealt with in Article 11, viz. are the soul's powers identical with the soul's substance?:

Dicendum quod...praedicta quaestio plus contineat curiositatis quam utilitatis, propter hoc quod sive una pars teneatur sive altera, nullum praeiudicium nec fidei nec moribus generatur.

(It should be remarked that...the issue brought forward smacks more of curiosity than utility because, whether you hold to one side of the argument or the other, nothing arises that is prejudicial to faith or morals.)

(*In 11 Sententiarum*, distinction 24; *Omnia Opera S. Bonaventurae*, tome 2, p.559)

This comment of the Seraphic Doctor nicely encapsulates his approach to philosophical issues: if a philosophical issue is raised that has no obvious bearing on religious belief or ethical behaviour, the best that can be said of it is that it arises out of intellectual 'curiositas', and has no 'utilitas [ad salvandum]'.

Of course, that St Bonaventure should comment in this way carries no implication that he was short on philosophical ability. The opposite was the case: his philosophical ability was of the highest order. It was, however, always brought into play in a theological or ethical context. Good examples of a first-rate philosophical mind at work when theological matters were under consideration are to be found in, e.g., the Seraphic Doctor's *Quaestiones disputatae de mysterio Trinitatis* (refer question 1, in particular), his *Brevi-*

*loquium* (a brilliant compendium of theologiae), his short treatise *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* (*Journey of the mind to God*), and his *De reductione artium ad theologiam* (*On tracing the arts back to theology*) - a work whose title well illustrates the outlook of Bonaventure.

The contrast with St Thomas is marked. Though not unconcerned with theological matters in Article 11 of the *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis*, the Angelic Doctor largely prescind from them to use the occasion of the discussion in Article 11 to set out in his Response a range of philosophical arguments for the position he holds, and to introduce several sharp philosophical distinctions. He goes on to propose in his replies to objections posed earlier in the Article a number of clarifications and elaborations relating to the soul, the soul-matter composite, the power/activity structure, conceptual issues about 'wholes', and so on. All of this is very much philosophy on its own terms, i.e. as an autonomous intellectual exploration concerned with accessing truths of the natural order for their own sake. No justification in terms of theological or ethical perspectives was thought to be necessary.

A citation from the contribution of P.Alfred Wilder, O.P., to the important volume *L'Anima Nell'Antropologia di S. Tommaso D'Aquino* - a contribution entitled 'St Thomas and the Real Distinction of the Potencies of the Soul from its Substance' (*op. cit.*, pp.431- 454) - takes this matter a step further, albeit in a slightly different direction, by attending to the relation between the position defended by Thomas in Article 11, and in other places (e.g. *Quaestio disputata de anima*, article 12; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, question 77, article 1), and much of his metaphysics:

I think an ability to see with some clarity the validity of St Thomas's position on the necessity, and distinct status, of operative potencies in created substances is a good measure of whether one understands St Thomas's doctrine on efficient causality in general as well as his overall doctrine on the structure of acting creatures, be their activity immanent or transient. If, moreover, one can distinguish accurately between God and creatures, essence, substance, predicamental and predicable accidents, properties, acts, passive and operative potencies, *esse* and *operatio*, *qualitas patibilis*, internal and external causality, and emanation and efficient causality - all of which enter into understanding, establishing, and defending St Thomas's position on the question with which this study has been concerned - this is a sign that one has understood something of what in general St Thomas's philosophy is all about.

St Thomas always enjoyed breathing pure philosophical air - and with lungs that were also very well adapted to the atmosphere of theology.

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