

Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature

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A Philosophical Study of *Summa theologiae*
Ia 75–89

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Introduction

*Alioquin, si nudis auctoritatibus magister
quaestionem determinet, certificabitur
quidem auditor quod ita est, sed nihil
scientiae vel intellectus acquirat, sed
vacuus abscedet.*

QQ 4.9.3c; see p. 16

This book is a close study of Aquinas's best-known philosophical text (§In.1), read in the light of his full body of writings (§In.2). The topic is human nature, which for Aquinas means above all a discussion of the soul and its various capacities (§In.3). My focus is philosophical, and yet the subject is a work of theology, because often it is theology in the Middle Ages that comes closest to our modern philosophical concerns (§In.4). Still, it is crucial to understand the theological context. Aquinas's interest in the philosophical problems surrounding human nature grows out of his broader theological views about the meaning of life (§In.5).

In.1. Overview

In the chapters to come, I have some novel and perhaps surprising things to say about Thomas Aquinas. As I consider how best to ease the reader down this road, the words of Montaigne come to mind: "Aristotle wrote to be understood; if he could not do this, much less will another that is not so good at it" (*Essays*, ch. 21). In fact I doubt whether Aristotle always did write to be understood, but certainly Aquinas did, above all in his reader-friendly *Summa theologiae*. But in the more than 700 years that have passed since Aquinas's death in 1274, our modes of expression have changed a great deal. Surely there is some call for commentary.

Of course, I am not alone in this enterprise. It may be that more has been written about Aquinas than about any other philosopher, and some of it has been insightful. Again, I think of Montaigne:

Who will not say that glosses augment doubts and ignorance, since there's no one book to be found, either human or divine, which the world busies itself about, whereof the difficulties are cleared by interpretation. The hundredth commentator passes it on to the next, still more knotty and perplexed than he found it. When were we ever agreed among ourselves: "this book has enough; there is now no more to be said about it?" (ibid.).

Somehow I am not distressed by this. It seems to me that knots and perplexity lie at the essence of philosophy. A philosophical text without knots is not philosophical at all. At best such a text will have started as philosophy and achieved too much, by treating an issue so thoroughly and decisively that it slips out of the realm of philosophy – growing up, perhaps, to become science.

A knotty philosophical text, then, is an interesting philosophical text, and it is my aim to identify a good many of the knots lying beneath Aquinas's serene prose. To my mind, there is far too much consensus in the secondary literature, a consensus that is symptomatic of a failure to appreciate the depth of his thought. I am constantly amazed at how much of what is written avoids raising the truly hard questions, and consequently leaves the reader feeling that perhaps Aquinas has nothing of much interest to tell us. It is as if those who suppose Aquinas has all of the answers have entered into a kind of unspoken conspiracy with those who suppose he has no interesting answers, with the result that his ideas have been neglected by the wider philosophical community.

An investigation into human nature raises many of the hardest questions in philosophy. I have by no means been able to address all of the issues that Aquinas raises in connection with human nature, but I think no one will feel cheated by the range of topics. The chapters that follow begin with the nature of soul and the mind-body problem (Chapters 1–5), then take up the workings of sense, will, and intellect (Chapters 6–10), and conclude with self-knowledge (Chapter 11) and immortality (Chapter 12). I have found that to understand many of these issues, I need to turn to metaphysics. As a result, much of what is novel in these chapters stands

or falls with some controversial claims on topics such as these:

- What is prime matter? (§§1.4 and 1.5, *Excursus*)
- What are substances, and what are substantial forms? (§3.2)
- What is the relationship of form and matter? (*Excursus*)
- What is the role of teleology? (§§In.5, 6.2, 7.1)
- How are substances individuated? (§12.4)

I am sure I haven't done justice to any one of these vast problems, let alone all of them. But I hope that I have been able to bring out at least some of the potential within Aquinas for an adequate solution.

Aquinas's ideas are surrounded on all sides by complex traditions. On one side, he himself was deeply influenced by earlier philosophers, Aristotelian, Platonic, and Augustinian, and he absorbed these traditions through a wide variety of sources. On the other side, Aquinas was at first the subject of fierce controversy and then, after both he and his work were canonized, the subject of a long commentary tradition. I had at one time hoped to situate Aquinas's thought within this context, backward and forward, but the task proved overwhelming. (From time to time, fragments of this effort surface, particularly in the notes.) The one influence I have remained committed to tracking is Aristotle's. Aquinas's philosophy is

Aristotelian in the way his theology is Christian, and much of what follows is unintelligible apart from its background in Aristotle's metaphysics and psychology.

In.2. The scope of the study

This is a study of Aquinas's Treatise on Human Nature, just one small part of the *Summa theologiae*'s first part (*ST* 1a), which itself constitutes only about a fourth of *ST*. The Treatise contains a mere fifteen questions (QQ75–89) out of the 119 that make up 1a. In all, my subject is less than 3 percent of *ST*'s whole. There are obvious reasons for picking this 3 percent: it is here, more than anywhere else in *ST*, that Aquinas confronts perennial questions about the human mind, the relationship between mind and body, the senses, intellect, and the scope of human knowledge. But these are issues that Aquinas takes up in many different places, often times at greater length, and so it is not so obvious why one should pick out the Treatise for special attention.

This question can be sharpened by looking at Aquinas's prologue to *ST* 1a, where he explains in careful detail his motivation for composing the work.

A teacher (*doctor*) of the catholic truth is not only responsible for instructing those who are advanced, but also has the duty to educate those who are just beginning, in keeping with what the Apostle says, in I Corinthians 3, *As unto little ones in Christ, I gave you milk to drink, not meat*. For this reason, our intent in this work

is to develop those issues that concern the Christian religion in a way that suits the education of those who are just beginning.

It has seemed to us, however, that those who are new to this teaching are impeded in a variety of ways when it comes to the things that various people have written: partly by the proliferation of unhelpful questions, articles, and arguments; partly, too, because the issues necessary for such students to acquire knowledge are developed not in instructional order, but according to the requirements of a textual commentary, or as the occasion for a disputation allowed; partly, also, because the constant repetitiveness of these works has generated aversion and confusion in the minds of those listening.

We will strive, therefore, to avoid these faults and others of this sort, and we will attempt, trusting in divine aid, to pursue those issues that concern sacred doctrine in a manner concise and lucid – inasmuch as the material allows (1a pr).

These remarks paint a vivid picture of pedagogy in the thirteenth century. Like a distinguished research professor faulting his colleagues for being too wrapped up in their own work to take notice of their students, Aquinas argues that the standard scholarly formats of his day are more confusing than illuminating for the novice. Lectures and treatises were too long, too repetitive, too disorganized – the result being “aversion and confusion.”

Vita

Aquinas is almost always silent on the subject of his personal motives and goals. We do not know, for instance, why he became a Dominican friar, nor why and how his theological and philosophical interests grew during his early years. Even as regards that most public side of him, his lectures and writings, we are largely in the dark about why Aquinas wrote what he did, when he did: Why, for instance, a *Summa contra gentiles*? (It was once widely thought that *SCG* was written as a kind of field guide for Christian missionaries in their intellectual struggles against the infidels. This has been discredited.) Why commentaries on Aristotle? (It was once widely assumed that these were written with the idea of combatting Averroes's influence as a commentator. This too has been discredited.) In light of such uncertainties, the preface to *ST* is particularly unusual and valuable for the insight it gives us into Aquinas's background motivations.

For a good summary of Aquinas's life and work, see Kretzmann and Stump (1998). The best detailed biography is Torrell (1996). Despite Aquinas's relatively explicit remarks, there is still controversy over precisely what role he intended *ST* to play. For two interesting and quite different suggestions, see Boyle (1982) and Jenkins (1997), ch. 3.

Aquinas no doubt meant these charges to apply to himself as much as to others. His first major work (1252–56) was a commentary (in question form) on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*. This work was both enormous (though no more so than *ST*), and also hopeless with respect to “instructional order,” as cursory inspection shows. Although the first book of *SENT* begins promisingly enough, with a discussion of theology's status as a science, Aquinas immediately plunges into a series of questions on use and enjoyment, a central topic in medieval ethics but hardly an appropriate starting point for a course in theology. Hard on the heels of this discussion, he enters into the mystery of the Trinity, the worst imaginable topic to take up with novices.

In giving his Commentary this order, Aquinas was simply following the structure of Lombard's *Sentences*; he was, then, very much writing “in keeping with the requirements of a textual commentary.” Indeed, such a commentary was the standard medieval requirement for a “teacher of the catholic truth.” Thus William Ockham, at the beginning of his own vast commentary on the *Sentences*, sixty years later, must first take up use and enjoyment (but only after a long and interesting prologue on theology and science), then the Trinity, and so forth.

Aquinas considered revising *SENT* in the mid-1260s, but gave up that project in favor of *ST*, which covers much the same ground, but in a style more conducive to novices. In *ST*, use and enjoyment get taken up in their proper context, near the beginning of the 1a2ae (QQ11,16), in the middle of Aquinas's discussion of human action. The Trinity is discussed in 1a (QQ27-43), but only after a thorough discussion of God's existence and essential nature.

Once scholastic theologians completed their lectures on the *Sentences*, their scholarly activities most often turned toward disputed questions, which might take up any topic – sometimes within certain limits, but often on any topic at all that a member of the audience might suggest. (These latter were known as *quaestiones quodlibetales*.) Aquinas delivered his first Quodlibet (QQ 7) in Advent, 1256, soon after finishing *SENT*. The topics he covered in that debate typified the random nature of such occasions: after three sets of questions on spiritual substances (the angels), the subject turned toward the Eucharist, then the bodies of the damned, then the interpretation of Scripture, and finally the value of manual labor. (He contends that doing philosophy counts as manual labor (QQ 7.7.1c).)

Most of Aquinas's disputed questions were not quodlibetal, and hence were more narrowly focused: he argued sets of questions on, among other things, truth, divine power, evil, and the virtues. The set of disputed questions that is of particular interest to us is his *Quaestiones disputatae de anima* (QDA), which seems to have been delivered the year before he began *ST*. Not surprisingly, there is considerable overlap between the two works. The most striking difference is the relative brevity of *ST*. In *ST* 1a 75.5

("Is the soul composed of matter and form?"), for instance, there are four objections followed by a brief main reply (the body or *corpus* of the article). *QDA* 6 asks the identical question, but introduces seventeen objections, and makes a reply that is four times as long. This is characteristic of the difference between Aquinas's disputed questions and *ST*. By a *summa* of theology, Aquinas does not mean the pinnacle of his work but merely a summary.

These considerations lead to some obvious questions. What does a reader gain, in focusing on *ST*, and what does the reader miss? Would one merely be missing "the proliferation of unhelpful questions, articles, and arguments"? Or is *ST* an oversimplification: good for beginners, but inadequate for the serious scholar? Scholars have largely preferred the first answer. James Weisheipl (1974) refers to *ST* as "Thomas's major work, the crown of his genius" (p. 361). John Jenkins (1997) writes that "on any given issue, the *Summa* generally contains the most mature, clear and definitive statement of Aquinas's position"; it "expresses his most fully developed thought" (p. 78). These remarks suggest that *ST* manages to be both concise and definitive, accessible to students and at the same time his most profound masterpiece.

Perhaps. But we should beware of letting educational needs distort history. Descartes's *Meditations*, for example, has been influential out of

INTRODUCTION

So 'nature' starts out meaning something like *birth*, and then gets extended to mean, first, the internal principles of birth and of movement in general and, second, the ultimate end of this process.

The Treatise is concerned with human nature in this last sense: its topic is the essence or defining character of human beings. "In general it is the essence of any thing, what its definition signifies, that is called its nature" (29.1 ad 4). Yet this focus on the essence of being human leads back to the prior sense of *natura* as inner principle of action, and so in turn to the question of whether matter or form has the better claim as being the inner principle of a thing's existence and functioning. Aquinas holds that form, rather than matter, is the inner principle that makes a thing be what it is: "the essence of any given thing is completed through its form" (29.1 ad 4). Indeed, following Aristotle, Aquinas holds that in the case of natural, nonartificial substances, the formal and the final cause are identical. The ultimate end of generation is the primary inner principle of a being, and this is its form. The form of a thing is the reason why such a thing was generated; that is what the process of generation was aimed at. So in the

human case, since a human being's form is the soul, "the end of the generation of a human being is the soul" (*InMet* VIII.4.1737). In this sense, Aquinas says, the formal and final cause of a human being are numerically the same.¹

What about matter? Aquinas holds that the material cause (the human body, for example) has much less of a claim to be part of human nature. It was the characteristic mistake of the pre-Socratics to suppose that all things could be explained in terms of material causes:

Ancient philosophers, unable to transcend their imaginations, . . . said that the only things that exist are bodies, and that what is not a body is nothing (75.1c).

Following Aristotle's famous diagnosis, then, Aquinas holds that explanations must be given in terms of formal as well as material cause (see *InPh* II.2). This is not a conclusion that the Treatise takes for granted. The very first thing that Aquinas sets out to show, in 75.1, is that the soul is not a body but rather the form of a body (see §1.3). Yet although material causes take a back seat to formal causes, still no definition of human beings would be complete without reference to the bodies from which we are composed.

The nature of a species consists in what its definition signifies. But in the case of natural things the definition signifies not the form alone, but the form and the matter (75.4c).

Human beings are essentially embodied creatures, and moreover essentially have bodies of a certain kind (see §2.1). A complete inquiry into human nature, then, would take as its subject all that is characteristically human, body as well as soul. (For discussion, see *InDA* I.2.144–160; *InPh* II.4.175.)

A theoretical enquiry into human nature will be aimed at the *universal* nature of being human:

IN.3. ON HUMAN NATURE

Sometimes *nature* is called the what-it-is of a thing, which includes all that the completeness of the species requires. For it is in this way that we say that human nature is common to all human beings (*SCG* IV.41.3788).

The Treatise is not concerned with features peculiar to one person or another, but with soul in general, and body in general. To this end Aquinas

distinguishes between two kinds of matter, common and signate. Only the former is contained in human nature:

Thus matter is part of the species in natural things – not signate matter, of course, which is the principle of individuation, but common matter. For just as it belongs to the character of this [particular] human being to be composed of *this* soul, *this* flesh, and *these* bones, so it belongs to the character of *human being* to be composed of soul, flesh, and bones (75.4c, continuing the earlier passage).

Etymology

Like many medieval authors, Aquinas is fond of speculative etymology. In claiming that the original meaning of *natura* is *birth* or *generation*, he seems for once to be right. (His source is Aristotle, *Met.* V 4, 1014b16, but see “natura” in Lewis and Short 1879.)

Here, as is often the case, the etymology serves a serious purpose (see Jordan 1986, pp. 16–17). Aquinas believes that language is isomorphic with the way we think (see **Pasnau** 1997a). By looking at how names change their meaning, we can see the way our thoughts have evolved.

Names are imposed by us in keeping with how we understand things, because names are signs for the things we understand. Now sometimes we understand the primary through the secondary, and thus we apply a name to something in a primary way, when in actual fact the name is suited to it only secondarily. So it is in this case. For because the forms and powers of things are cognized through their actions, generation or birth took the primary sense of the name *natura*, whereas form took the most remote sense (*InMet* V.5.824).

From a logical point of view, *natura* ought to mean the inner principle or form of generation. (Hence Aristotle remarks that “in the primary and strict sense,” *phusis* refers to a thing’s inner principle of movement (*Met.* V 4, 1015a13).) But human understanding starts with what is most visible. So *natura* was first used to refer to the action of generation, and only later applied to the inner principle. We will see that this is a key principle of Aquinas’s methodology: in understanding the soul, one works one’s way in from the external action to the internal capacity that explains the action, and eventually to the nature of soul itself. We have no direct access to the soul, not even to our own soul (§§5.5, 11.2).

This study has little to say about universals (see §10.1). But it is helpful to keep in mind that the subject of the *Treatise* is the human being, focused not on features peculiar to any one individual, but on the features that all fully functioning human beings must possess.²

These remarks on *natura* confirm that our subject is human nature in what is now the primary sense of that phrase: nature as essence or defining account. We can now understand more clearly how this part of *ST* is structured. Aquinas first lays out God's aim in producing the human species (QQ75–89), then he explains how in fact God did produce the human species (QQ90–102). The second set of questions rests on the first: by providing an account of human nature, Aquinas specifies the final cause of God's creative act. QQ90–102 then complete the discussion of human beings by analyzing the one Aristotelian cause left outstanding: the efficient cause. Here Aquinas addresses the question of where human beings come from. Once he has answered this question, he takes himself to have completed a general treatment of our species.

In.4. A philosophical study

ST is a work of theology. This has two important consequences. First, and most apparently, large parts of the work are concerned with issues that presuppose elements of Christian doctrine. The general topic of 3a, for instance, is Christ. Second, Aquinas permits himself in *ST* to rely on premises that are not accessible to natural reason. Thus the second part of Aquinas's general treatment of human beings (QQ90–102) presupposes in many places the Genesis account of human creation. Although Aquinas is

very much concerned with showing that this account is coherent, no attempt is made to demonstrate its truth.

In between and within the more theological discussions there are a great many places where Aquinas engages in analysis that is clearly within the bounds of what we now call philosophy. The Treatise is in this regard perhaps the richest of all such sections of *ST*. The most superficial examination indicates that the topics are philosophical: mind and body, free will, knowledge, intellect, perception (see the list of questions below). A more detailed examination shows that Aquinas's arguments are themselves philosophical, generally presupposing no theological claims whatsoever. Occasionally, Aquinas invokes the existence of a God that created the world according to a rational plan (see §§6.2 and 7.1). But even such nonsectarian theological premises are rare in the Treatise, and never crucial to the argument. So while the overall plan of *ST* is theological, significant portions of the work readily fall within the modern discipline of philosophy.

There should be no objection, then, to a philosophical study of *ST*, especially the Treatise. But there still might seem to be something at least puzzling in the choice of a theological work as the subject for a philosophical study on human nature. If philosophy is what is wanted, why not focus on one of Aquinas's more philosophical works, such as *SCG* or, even more so,

his Commentary on Aristotle's *De anima*? For that matter, why focus on a theologian at all? There were many philosophers active during Aquinas's time (Siger of Brabant, Boethius of Dacia, and others even more obscure) who explicitly sought to contain their arguments within the bounds of natural reason.³

Immediate answers to these questions suggest themselves. The focus is *ST* because that provides the most clear and succinct account of Aquinas's views (§In.2). The focus is Aquinas, because Aquinas was more talented than his contemporaries who taught philosophy. Still, one might feel puzzled. For, putting to one side the excellence of Aquinas and the "concise and lucid" manner of *ST*, it turns out to be generally true (allowing for a few exceptions) that the history of medieval philosophy is the history of medieval theology, minus the theological stuff. Why should theology and philosophy have been so closely tied? Again, an answer may suggest itself. Theology was held in more prestige than philosophy: one advanced to theology only after mastering philosophy. Naturally, the most talented and ambitious minds gravitated to that field. So, since theology as then defined contained philosophical elements, it is natural for historians of medieval philosophy to spend time mining those elements. This is the sort of explanation Anthony Kenny (1993) suggests:

... of course since the greatest medieval philosophers were theologians first and philosophers second, it is to their theological treatises rather than to their commentaries on *De anima* that one turns for their insights into philosophy of mind (p. 20).

This is a non sequitur. Kenny himself notes here that theologians often wrote philosophical works, such as *De anima* commentaries. So why shouldn't philosophers today study those commentaries above all else? Are we to suppose that these theologians didn't put their best efforts into their philosophical works? Did they save themselves for their theology?

Kenny's suggestion simply articulates the conventional view among historians. Yet it is inadequate: it leaves obscure the connection between philosophy and theology, and implies that it is a matter of mere chance that the history of medieval philosophy is largely found within medieval theology. Did it really just so happen that the best philosophers decided to become theologians? Again, there is the prestige of theology in the medieval university – but what if medicine had been the more prestigious field of study? What if the best philosophers had become medical doctors? Would the history of medieval philosophy then be drawn from medical treatises (leaving out, of course, the medical stuff)?

It is surely no accident that the best medieval philosophers became theologians, and that most of medieval philosophy is found within medieval theology. My suggestion is that philosophy today actually has more in common with medieval theology (that is, theology as then practiced) than it does with medieval philosophy (that is, the part of the arts curriculum that was referred to as philosophy in the medieval university).

In other words, it seems to me that medieval theology, not medieval philosophy, is the closest medieval precursor to modern philosophy. Such a claim needs qualification in two ways. First, much of medieval theology is outside of modern philosophy (think of *ST* 3a, devoted to Christology). Second, certain areas of modern philosophy, most notably logic and the philosophy of language, were more often practiced as parts of medieval philosophy, not medieval theology. But the core subjects of philosophy today – ethics, mind, knowledge, metaphysics – were treated in the Middle Ages as central aspects of theology.

One can readily see as much by examining, first, the list of questions that make up the Treatise.

Q75. The soul in its own right.

Q76. The soul's union with the body.

Q77. The soul's capacities in general.

Q78. The soul's preintellective capacities.

Q79. The soul's intellective capacities.

Q80. Appetite in general.

Q81. Sensual appetite.

Q82. Will.

Q83. Free decision.

Q84. The means through which intellect cognizes corporeal things.

Q85. How and in what order intellect cognizes corporeal things.

Q86. What intellect cognizes in corporeal things.

Q87. How intellect cognizes itself.

Q88. How the human soul cognizes things that are above it.

Q89. The soul's cognition when separated from its body.

These are precisely the kinds of issues we would expect to see addressed in a philosophical treatise. (Only the last two questions are exceptions; they presuppose the existence of angels and God, and the temporary separation of soul from body.) Many of these issues might also be taken up by a philosopher working within the medieval arts faculty. But discussions within the arts faculty would also have included a great deal of material that we would now regard as scientific, and of primary interest to historians of science. Such tendencies are apparent even in Aquinas's own Commentary on Aristotle's *De anima*. Although that work does contain valuable philosophical discussions of issues taken up in the Treatise, it contains many excursus that by our lights are not philosophical at all, such as these:

Why some things remain alive when cut apart (I.14)

Does imagination have a determinate organ? (II.5)

The nature of light (II.14)

The nature of translucent media (II.14)

The necessity of light for seeing (II.14)

Why some things are visible in the dark (II.15)

Why distance impedes vision (II.15)

IN.4. A PHILOSOPHICAL STUDY

sensory capacities, their functions, and their relationship to soul's other capacities. Physiological details are relevant, as Aquinas puts it above, only "in light of the relationship that the body has to the soul."⁵

It might seem that this account of the relationship between theology and philosophy runs roughshod over how Aquinas himself depicts the two fields. He in fact distinguishes between two sorts of theology, philosophical theology and sacred theology (*sacra doctrina*).⁶ In the very first question of *ST*, he sets out the difference in a way that seems to fly in the face of the argument I have been making. Philosophy, he writes, is "investigated through reason," whereas theology "is grasped through revelation" (1.1c). Theology – that is, sacred theology – takes its principles "immediately from God, through revelation," using other sciences "as inferior and ancillary" (1.5c). If we were to take these claims at face value then it would be hard to see how medieval theology could be of very much interest to philosophical historians, let alone of primary interest. Medieval theology would be almost entirely dependent on the premises of revealed dogma, with philosophical arguments coming in only as a kind of auxil-

iary tool.⁷ Such an approach would be deeply unphilosophical, in the modern sense, and might even justify Bertrand Russell's notorious charge that "there is little of the true philosophic spirit in Aquinas" (Russell 1945, p. 463).

Yet if this seems to be what Aquinas is saying, his actual practice shows that he must mean something rather different. In fact the sort of account just described badly distorts the character of medieval theology, as it was practiced not just by Aquinas (and Scotus and Ockham), but by theologians throughout the later medieval period. In *ST*, for instance, Aquinas does at times presuppose religious doctrines (as in his account of the first production of human beings (QQ90–102)). But he is constantly concerned with limiting those presuppositions as much as possible. Indeed, immediately after giving the above characterization of theology, Aquinas proceeds to give a series of five philosophical arguments for God's existence (2.3). This would be entirely inappropriate if theology really did take its premises from revealed truth, using philosophy as a mere ancillary tool. The Bible is full of evidence that God exists; why not use that as evidence, rather than the far more doubtful paths proposed by the Five Ways?

Aquinas suggests an answer to this question when he takes up the question of whether theology employs arguments (1.8). One might suppose that it does not, since the data of revealed doctrines very often speak for themselves. (Does God exist? Yes, it says so right here. Does he have fore-

knowledge? Yes, it says so here.) Aquinas naturally holds that theology does use arguments, and he offers two reasons why. The first is to expand the bounds of theology beyond what is immediately apparent through revelation. The second is to argue against those who would reject some of the basic tenets of the faith. Aquinas recognizes that if an opponent is willing to reject *all* the tenets of the faith then no argument is possible. The most

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one could do at that point would be refute the opponent's arguments for the contrary position, leaving the two sides at a standoff. But the typical theological adversary, in Aquinas's time, was one who would accept at least some of the tenets of the faith, and in such cases "we argue through one article against those who would deny another" (1.8c). In such dialectical circumstances one theological strategy recommends itself above all

others: one should rest one's arguments on as few revealed premises as possible, taking the faith for granted where one absolutely must, but using premises accessible to reason wherever possible. Such a method makes possible the study of doctrines "necessary to human beings for salvation" (1.1c), and at the same time seeks to make those doctrines as accessible as possible to people who might not accept all the evidence of authority and revelation.

In one of his later quodlibets (from 1271), Aquinas offers a further reason for why theology should spend most of its time on rational arguments rather than appeals to authority.

The disputation of a teacher, in the schools, has the purpose not of eliminating error but of instructing the listeners so that they may be led to understand the truth that the teacher puts forward. And here one must rely on arguments (*rationibus*) that investigate the basis for the truth, and that make it be known *how* what is said is true. Otherwise, if the teacher determines the question based on bare authorities, the listener will be made certain that the thing is so, but will acquire no knowledge or understanding and will go away empty (QQ 4.9.3c).

This announces the central motivation for Aquinas's work. Almost everything he wrote was intended for students, not for heretics or infidels, and that is of course true above all for *ST*. The goal of his teaching is not just the right answer, but a deeper understanding of why and how what is said to be true can be true. Merely having the right answer would count for nothing – it does not count even as a form of "knowledge or understanding"⁸ – and the student would go away empty. Aquinas's theology, then, is thoroughly philosophical in its methods. Never is

something accepted on faith that might be proved through reason. Revealed doctrine is the foundation of his theology, but in practice it provides at most the guidelines for his work. The real heart of Aquinas's theological project corresponds quite closely with what we consider the project of philosophy.

In.5. The larger context

Although Aquinas's approach is philosophical, his focus is significantly different from our own. This is obvious when *ST* is viewed as a whole, but it is apparent even within the Treatise alone, in its very organization. In the prologue to Q75, Aquinas sketches the structure of the fifteen questions to follow.

... our first consideration will be turned toward the soul. And because, as Dionysius says, three things are found in spiritual substances – essence, power, and operation – we will first consider features of the soul's essence, then second features of its power or capacities, and then third features of its operation.

The Treatise is divided into three sections. The first group of questions (QQ75–76) concerns “features of the soul's essence,” under which heading Aquinas includes questions regarding the soul in its own right and questions regarding the union of soul and body. The second group of questions (QQ77–83) concerns the soul's capacities: nutritive, sensory, locomotive, appetitive, and intellective. This list comes from the *De anima* (414a31–32; see 78.1sc), but unlike Aristotle, Aquinas gives by far the bulk of his attention to appetite and intellect. The third group of questions (QQ84–89) concerns the soul's operations – although in fact the only sorts of operations that get taken up here are those associated with intellect. (Discussion of the appetitive operations is postponed until 1a2ae.)

Aquinas's focus therefore becomes narrower as the Treatise proceeds. He moves from soul in general (including nonhuman souls), to the various capacities of the soul (paying special attention to intellect and will), and finally to operations associated with intellect alone. Why this increasingly narrow perspective, in what is supposedly a general treatise on human nature? At the outset of his discussion of the soul's various capacities (78pr), he makes the following remark:

A theologian, in his investigations, has to be concerned with making a special inquiry only into the intellective and appetitive capacities; it is here that the virtues are found.

Evidently the words that follow the semicolon explain those that come before it. Only intellect and the appetites are of special interest to the theologian, because only these capacities are subject to the virtues. (There is no such thing as having virtuous senses, or virtuous capacities for movement and nutrition.) Why this focus on virtue? We regard ethics as merely one kind of issue that arises regarding human nature. Aquinas seems to regard it as the only issue that is important in its own right for a theological investigation of human nature. And when we look ahead to *ST* 2a we see that vast sections of that work are devoted entirely to these topics. From our perspective, this single-minded interest in ethical questions looks rather distorted. Is there a good reason for this focus? Is Aquinas simply manifesting the kind of obsession with sin and virtue that we tend to expect from religious thinkers?

This reference to virtue goes unexplained in the Treatise, but the remark comes into focus when we step back from this particular section of *ST*. The broader plan of the work reveals that Aquinas's focus has its own philosophical justification. What looks peculiar and narrow-minded turns out to reflect the broader philosophical framework of Aquinas's thinking about human beings.

Here is the plan of *ST*:

Part One (1a)

Introduction: Sacred Doctrine (Q1)

I. God

- A. God's essence (QQ2-26)
- B. The divine persons (QQ27-43)
- C. The procession of creatures from God
 - 1. The production of creatures (QQ44-46)
 - 2. The distinction among creatures (QQ47-102)
 - 3. The conservation and governance of creatures (QQ103-119)

Part Two (2a)

II. Human Beings

- A. The ultimate end of human life (1a2ae QQ1-5)
- B. Actions through which a human being can reach this end
 - 1. Human actions in general (1a2ae QQ6-114)
 - 2. Human actions in particular (2a2ae QQ1-189)

Part Three (3a)

III. Christ

- A. Christ Himself (QQ1-59)
- B. The sacraments (Q60-)

(Aquinas ceased working on *ST* at the end of 3a Q90. To complete the work his early followers put together the so-called *Supplement*, pasting together material from *SENT*.)

C. Immortal life

Notice, first, that the Treatise falls under the section of *ST* devoted to God, not under the section devoted to human beings. The reason for this is that Aquinas takes the study of God's creative activities to be an important aspect of studying God. Hence more than half of 1a is concerned with

the created world, in particular, angels (QQ50–64), the purely physical world (QQ65–74), and human beings (QQ75–102). In part, then, the Treatise is just a piece of Aquinas's larger project to understand God. At the same time, the Treatise establishes the foundations for the enormous second part of *ST*, which takes human beings as its sole subject. These earlier questions are not considered anew in *ST* 2a (except for the discussions of will and freedom (QQ82–83), which gets expanded and reconsidered in 1a2ae QQ6–17). So the Treatise bears much of the weight for the 300-some questions that follow.

Why should *ST* 2a have been devoted entirely to human beings? In the prologue to 1a2ae Aquinas situates this part of the work in an explicitly theological context:

As Damascene says, human beings are said to be made in God's image insofar as 'image' signifies *intellectual*, and *free in one's decisions*, and *capable on one's own*. So now that something has been said about the exemplar, God, and about the things that proceeded from the divine power in keeping with His will, it remains for us to consider His image, human beings, insofar as they too are the source of their actions – as they have free decision and power over their actions (1a2ae pr).

Apparently, *ST* 2a focuses on human beings because we provide an image of God. But this cannot be the whole story, if only because it leaves unex-

plained the focus on human virtue. If Aquinas's only aim were to understand God's nature, there would be no justification for 2a's massive treatment of human action, a discussion so large it needed to be split up into two parts (1a2ae and 2a2ae).

In part, Aquinas's motivation seems to be pragmatic, in that a detailed analysis of human beings would benefit us more than a similar analysis of, say, angels. This, at any rate, is what is suggested by his explanation for the longer second part of *ST* 2a, concerned with human actions in particular:

Imago Dei

The discussion of human beings in 1a QQ75–102 is part of a larger project to understand God via creation. The theologian looks to the created world to understand God in just the sense that the art historian looks to the Sistine Chapel to understand Michelangelo. But if this is the project, then Aquinas would seem to have no special reason to focus on human beings. All of creation provides a kind of image of God, and some parts of creation – specifically, the angels – provide a better image of God (see the Epilogue).

In fact, the distribution of questions in *ST* 1a reflects Aquinas's attempt to give a balanced treatment of the different parts of creation. Human beings are the subject of about twice as many ques-

tions as the angels, but of course we are in a better position to describe our own species. (If anything should seem surprising, it is that Aquinas could say as much as he did about where angels are located (QQ51–53), how they think (QQ54–58), etc. See **Doctor Angelicus**, p. 359.) The purely physical world (including nonhuman animals and the heavens) gets only ten questions, rather few for such a large topic. But here Aquinas is brief because the physical world is less important as a manifestation of God's creative power. Angels, as purely incorporeal creatures (50.1), are the loftiest members of the created world, and therefore play a major part in Aquinas's efforts to understand God's creative purpose. Human beings are part spiritual and part physical ("... human beings, who are composed of a spiritual *and* corporeal substance" (75pr)), which gives us a theoretically perplexing kind of dual status – we are metaphysical amphibians, to borrow Eleonore Stump's apt phrase (Stump 1995, p. 514). This unique dual status makes us especially interesting in many ways, and provides some justification for paying special attention to our own species in a general account of God's creative activities.

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we understand the purpose of human life, we see what the essential features of a human being are. In fact, the final cause specifies and gives shape to the formal cause in much the way that the formal cause specifies and gives shape to the material cause: "The end is related to things ordered to the end just as form is related to matter" (1a2ae 4.4c).

Final causes can seem irrelevant when one supposes that there are other ways to determine the essential features of things. One might, for instance, suggest that human nature can be specified by working out the capacities that make humans different from other creatures. But if this procedure were effective then Aquinas could have devoted the Treatise to our locomotive capacity, analyzing the details of biped locomotion. Obviously this would not capture even part of human nature: "the end of the human soul is not moving the body, but intellectual cognition, wherein one's happiness lies" (*De unitate* 5.308–10 [261]). One might then suppose, rethinking the first suggestion, that human nature can be specified by working out the most *significant* distinctive capacities of human beings. Aquinas agrees. But he sees no way of giving any content to the notion of *significant* without

turning to the final cause. We can't know what the most significant human capacities are unless we know what the ultimate end of human life is.

In this way, Aquinas's views about the purpose of human life (the *meaning* of life, as we might loosely say) determine the structure and focus of *ST*. His initial, foundational treatment of human nature, the Treatise that is the subject of this study, takes shape in anticipation of his account of the virtues in 2a. Intellect and the appetites are the focus; the soul's other powers are of interest only inasmuch as they pave the way for understanding intellect and the appetites. Aquinas's focus is theological, as he conceives of that, but it is for this very reason also philosophical, as we conceive of that. His view that final causality gives shape to human nature provides both a rationale and a sample of why theology for him is continuous with philosophy for us.

I

Body and soul

A study of human nature involves, first and foremost, a study of the human soul. The fact that we have a soul is not even a point of controversy, given the way Aquinas defines his terms. What is controversial is the nature of soul. The first and perhaps hardest article of the Treatise asks whether the soul is a body. Aquinas answers in the negative, but this does not rule out the soul's being something material, in our modern sense (§1.1). Aquinas is concerned with refuting the ancient natural philosophers, who thought that all things were bodies (§1.2). In opposition to their reductive account, Aquinas insists on the explanatory priority of actuality (§1.3). But his dispute with the ancients in fact rests on a deep metaphysical disagreement about the nature of matter, a disagreement that points toward the reductive nature of Aquinas's own account (§1.4).

1.1. What is a human being?

Aristotle remarks in *Metaphysics* VII 17 that the question *What is a human being?* is inherently obscure because it doesn't give us any help in breaking

down the problem.

We lose sight of what is being asked most of all in those cases where things are not predicated of one another – e.g., when it is asked *What is a human being?* – because we are speaking unconditionally, without separating out that these are this (1041a32–b2).

Aquinas, in his Commentary, explains:

The reason for our puzzlement in such cases is that some one thing is introduced unconditionally, like *human being*, and the question does not introduce the things to which being human applies, such as the parts, or even something that is the underlying subject (*suppositum*) of the human being (*InMet* VII.17.1662).

What is needed, then, is that we give the question some structure. What, exactly, are we asking about when we ask, *What is a human being?* What are the relevant component parts? What is the underlying subject? The very simplicity of the question, as it stands, impedes our progress. Without some analysis of the subject matter we will find it difficult to provide any satisfactory answer.

It is easy to agree with Aristotle that the question *What is a human being?* is fundamentally obscure. From our perspective the reason for this obscurity lies in large part in uncertainty over what sort of answer might

be wanted. If we could determine the kind of question that is being asked then it seems that an answer might well be within reach. If, for instance, the question is a biological one then perhaps the Human Genome Project will provide the right sort of answer. If the question is psychological, or evolutionary, or historical, then different sorts of answers suggest themselves. It seems that we cannot begin to answer the question, however, until we have some general sense about the sort of answer that is wanted.

In addressing the topic of human nature, Aquinas is asking this very question, *What is a human being?* (see §In.3). He makes it clear that the *sort* of question he is asking is a theological one, and as a result he supposes that an answer must be given in terms of the human soul, focusing on the human body only as it relates to soul (see §In.4). So “our first consideration will be turned toward soul” (75pr). Indeed, the entire Treatise takes the soul as its explicit topic: first, the soul’s essential features (QQ75–76); then, its capacities (QQ77–83); then, its operations (QQ84–89). Already, then, Aquinas has given some content to the initially obscure question *What is a human being?* He will consider the question answered if he can give a general account of the human soul; he will not be interested in the physical characteristics of the human body, save insofar as those characteristics contribute to our understanding of soul.

In the prologue to the Treatise it looks as if Aquinas is simply going to presuppose the soul as his subject matter. If this were his approach then we might well feel as if the project is on shaky ground from the very beginning. To many modern readers it is not at all obvious that human beings even have such a thing as a soul; one might be inclined to agree with David

Hume, for instance, who in his own *Treatise of Human Nature* – published in 1739 – speaks of soul as a “fiction,” as “something unknown and mysterious” (I.iv.6). But in 75.1c it becomes clear that Aquinas’s strategy is more credible than it might initially seem. Here, at the very start of his reply, he does give us a rationale for postulating a soul in human beings, and indeed in all living things:

In order to investigate the soul’s nature one must hold from the start that the soul is said to be the first principle of life in the things that are alive around us. For we say that ensouled (*animata*) things are living things, whereas non-ensouled (*inanimatas*) things are those that lack life.

These considerations are meant merely as the starting point of the discussion; even the ancient naturalists are supposed to accept that the soul is the first principle of life (they go wrong when they suppose that the soul is something corporeal). Aquinas thinks that this starting point is uncontroversial – something that any materialist, even the most archly empirical, should accept. For he is simply stipulating here that by ‘soul’ he will mean *first principle of life*. Take the various living things that are, as he puts it, “around us”; let ‘soul’ stand for whatever it is that gives those things life.

Anima

How did it happen that the Latin *anima* came into English as 'soul'? Most philosophical Latin terms were absorbed straight into English. (A few examples: *materia*, *forma*, *actus*, *potentia*, *motus*, *operatio*, *sensus*, *intellectus*, *imaginatio*, *memoria*.) English has quite a few derivatives from *anima*, such as *animate* (both verb and adjective), *animated*, and even *animal*. But *anima* itself never made it as a noun. The reason seems to be that the word 'soul,' Germanic in origin, was on hand from the earliest period of the English language, and was viewed as an acceptable translation for *anima*. It seems likely, however, that our thinking about the soul would be dramatically different, and closer to Aristotle's, if we hadn't lost the etymological connection (present in both Latin and Greek) between soul and life. (See **Qwyckening**, p. 112.)

As for why we should give the word 'soul' (*anima*) a meaning of this sort, Aquinas appeals to some linguistic data pertaining to the Latin term: things that are alive are said to be animate, whereas things that are inanimate are said to be nonliving. It will be the project of the rest of the Treatise to determine what this *anima* is. At the moment we haven't even specified whether the soul is some single principle that we all share, or something

individual in each one of us – and, if the latter, whether we can make any interesting generalizations from one living being's soul to another's. For present purposes Aquinas simply wants agreement on defining the soul as that which, at the most basic level (we are speaking of the *first* principle), gives things life.

With this definition in hand Aquinas proceeds to the article's primary topic. It is noteworthy that the question Aquinas raises is not one of the more technical, Aristotelian questions he might ask: Is the soul material? Is it a form? Is it a potentiality? Is it an actuality? Instead, he chooses the more concrete question – *Is the soul a body?* – and derives answers to these other questions as he proceeds through QQ75–77. These other questions that he might have asked are not just more technical, in that they presuppose Aristotle's conceptual framework, but also more controversial. This is particularly so for the question of whether the soul is material. For although to our ears there might seem little difference between asking whether something is a body and asking whether it is material, to Aquinas's way of thinking these are significantly different questions. To address the question of whether the soul is material, in whole or in part, requires a developed theory of prime matter, an elusive topic on which there was little consensus in Aquinas's time. Indeed, as we see below in §1.4, Aquinas views mistakes about the nature of matter as underlying the worst sorts of confusions about soul, and therefore about human nature. Aquinas wants

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from that phrase (75.1.IV).) As this study advances, we will see various ways in which the soul can be viewed as the *first* source, cause, or principle of life. It is first in terms of being that which is primarily responsible for the *existence* of a living being (§3.3), and it is also first in terms of what it contributes to the *purpose* of a living being (§6.2). Here we are looking for that which is primarily responsible for life, and Aquinas tells us that “life is displayed above all by two functions: cognition and movement” (75.1c). So to speak of soul as the first principle of life is to say that it is primarily responsible for cognition and movement. As for why the soul is primary, that will have to emerge in the course of this chapter.

Even if Aquinas’s question now seems clear enough, it may nevertheless appear that he has set himself an impossible task, especially for the brief space of this initial article. For, given how Aquinas understands ‘corporeal,’ it may look as if he has committed himself to establishing the existence of some sort of nonextended spiritual power within us, a Cartesian ghost in the machine, an incorporeal homunculus. His position looks even worse once one notices that Aquinas wants this account to hold for *all*

living beings: not just humans, nor even just animals, but all the way down to the lowest forms of life. How will we be persuaded that there is something incorporeal responsible even for the life of a plant?

In fact, Aquinas's goal here is rather different – although no less ambitious, as we will see. First, he is not at all concerned at this point with establishing what this first principle of life does. So there is no reason to fear that we are going to be offered a homunculus account – an account on which some inner faculty is postulated to carry out all the activities that the organism as a whole seemed to carry out. (Obviously such an account explains nothing, but simply raises all the same questions at a more obscure level.) The nature of soul's powers will become clear as the *Treatise* emerges, but that is not the concern at present. Second, Aquinas is not arguing that soul is some sort of nonextended substance of the Cartesian sort. Such an entity would indeed be mysterious, and a treatise devoted to its discovery and analysis would be of limited interest. But this is not the way Aquinas thinks of the soul, and he thinks that the air of mystery that surrounds our notion of soul will be dissolved once we recognize the sort of thing we should be looking for. His argument is that to identify soul with body is to commit what amounts to a category mistake. Such corporeal theories look in the wrong place for the first principle of life: they look among bodies, when they should be looking for causal principles of a fundamentally different kind. What soul is, in fact, is the *actuality* of a living body, and to be an actuality is to be incorporeal. But this is not the sort of incorporeal stuff that might dance on the head of a pin. Aquinas is arguing that corporeal theories of soul have misconceived the way an ultimate explanation of life must be given, and consequently have misconceived the

nature of soul.

Aquinas's account is particularly ambitious because he is challenging not just a certain theory of soul, but an entire scientific/philosophical program.

1. BODY AND SOUL

We are given a hint of this in the last few sentences of 75.1c, when Aquinas states his final conclusion:

Therefore the soul, which is the first principle of life, is not a body, but the actuality of a body. And this is so in just the way that heat, which is the principle of heating, is not a body, but the actuality of a body.

With this seemingly casual, off-the-cuff comparison, Aquinas notes that the kind of argument just used to derive soul's incorporeality might equally well be used to derive an incorporeal theory of heat. Just as soul is not a body, so too heat is not a body. Both are actualities (though we will see

that they are very different kinds of actualities). The reader who might otherwise have missed the point is here forcibly shown how Aquinas is arguing not just for a particular account of soul but for a general metaphysical theory, one that will extend over all natural phenomena, living and nonliving.

The point is easily missed. For although Aquinas had, early in the reply, introduced the view of the ancient philosophers who held that all things are corporeal, he had not made it clear that he would be issuing such a fundamental challenge to their position. Aquinas says he will employ one of the “many ways of showing that this view is false.” But one would naturally suppose his argument to be directed at the ancient position only as regards the soul. It is a surprise to discover, at the end of the reply, that his argument can readily be generalized as a critique of the entire ancient position. If this is Aquinas’s aim, then we need to take a step back ourselves, and look at precisely what this ancient view was (§1.2). Then we need to see how Aquinas’s argument in 75.1c runs (§1.3). After that, finally, we need to consider whether this argument really can work as a general critique of the ancient position (§§1.4 and 1.5).

1.2. The ancient naturalists

The explicit target of 75.1c is those ancients that held all things to be corporeal.² It is tempting, for us, to refer to these ancient philosophers as materialists. Yet that description can be misleading. It can be misleading, first, because there are vast differences between what we mean by matter and what Aquinas means by matter (see §1.4). Second, and more funda-

mentally, the label 'materialist' misdescribes the nature of the disagreement between Aquinas and the ancients. Aquinas thinks that these figures went wrong not just because they disbelieved in spiritual entities like God, angels, and the human soul, but – more basically – because they had the wrong metaphysics, even with respect to the natural world that was their focus.

To get straight on these matters we need to look closely at how Aquinas characterizes the ancients' views.³

Now life is displayed above all by two functions: cognition and movement. But the ancient philosophers, unable to transcend their imaginations, claimed that the prin-

it is not at all obvious that their view is an unattractive one. For one way of describing the faith to which the modern materialist subscribes is to say that the only sort of stuff that is out there is material stuff. There is nothing in nature that is nonphysical, incorporeal, or spiritual. If this is a sound translation into modern terms of the ancient views, then most philosophers today will find themselves in sympathy.

Aquinas takes the ancients to be wedded to a more specific and less plausible kind of materialism. He believes they are committed to a very specific metaphysical picture, which we can begin to understand by looking at a slightly different way in which he often characterizes the ancients' view:

The first of those who philosophized about the natures of things held that only bodies exist. They claimed that the first principles of things are certain corporeal elements, either one or many (*De substantiis* 1.1–5 [43]; see 75.3c, *InMet* 1.9.145, *InDA* 1.5.29).

The first sentence here repeats the earlier characterization, but the second sentence makes a more specific claim. One might naturally suppose that this second claim is a straightforward consequence of the first: if only bodies (*corpora*) exist, then *a fortiori* the first principles of things will be corporeal. But the second claim is stronger. There are in fact many philosophers who would consider themselves materialists and yet embrace only the first of these two claims. A latter-day Platonist might suppose that everything that exists is corporeal, and yet believe in abstract (and therefore incorporeal) properties. One might similarly believe in space-time, or in numbers or sets, and yet still insist that everything that actually exists is corporeal. Perhaps there is an irresolvable tension in such claims. But it

is at least tempting to suppose that only bodies exist, and at the same time to hold that a metaphysical analysis of bodies reveals principles that are not themselves bodily.

Aquinas identifies the weak point in ancient naturalism as its assumption that even the principles of things must be bodies. He describes all the ancient naturalists as having agreed on this point, and as quarreling over just how many such corporeal principles should be posited. Some thought that one corporeal element could account for the entire natural world. (Thales, for instance, opted for water, Diogenes of Apollonia for air.) Others (such as Empedocles) thought that several corporeal principles were necessary. But it was precisely in limiting their accounts to corporeal principles that they saddled themselves with an unworkable theory, even as regards the natural world.

What is it that makes this brand of materialism unacceptable? It is crucial to recognize that Aquinas does not attribute to the ancients a theory that is obviously false. One might suppose that if "what is not a body is nothing" (75.1c), and if corporeal elements are the first principles of things, then the ancients will be utterly unable to give any but the most reductive, even eliminative, explanations of reality. Instead of being able to say that two things look similar because they are the same color, it may

seem that the ancients would have to say that these things are similar because they share the same underlying corporeal structure, and that indeed there is no such thing as color, strictly speaking, unless 'color' is a term of convenience for referring to such corporeal structures. Moreover, it may seem that the ancients would not even be able to account for *structure*, unless they can somehow explain the structure of things strictly and entirely in terms of corporeal elements. (Not in terms of the *position* or *interrelationship* of corporeal elements, but in terms of strictly corporeal elements.) On this reading the ancients would be attempting either (1) a reductive explanation of all things in terms of bodies alone; or, even more radically, (2) the *elimination* of any sort of entity or explanatory principle that is not one of their elemental bodies. Either way, this sort of project looks unattractive and hopelessly crude.

But although the ancient position is flawed, it is not *that* flawed. Aquinas thinks the ancients went wrong in interesting ways; one can't refute their view simply by showing that we must be able to talk not just about bodies, but also about the states that bodies are in. Indeed, although elemental bodies are in some sense basic on the ancient scheme, it was no part of their project to explain away all the states that might characterize these bodies. In fact, the ancients were ready to countenance properties such as color, size, and shape:

The ancient philosophers . . . did not get far enough to raise their intellects toward something that is beyond the sensible. And so they were aware only of those forms that are proper or common sensible objects. But forms of this sort are clearly accidents, such as white, black, large, small, etc. (*InMet* VII.2.1284).

The ancients did acknowledge forms such as colors and sizes, and Aquinas does not suggest that they advocated the reduction or elimination of such forms in favor of description at a purely corporeal level. What the ancients did claim, however, is that such forms are accidental – which is to say that they are attributes that might come and go while the substance remains the same (see §3.4). Elsewhere, Aquinas describes how such forms were thought to be added onto a thing's substance:

Because principles must endure, a thing seems to be a principle if it endures through generation and corruption. But matter, which they said was the substance of a thing, endures through every change. Its states, however, are changed: the form, and all the things that are added onto the matter's substance (*InMet* I.4.74).

Forms, on this account, come and go while the basic corporeal stuff remains the same. (Here Aquinas speaks of *matter*, because he is now talking about the fundamental stuff that makes up the body.)

On the ancient view any body can be analyzed into (1) the underlying elemental matter and (2) accidental forms. The matter is basic and elemental because it endures. Aquinas describes the ancients as arguing from an initial assumption that “principles must endure.”⁴ And it is the underlying material stuff, the ancients supposed, that endures in this way. Gold

is mined from the ground, processed and shaped, melted down and shaped again, ad infinitum. What remains the same, every step of the way, is the underlying material stuff: either the gold itself or something even more basic than the gold. Shape, size, and surface color get added on top of this material substratum. So for these ancients the first principles of things are corporeal elements: they are the first principles because they are the simplest stuff that can be found in nature. Aquinas reports (*InMet* I.12.188) that the ancients, in looking for first principles, should have been looking for (1) that which is most simple and (2) that which is most perfect. If they had done that then they would have been led to embrace actuality as their first principle (and God as first among all actualities). But because the ancients concentrated only on the first criterion of simplicity, they focused their search on the most basic stuff that could be found in the natural world. For some this was water, for others air, and so on.

So the ancient position is not crudely reductive, and neither is it simply a generic version of materialism ("the only things that exist are bodies"). On the ancient view, the question of what is a human being becomes the question of what material – fire, water, and so on – serves as the basic principle of life. And when the ancients are understood in this way, their program suddenly begins to look quite similar in spirit to the Human Genome Project, which takes as its basic principles the four nucleotides from which DNA builds its twenty different amino acids. Of course, Aquinas has nothing against learning as much as possible about the physical makeup of human beings; indeed, he regards this as among the most important of human achievements. But he would object to any account, ancient or modern, that purports to describe the *nature* of human beings

in corporeal terms. We can now turn to his reasons for this view.

1.3. The argument for soul as actuality

Aristotle, as we saw in §1.1, was struck by the obscurity of questions like *What is a human being?*; he advocates our “separating out” such questions into a more perspicuous form. He goes on to offer a more specific suggestion about how such *What is . . .* questions are to be analyzed: “we are searching for the cause of the matter, and this is the species: that by which the matter is a certain thing” (1041b7–8). Aquinas tries to spell this suggestion out in somewhat more detail:

It is clear, therefore, that in such questions “we are searching for the cause of the matter” – i.e., that on account of which the matter realizes (*pertingat ad*) the nature of what is being defined. And this thing we are searching for, the cause of the matter, “is the species” – that is, the form – “by which [the matter] is a certain thing” (*InMet* VII.17.1668).

As Aquinas understands Aristotle, then, the question *What is a human being?* should be analyzed as the question of what makes this material stuff be human. The general line of reply that Aristotle proposes (and Aquinas

I. BODY AND SOUL

(v) The soul, which is the first principle of life, is not a body, but the actuality of a body.

We can take for granted that the soul just is the first principle of life (see §1.1). But do we really have an argument for the conclusion that the internal principle primarily responsible for life is not a body?

Aquinas assumes, in (v), that an actuality is not itself a body. This assumption needs some defense, especially in the present context, when dealing with philosophers who suppose that all things are bodies. And it is not clear that the conclusion follows from earlier premises. For it seems we can accept

(iii) It holds of some body that it is living, or else is a principle of life, through its being *such* a body

without endorsing incorporeal principles of explanation. And

(iv) As for the fact that it is actually such, it has this from a principle that is called its *actuality*

seems to be simply a terminological decision. Certainly, this terminological decision is of tremendous importance for Aquinas's broader metaphysics. In claiming that actuality explains what makes a thing be such (*tale*), Aquinas is making a sweeping claim: *whenever* we want to characterize an object *in any sort of way*, we should do so in terms of the presence (or absence) of something that he calls its *actuality*. As noted already, this is a claim that holds not just for the soul, but in all cases, across the board. We are not told much about this actuality in 75.1. In later articles (e.g., 75.4, 75.5), Aquinas takes for granted that actuality is equivalent to form, and so takes for granted that the soul is a form. But here he doesn't even say that much. Yet what he does presuppose – without explicit argument – is that this actuality is something nonbodily. What justifies that presupposition?⁶

Certainly, one body can make another body be such. This happens when one rock crushes another. Moreover, complex bodies are composed of bodily parts, and these parts can cause the complex body to be such. The heart, a bodily organ, causes the larger body of which it is a part to be such a body. Aquinas acknowledges these facts when he allows that a body can be a principle of life. Here is how he introduces the main argument of 75.1:

It is clear that not just any principle of an operation associated with life is a soul. For if so then the eye would be a soul, since it is a principle of seeing, and the same would have to be said for the soul's other instruments. But we say that the *first* principle of life is the soul. Now although a body could be *a* principle of life, in the way that the heart is a principle of life in an animal, nevertheless no body can be the first principle of life. For (i) . . . (75.1c).

Aquinas grants that it makes sense to speak of bodily parts as principles of life. Generally, indeed, he is willing to say that bodily parts can be principles of the various operations associated with life. The eye is a principle

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of vision; elsewhere he says that the heart is the principle of movement in animals (20.1 ad 1). Corporeal explanations can be partial explanations. But what Aquinas insists on is that nothing bodily can be the *first* principle of life. From here it follows straightaway that since the soul is the first principle of life, the soul is not a body.

To say that nothing bodily can be the first principle of life is equivalent to saying that nothing bodily can be the primary explanation of a body's being actually such as to be alive. This puts the weight of the argument on (iv), which needs to be understood as follows:

(iv) As for the fact that a body is actually such, it has this [*primarily*] from a principle that is called its actuality.

And now we can ask: why couldn't a bodily organ, such as the heart or the brain, be the first principle of life? Why, for instance, couldn't the Human Genome Project reveal the nature of human beings? Why, to frame the question more generally, are corporeal explanations always incomplete?

One natural line of thought at this point runs as follows. Regardless of which part of the body we point to, we can always ask a further question about why that bodily part explains life. Most crudely, we cannot just point

The human core

Of all the parts of the body, Aquinas (following Aristotle) took the heart to be the best candidate for the first principle of life. Aquinas says the heart is "that by which life is preserved" (18.1 ad 1); "the first principle of movement" (20.1 ad 1); "the instrument of the soul's passions" (1a2ae 48.2c). It was not until William Harvey, in the seventeenth century, that the heart's true function of circulating blood was understood.

Just as we now look to the brain as the most likely material explanation for animal life, so Aquinas looked to the heart. Why didn't Aquinas look to the brain? Aquinas was at least several steps ahead of Aristotle here, inasmuch as Aristotle believed – astonishingly

enough (e.g., *Parts of Animals* II.7) – that the function of the brain was to cool the blood (think of the radiator in a car engine). Aquinas recognizes the crucial role of the brain in sensation, and hence in human life (see §§4.2, 6.4, and 9.4), but he also supposes that the heart is somehow the ultimate principle of sensation (see §6.4). Moreover, it is impossible, Aquinas believes, for the brain to account for the operations of will and intellect (see §2.2). All of this gives him little reason to take the brain seriously as a candidate for the first principle of life.

animal life. This would be the first principle of life, the soul. Yet such an explanation would still be an explanation in terms of form or actuality. For Aquinas, it is always actuality that is explanatory.

On this reading, Aquinas's argument no longer appears very controversial. It not only is consistent with materialism in its modern form, but also seems quite modest in its theoretical implications. The Human Genome Project need no longer fall afoul of 75.1, because it too might be formulated in terms of structure and function, rather than in terms of the crude insistence that human beings are just a list of chemical elements. In fact, the argument now seems so modest as no longer to pose any difficulty for the ancients. Aquinas seems to argue against them simply by pointing to the existence of actuality – as if the ancients, for whom all things are bodies, cannot account for such a thing. Yet on any charitable reading of the ancient position it seems that they do allow for actuality (see §1.2). We should wonder, then, what Aquinas means by 'body' when he reports that for the ancients "the only things that exist are bodies, and that what is not a body is nothing" (75.1c). Surely the ancients believed not just in bodies *simpliciter*, but in bodies of such and such kinds. (Indeed, what the ancients notoriously quarreled over was precisely what *kinds* of bodies to postulate as basic.) It is beginning to look, then, as if these ancient naturalists are simply straw men. No corporeal theory could be so crude as to postulate only bodies *simpliciter*, but as soon as one begins talking about bodies of such and such nature, it seems that one is no longer subscribing to a corporeal theory.

This is not a happy outcome. Aquinas clearly takes himself to be refuting a serious philosophical error, and so no interpretation can count as

adequate until it clearly identifies what that error is supposed to be. If the ancients' error was a real one, it must be not simply that they failed to talk about bodies of such and such kinds – no one would make that mistake – but that they somehow failed to do so in an adequate way. So we should not suppose that when Aquinas describes the ancients as holding that only bodies exist, he means that they tried to do without actuality. The argument of 75.1c suggests as much, by holding up the ancients as defenders of a purely corporeal theory, and then showing that actuality is something different from body. But no one could do without actuality, given how Aquinas defines it. The ancients, then, must have gone wrong not because they left out actuality entirely, but because they failed to conceive of actuality in the proper way.

At this point, however, the Treatise offers us little help. Aquinas is ready to move on. Enough said for beginners, or so he supposes. We have been given as much of an Aristotelian orientation as he thinks is necessary – even if the argument is not adequate as a reply to any serious version of ancient naturalism. The opening article of the Treatise therefore poses something of a puzzle. In the last section of this chapter I suggest that we can solve this puzzle only by entering into some rather murky issues in Aquinas's metaphysics. The connections here are ones that he does

not clearly spell out, in the Treatise or elsewhere, but that allow us to make good sense of an account that would otherwise look confused and misguided.

1.4. The crucial role of prime matter

The ancients, I have suggested, did not neglect actuality entirely; instead, they somehow erred in deploying the notion. One possibility is that the ancient mistake amounted to their simply not *recognizing* the role of actuality in their theory. Even though they supposed “that the only things that exist are bodies, and that what is not a body is nothing,” we might say that even their own theories couldn’t stick with this maxim. There is some nearby textual evidence for that reading, in the remark that “. . . the ancient natural philosophers did not know to distinguish between actuality and potentiality” (75.1 ad 2). So perhaps the ancient mistake lay simply in misdescribing their own view. If they had grasped what actuality is, they would have seen that even their own accounts rested on things being in actuality (being *such*), and they would have realized they were not offering strictly corporeal theories. If that is right then the dispute seems largely a matter of terminology, as if Aquinas is objecting not to the ancient theories *per se*, but to the way the ancients described their theories.⁸

The issues are more subtle and difficult. Although the ancients did not draw a distinction between potentiality and actuality, they did rely on actuality in their thinking. Their error was to build this actuality into the ground level of their metaphysics. Actuality, for the ancients, is either something accidental, added on, or else it is a primitive, unanalyzable part

of their basic corporeal elements. Aquinas believes that the fundamental ancient mistake was their failure to recognize the priority of actuality.

The pivotal issue is the role of matter. Aquinas believes that the ancient mistake stems “from ignorance about matter” (*InMet* VII.2.1285). Because they got matter wrong, they went wrong about the first principles of things, and held that “only matter is a substance” (*ibid.*) – that is, only matter is a basic principle. Here is how the ancients conceived of matter:

The subject as a whole, which we claim to be composed of matter and form, they said was prime matter: air, water, or something of that sort. They said that forms are what we call accidents, the quantities and qualities whose proper subject is not prime matter [as they supposed], but the composite substance that is the substance in actuality (*InMet* VII.2.1284).

Diogenes of Apollonia, for instance, supposed that “air is the principle of all things” (*InDA* I.5.150–51), and he identified the soul with air. On this sort of theory, air becomes prime matter. The ancients allowed forms into their account only to the extent that these forms were added onto prime matter; in the terms of Aquinas’s theory, the ancients allowed only accidental forms (see §1.2, above, and §3.4). The ancients didn’t allow forms as constituent parts of their elemental bodies, and therefore

Aquinas describes these bodies as playing the role of prime matter in their account.

The mistake in all of this is that the ancients fundamentally misunderstood what matter is: “. . . the ancient naturalists, who claimed that prime matter is something actually existent – e.g., fire, air, or something like that . . .” (76.4c). On the ancient view, actuality is built into matter at the most basic level. The basic, primary stuff has its own actuality, it actually exists, and so for the ancients there is no way to distinguish body from actuality at this level. Aquinas, in contrast, takes himself to be following Aristotle when he insists that genuinely prime matter has no actuality at all. Such pure potentiality cannot exist without actuality; or rather, prime matter does not exist at all in its own right:

Matter . . . is never stripped of form and privation, because at one time it exists under one form, at another time under another. But in itself (*per se*) it can never exist, because given that by its nature it has no form, it has no actual existence, since actual existence comes only through form, whereas it is solely in potentiality. (*De principiis* 2.112–18 [349]).

Indeed, one cannot even speak of different pieces of prime matter, because there is nothing to individuate the stuff: “prime matter is numerically one, across all things” (*De principiis* 2.98–99 [348]).

The mistake of the ancients lay in supposing that certain actualized bodies were first principles and underlying, enduring substances. Aquinas believes that a body always admits of further analysis into matter and form, potentiality and actuality. Remove all actuality and one arrives at prime matter. Bodies, since they are three dimensional (see §1.1), are never prime matter. The ancients, in contrast, took certain bodies to be prime matter,

which precisely means that they thought no more basic analysis was possible. Any actuality that their primary bodies might have was built into the matter as an indistinguishable part and so they must reject

(iv) As for the fact that a body is actually such, it has this [*primarily*] from a principle that is called its actuality.

Although the ancients did recognize actuality at the level of accidental forms, they nevertheless denied any such distinction within their basic explanatory principles, and so they were unable to see the fundamental priority of actuality.

It is this conception of prime matter as something intrinsically actualized that leads the ancients to describe the soul as a body. Because their basic corporeal principles contain actuality, these principles appear to be good candidates for explaining the basic functions of life: cognition and movement. Aquinas thinks that when one recognizes the nature of genuine prime matter, one will recognize that such matter cannot be explanatory. For Aquinas, explanation in terms of prime matter is inconceivable; matter can explain only insofar as it is actual. Far from being explanatory, prime matter is not even intelligible in its own right:

2. SOUL AS SUBSTANCE

Still, before turning our attention to the soul's alleged subsistence, we can see one obvious respect in which Aquinas does not embrace the most extreme form of substance dualism. Unlike Plato and Descartes, Aquinas explicitly and vehemently denies that human beings should be identified with their souls. His view is presupposed by 75pr: "... human beings, who are composed of a spiritual *and* corporeal substance." It is present in 75.2 as well, when Aquinas concedes in the face of the first objection that the human soul is not fully a particular thing, but merely "*part* of the human species" (75.2 ad 1). These, however, are merely statements of a view, not arguments. Aquinas's argument comes in 75.4, where he concludes that "a human being is not soul alone, but something composed of soul and body."

The argument of 75.4 rests on a claim about how we should delineate objects – how, in other words, we should determine where one object ends and another begins. Am I, a human being, just my soul? Or am I my soul and my body? Or am I my soul, my body, and my clothing? And so on. Aquinas offers the following as a test: "any given thing is identified with

what carries out the operations of that thing" (75.4c). So to decide what a human being is, we need to determine what the operations of a human being are. Aquinas reasons in 75.4 that human beings must be said to engage in sensation. But because sensation is plainly an operation carried out by the body (wholly by body? see §2.3), human beings must be not just their souls, but soul and body.

The argument seems clear and attractive, but one certainly might wonder about a number of points. First, Aquinas seems to think that sensation is the only operation that requires us to identify human beings with their bodies as well as souls. Speaking of the Platonic view that identifies us with our souls, he remarks,

This [view] evidently *could* be maintained, if it were held that the sensory soul's operation belongs to it alone, without the body. For in that case *all* the operations attributed to a human being would hold of soul alone (75.4c).

The second sentence seems plainly false. Even if we attribute the sensory soul's operations to the soul alone (this would include not just sensation, but also memory and the emotions (see §8.4), among other things), there are still other operations that we attribute to human beings, and which obviously do require a body. What about playing football? What about walking to the store? Aquinas's exclusive focus on sensation seems unjustified.

Here is a second difficulty. Aquinas's test was that "any given thing is identified with what carries out the operations of that thing." But once our thoughts begin to run over the wide range of operations that might be attributed to a human being (fishing, talking on the phone, playing the piano, reading a book), it looks as if these operations are carried out not

just by our soul and our body, but also by the various tools that we use. So, if we accept Aquinas's test, it is hard to see why a telephone, or a piano, is any less a part of me than are some parts of my body.

2.1. THE ESSENTIAL BODILY COMPONENT

The obvious reply to this objection is to draw a distinction between things that I use as instruments and things that are part of me. But this wouldn't get Aquinas very far. For although he often does draw a distinction between agent and instrument, he regularly refers to our bodily organs, including the sensory organs, as instruments. Indeed, in 78.1c he writes that "our entire bodily nature is subject to the soul, and is related to it as matter and instrument." (He refers to the senses as instruments at 75.1c, 76.5c, *InDA* I.2.46–69.) So my body is an instrument, on Aquinas's way of thinking. What, then, makes it different from the other instruments on which I rely? What makes it part of me?

Both of these objections can be handled at once if we revise Aquinas's test so that it concerns only those operations that are *essential* elements in my functioning as a human being. The test would then read: "Any given thing is identified with what carries out the ESSENTIAL operations of that thing." By an essential operation, I do not mean an operation that every human being must engage in, but an operation that every human being must be *capable* of engaging in, in order to count as human. For Aquinas, sensation and thought are the essential human operations. Playing football and walking to the store are not essential in this way. It seems clear, on reflection, that no essential human operation requires any sort of instrument like a telephone. But the body is required, or so Aquinas argues, because we cannot engage in sensation without the body.¹

We can now see, then, that Aquinas's argument in 75.4 rests on some crucial assumptions about what sorts of operations are essential to being human. And now that these assumptions are out in the open we can see that here too there is room for doubt. We might, first, try denying that sensation is a requirement for being human, as Plato in effect argues in the *Phaedo*. But suppose we grant this point, against Plato, since it is so hard to imagine that our lives could be considered human if we lacked all sensory experience, all emotion, and all desire.² Here, still, there is another difficulty. For if what is essentially human are the experiences associated with sensation and emotion, then we need to question whether the body is required for us to have these experiences. Aquinas supposes that the operations of the sensory soul do require the body:

Sensing, and consequently the operations of the sensory soul, clearly do occur with some transformation to the body: in seeing, for instance, the pupil is transformed

by the species of a color, and the same is evident in other cases (75.3c).

But we might wonder, now following that other great proponent of substance dualism, Descartes, whether the essential aspect of sensation and emotion – the way it feels to have these experiences – actually requires the body. If the basic experience of sensation is an operation of the soul, not the body, then the body might well be dispensable. Aquinas speaks of the pupil's being transformed by a likeness of color. But might we be able to have sensations, and color experiences, without that particular bodily organ? The sense of sight is adapted to our particular environment, and is

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necessary for us to see – given the world we now live in. But this seems to be a contingent fact about our present life, and not at all an essential part of being human.

If what is essentially human is sensation itself, and not the particular bodily mechanisms that put us in touch with our present environment, then it seems that Aquinas needs to show that the body is required even for the very experience of sensation. I believe that Aquinas is ready to make this very claim. There is no gap at this point in the argument, because Aquinas believes that sensation is a wholly bodily process. From the eye's focusing of light rays to the brain's generation of experiences, the process is a physical, corporeal one. This is a controversial reading of Aquinas, one for which further argument is needed (see §2.3). But we now have some preliminary reason for thinking that this must be Aquinas's position: the rejection of extreme substance dualism in 75.4 depends on holding (contrary to Plato) that the capacity for sensation is an essential part of being human, and on holding (contrary to Descartes) that sensation, even in its essential respects, requires the body.

2.2. The rational soul as a subsistent form

What does it mean when 75.2 claims that the human soul is subsistent? Aquinas regularly links subsistence and substancehood, saying, for instance, that "it is characteristic of a substance to subsist on its own" (III *SENT* 6.1.1.1c; and see 75.2sc). This suggests that we might come to understand subsistence by studying Aquinas's theory of substances. But this strategy will not work. First, Aquinas employs a notion of substance that is much weaker than what we would expect. He thinks that a human hand counts as a substance, for instance, even though a hand is part of a larger substance, a human being (see §2.4). So it is not at all obvious what

Aquinas thinks substances are. Second, Aquinas treats the notion of subsistence as prior, and uses it to analyze the notion of substance. He holds that for something to be a substance it must (a) subsist and (b) be the underlying subject of accidents (I *SENT* 23.1.1c; *QDP* 9.1c). So the conditions for substancehood are stricter than those for subsistence, and the notion of subsistence is required to explain what substances are. No wonder, then, that Aquinas usually refers to the soul as subsistent, and only occasionally speaks of it as a substance. The former concept is the more basic one.³

We should put the soul's substantiality to one side, then, and focus on its subsistence. Aquinas is not very explicit about this notion in the *Treatise*, but earlier in *ST* he offers this criterion: "we say that things subsist that have existence not in others, but in themselves" (29.2c). Elsewhere he offers this same criterion in somewhat different terms: a thing subsists when it "doesn't need some outside foundation in which it is sustained, but is sustained in its own self" (*QDP* 9.1c). Accidents provide the clearest examples of things that do not subsist, because it is precisely the nature of

It is disappointing that at this crucial juncture there is not more to say on Aquinas's behalf. But so far as I can see, there is not.¹¹

2.3. The sensory soul as a material form

Although the argument of 75.2 is disappointing, interesting questions remain about the status of the conclusion Aquinas reaches there. In saying that the human soul is subsistent, Aquinas means that the soul is a form that somehow surpasses matter, meaning that it can potentially exist apart from its matter – that is, apart from the body. This requires, as we have seen in §2.2, that the soul has an operation that transcends matter. It is not

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at all obvious how to locate this kind of view within the context of recent philosophy. And in view of the dissatisfaction among many philosophers

today with both dualism and materialism, it is worth investigating just what kind of relationship Aquinas postulates between mind and body. To clarify this issue, I will first look at the contrasting case of sensation, which does not transcend matter.

Aquinas believes that the souls of nonrational animals are not subsistent, a conclusion he establishes in the way we should now expect: by showing that their operations do not transcend matter. Strictly speaking, to show that animal souls are not subsistent, Aquinas would have to show that *all* animal operations require a body. (In this section I use the term 'animal' as shorthand for *nonrational animal*, and as a translation of Aquinas's talk of brute animals or beasts.) But he takes for granted, reasonably enough, that the only plausible candidate within animals for a non-bodily operation is the activity of sensation, and so the argument of 75.3 is confined to showing that sensation requires the body.

In reaching this conclusion, both here and elsewhere, Aquinas does not bother to distinguish between animal sensation and human sensation. He sees no fundamental difference between the two, writing,

The operation of the sensory capacity is carried out in the same way in a human being and an animal; for a human being sees through the eye in the same way (*eodem modo*) that a horse does (*QQ* 10.4.2c).

Aquinas does think that in some respects our sensory powers are "much finer, . . . as is evident in the cases of touch and the inner powers of apprehension" (*QDP* 3.11 ad 1), but these are not differences in kind. We have a softer skin than do animals, and consequently a finer sense of touch; also, we have more powerful internal senses. These internal senses, when

combined with intellect, make a vast difference in how we use our senses, and even in our sensory experiences themselves: hearing a language you understand is very different from hearing one that is entirely foreign (see §9.2). But, contrary to what Descartes would later suppose, our sensory powers are not fundamentally different from those of animals.¹² Aquinas thinks that basically the same story holds for all sensory powers, human and animal alike: “with regard to sensible forms, there is no difference between a human being and other animals, because they receive a similar impression from external sensible qualities” (78.4c). Moreover, the only fundamental difference between the soul of a human being and the soul of a nonrational animal is that the former contains mind or intellect: “our soul differs from the soul of an animal only with regard to mind” (3a 5.4c).

This qualitative similarity between human sensation and animal sensation makes it easier to reach conclusions about how Aquinas conceives of sensation occurring in us. The fact that the sensory soul of an animal is not subsistent entails that the sensory part of the human soul is not subsistent,¹³ which means that its operations involve the body. (If this