Contextualizing Aquina's Ontology of Soul: An Analysis of His Arabic and Neoplatonic Sources

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CONTEXTUALIZING AQUINAS'S ONTOLOGY OF SOUL: AN ANALYSIS OF HIS ARABIC AND NEOPLATONIC SOURCES

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ABSTRACT
CONTEXTUALIZING AQUINAS'S ONTOLOGY OF SOUL: AN ANALYSIS OF HIS ARABIC AND NEOPLATONIC SOURCES

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Contemporary scholarship has generally focused on two major influences that have shaped Thomas Aquinas' account of the soul. The first set of scholarship focuses on how doctrinal concerns and the Augustinian and Scholastic traditions defined the central issue that Aquinas faced, *viz.,* explaining how the soul can be treated as an individual substance that has an essential relationship to a body. The second set of scholarship focuses on Aquinas's employment of Aristotle's works in his attempt to resolve the issue. Contemporary assessments of Aquinas's theory of the soul-body relation therefore take Aquinas to be offering a solution that follows directly from Aristotle's hylomorphism and Aristotle's remarks about human psychology. However, this provides an incomplete picture of Aquinas's ontology of soul and its relationship with the body. Aristotle's remarks about form, the form-matter relationship, the role of intellection in human psychology, and the status of the soul as form in light of its intellectual activity require significant interpretation on the part of the reader. Aquinas often turns to the works of Avicenna and Averroes for guidance in how to read Aristotle. Moreover, Avicenna's own understanding of Aristotle's view of the soul is heavily influenced by important conceptual changes to the notion of form in the Neoplatonic commentaries on Aristotle. Aquinas selectively follows interpretations or adopts principles found in the works of Avicenna and Averroes when presenting his own account of the soul. This is important, because these principles differ in important ways from Aristotle's own views or from alternative interpretations of Aristotle's remarks. Consideration of Aquinas's Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic sources is therefore indispensable for a complete account of Aquinas's conception of the soul as both a subsistent substance and substantial form.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION – CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATIONS OF AQUINAS ON HUMAN CONSTITUTION

In this dissertation I consider Thomas Aquinas's philosophical anthropology from the vantage-point of his Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic sources. I will argue that familiarity with these sources are necessary for a complete understanding of Aquinas's conception of the human soul and his conception of the soul's relation to the body simply because Aquinas draws from these sources certain metaphysical principles that are indispensable for his account of human nature. Recent scholarship has generally given little consideration to the role these sources play in shaping Aquinas's philosophical anthropology. This can be seen as the result of having taken approaches to Aquinas's philosophical anthropology that place emphasis on other influences of Aquinans's thought and in some cases preclude sustained treatment of the Arabic and Neoplatonic background of Aquinas's thought. One approach takes Aquinas's conception of human nature as primarily driven by his concern a) to reconcile Aristotelian philosophy with Catholic articles of faith and b) to resolve many of the Scholastic philosophical issues of his day. Consequently, this approach looks to the Latin tradition that preceded Aquinas as formative of his view. I shall call this the “Latin Christian Interpretive” approach (LCI). Another approach takes for granted that the interpretive context of Aquinas's thought is founded on Aristotle's hylomorphism. It then proceeds to reconstruct Aquinas's philosophical anthropology *via* argument analysis, usually with the aim of providing an assessment of its usefulness in addressing contemporary philosophical issues. I shall call this the “Aquinas as Aristotelian” approach (AAA). As a consequence of neglecting to

consider the formative role of Aquinas's Arabic and Neoplatonic sources, LCI and AAA have at times led to incomplete and in some cases mistaken accounts of Aquinas's philosophical anthropology. While Aristotle and early Scholasticism are undoubtedly integral to Aquinas's philosophical anthropology, an approach that also accounts for the contribution of Aquinas's Arabic and Neoplatonic sources to his interpretive context (I call this approach "Source-Based Contextualism," SBC) provides a more complete depiction of Aquinas's view. Studies focusing on the Arabic and Neoplatonic influence on Aquinas's thought should therefore complement some of the LCI and AAA focused scholarship and also correct some oversights. This should improve comparisons of Aquinas's thought with the philosophical anthropologies of prior and later thinkers, bring greater clarity to the meaning and import of his arguments, and, consequently, better position one to assess the truth-value of Aquinas's theses.

In later chapters I show that one must draw on Aquinas's Arabic and Neoplatonic sources to provide a complete exposition of Aquinas's reasoning on human constitution. The purpose of this introductory chapter is to provide a brief sketch of representative scholars of LCI and AAA and the topics dealt with in the later chapters of the dissertation.

1.1 Two Recent Approaches to Aquinas's Philosophical Anthropology

Two recent approaches to interpreting Aquinas's philosophical anthropology, LCI and AAA, neglect the Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic background of Aquinas's thought. However, this background provided Aquinas with metaphysical principles indispensable

to his conception of human nature. Consequently, LCI and AAA have led to incomplete and/or erroneous interpretations of Aquinas's philosophical anthropology. This section provides a brief exposition of each approach by summarizing the work of representative scholars.

1.2 The "Latin Christian Interpretive" Approach

The LCI, taken by scholars such as Anton Pegis, Richard Dales, and Carlos Bazan, presents Aquinas's conception of human nature as having been shaped by Augustine and the Augustinian tradition, the Scholastic philosophical issue of how the soul can be both substantial form and a subsistent substance, and the Latin Averroist controversy. This scholarship has focused disproportionately on the contribution of the Latin tradition to Aquinas's conception of human nature, with insufficient attention given to the Arabic/Islamic sources that Aquinas employed and often explicitly cited in the course of developing the metaphysical framework for his conception of human nature.

1.2.1 Anton Pegis

Anton Pegis maintains that the historical origin of Aquinas's theory of human nature ultimately rests in the Augustinian Christian tradition that preceded him. Pegis presents his clearest statement of this thesis in his 1962 St. Augustine Lecture, "At the Origins of the Thomistic Notion of Man" (Pegis 1963).[1] In this work, Pegis claims that although the Augustinian vision of human personhood treats the human soul as a simple,

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1 An expression of this thesis can also be found in several of Pegis's other works. See: Pegis (1976) and Pegis (1974).

immaterial, and immortal substance in its own right such that it is capable of ruling over the body, its early Medieval expositors were not concerned with espousing an ontology of the human person; rather, they were motivated by moral and spiritual questions (Pegis 1963, p. 16-17). As such, their concern instead was to express something of the spiritual journey of human persons in their discovery of God through exploration of the rich "inner life" of their souls[2] and to express "the superiority of the soul over the body" (Pegis 1963, p. 16).

The Augustinianism of the early Medieval period stands in contrast to the theological context of the 13th century, the milieu in which Aquinas was active. It was during this century that the surviving Aristotelian corpus other than works from the *Organon* became available to Latin Europe, which availability brought a fresh metaphysical vocabulary and, consequently, a sea change in reasoning about human nature from primarily moral and spiritual perspectives to a primarily ontological perspective (Pegis 1963, p. 8). As Pegis sees it, "the theologians of the thirteenth century were . . . called upon to explain in metaphysical terms" the Augustinian vision of human personhood that developed during the early Medieval period (Pegis 1963, p. 17-18). However, Aristotle's notion of human nature, *viz.* that the unity of a singular human being consists in a hylomorphic composition and, consequently, that the soul-body relation is a

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2 For instance, Pegis writes of Augustine's view: "To know himself, St. Augustine had to find God; which is another way of saying that the Augustinian effort to know man is, even when expressed in abstract definition, a journey to God, a journey of unification in the love of God" (Pegis 1963, p. 17). For Pegis's discussion of Augustinians prior to Aquinas who, according to Pegis, presented non-metaphysical expressions of Augustine's Platonic view of human nature, see (Pegis 1963, p. 12-15).

form-matter relation, appeared to rival the Augustinian view of the soul as a *hoc aliquid*, a substance *per se* (Pegis 1963, p. 19-20). Thus according to Pegis, the 13th century issue of human nature was defined by "whether [one] can say at one and the same time that the human soul is a spiritual substance in its own right, having therefore its own existence, and the substantial form of the body" (Pegis 1963, p. 12). As a 13th century theologian committed to an Augustinian view of human personhood, Thomas Aquinas was therefore faced with the difficulty of providing a metaphysical account of this view in Aristotelian terms, a view that would have been foreign to Aristotle himself.

The above historical narrative indicates to Pegis that it could not be that "St. Thomas simply created [his] philosophical doctrine" (Pegis 1963, p. 7). Nor could it be that Aquinas's theory of human nature resulted from "a simple matter of expounding in a straightforward way a straightforward Aristotelian philosophical text" (Pegis 1963, p. 7). Rather, Aquinas's conception of human nature has its origins in his commitment to the spiritual vision of human personhood espoused by his predecessors, even while Aquinas expressed his theory using the Aristotelian philosophical language of his day:

> Such an approach to St. Thomas Aquinas supposes that the Aristotelianism of St. Thomas Aquinas was not his "philosophy," but the technical language and instrument through which he expressed his personal philosophical ideas which he then went on to use in his theology (Pegis 1963, p. 17-18).

Yet Pegis maintains that Aquinas was deliberate in his choosing the Aristotelian technical language because "it grounded and made possible the notion of an individual substance having an individual essence" (Pegis 1963, p. 21). In contrast, the Platonic technical

language treated substances and essences as "a cluster of participations, intelligible and ordered, but constituting a hierarchical system of forms rather than a unitary substance," therefore making it incapable of fully expressing the sort of unity envisioned in the Augustinian conception of human personhood (Pegis 1963, p. 20-21). Pegis thus concludes that Aquinas used Aristotelianism, first, to "oppose on metaphysical grounds the various Platonic psychologies that seemingly did not know how to maintain the unity of man's essence" (Pegis 1963, p. 23), and, second, to "correct the Platonism of St. Augustine . . . and still leave the core of Augustinian doctrine intact" (Pegis 1963, p. 26).

According to Pegis's account, then, it is Aristotle and Augustine who define Aquinas's philosophical anthropology; while the principle source of Aquinas's reflection on human nature rests in Augustine's spiritual conception of human personhood, Aristotle's metaphysics of substance provides Aquinas the opportunity to reimagine that Augustinian vision in a philosophically precise way, as well as provide a vantage point to oppose positions that would compromise its notion of the unity of human nature. As such, the Augustinian core of Aquinas's conception of human nature necessitates that it appear altogether unique in comparison with the philosophical anthropologies of Aristotelian commentators who preceded him, since, Pegis claims, "none of the great commentators before St. Thomas – not Alexander, not Avicenna, not Averroes – had visualized that an intellectual substance could be in its very essence the substantial form of matter" (Pegis 1963, p. 5).[3] In other words, the question of whether the soul could be

3 Also see (Pegis 1963, p. 34): "The Aristotelian commentators had not been able to see how any substantial form of matter could be other than material, or how any separate and subsistent form could be other than entirely separate from matter. From this it followed that a form joined to matter was corruptible and that an incorruptible form was, and could be only, separate from matter. That there could be

both a subsistent substance and a substantial form is an issue that would not have occurred to the Aristotelian commentators simply because it was a problem peculiar to those who were attempting to express an Augustinian anthropology in Aristotle's ontological verbiage. Since an Augustinian worldview was foreign to Avicenna, Averroes, and others, how could they serve as essential sources in determining Aquinas's solution to the problem he faced?

If the positions of the Arabic thinkers and other Aristotelian commentators were to play any role in Aquinas's solution, it would be that they outlined the opposition, offering a point of contrast to the unified view of human personhood that Aquinas presented. For instance, one finds Pegis's discussion of Avicenna's "occasionalism" as an insufficient source for explaining the Augustinian notion of the unity of the human person in Aristotelian terms (Pegis 1963, p. 28-29). One sees this attitude expressed in Pegis's other works as well. For instance, in the conclusion of *St. Thomas and the Problem of the Soul in the Thirteenth Century*, Pegis explicitly characterizes Avicenna as representative of the Platonism that Aquinas was at pains to refute. Pegis writes, "Behind Avicenna rises the figure of Plato, and in Plato St. Thomas sees the parent of all doctrines incompatible with Aristotelianism" (Pegis 1976, p. 188), and, later, the "difficulty within the Avicennian system was really the product of an attempt to graft Aristotelian ideas onto a fundamentally Platonic psychology" (Pegis 1976, 201). Similarly, Pegis argues that Aquinas found in Averroes and earlier Aristotelian commentators,

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an intellectual form that was, at one and the same time, a substance within itself and the substantial form of matter was not only a novelty within Aristotelianism but an impossible novelty as well."

> a conception of the soul which he [i.e. Aquinas] considers to be essentially Platonic, but which is defended by appeal to the authority of Aristotle . . . St. Thomas, therefore, must turn historian and begin that long exposition of Aristotle, directed against his Greek and Arabian commentators, not to mention their Latin followers, in which an essentially Platonic separatism is attacked on all points and the unity of man defended (Pegis 1976, p. 162-163).

Since Pegis's Aquinas sees all vestiges of Platonic metaphysics as the polar opposite to Aquinas's own view, and that the Arabic philosophers and Aristotelian commentators espoused doctrines that matched up with Plato's, it is unsurprising that the Arabic philosophers and Aristotelian commentators would be overlooked as constructive influences on Aquinas's philosophical anthropology.

As shown above, Pegis's historical narrative provides reason to treat the Arabic thinkers and the Aristotelian commentators as having no formidable impact on Aquinas's philosophical anthropology, because the narrative leads one to presuppose that Aquinas had already found in the spiritual vision of Augustine and the technical metaphysical language of Aristotle what he needed to present a conception of the human person that treats him as a unity. Moreover, Pegis presents the Arabic thinkers and the Aristotelian commentary tradition as presenting a Platonism to which Aquinas was diametrically opposed. Such an approach would preclude the possibility of providing sustained consideration of the influence that Aquinas's Arabic and Neoplatonic sources might have had on Aquinas's philosophical anthropology.

1.2.2 Richard Dales

In *The Problem of the Rational Soul in the Thirteenth Century*, Richard Dales treats Aquinas's philosophical anthropology as a response to the Scholastic philosophical

issues of his day. Like Pegis, Dales sees Aquinas as the first among the Scholastics to argue that the human person constitutes a unity, because the soul and body "have a common principle of existence given to the substance 'man' by the soul, as form" (Dales 1995, p. 108). However, Dales sees Aquinas's doctrine as a way for Aquinas to address at once a handful of questions that had occupied his contemporaries and his 13th century predecessors: "is the soul an individual substance in its own right, a *hoc aliquid*;" is the soul simple or composed; is the soul "passed along by the parents to the child by biological means" and if not, how is "the rational soul related to the vegetative and sensitive souls" (Dales 1995, p. 10-11)? These questions emerged as Aristotle's psychological, epistemological, and metaphysical works were gradually received into the Latin West. As Dales sees it, the attempted solutions to these questions by Aquinas's predecessors resulted in a "stage of confusion." For instance, concerning the "central problem" of how to "reconcile the notion of the soul as a form with that of the soul as a complete substance," Dales writes of pre-Thomistic 13th century Scholastics:

> Some authors – Alexander Nequam, Alexander of Hales, William of Auvergne, and Albert the Great – denied in one way or other that it [i.e. the human soul] was a form; and those who did concede the use of this term for it always had to re-define 'form' in order to save the soul's substantiality and immortality (Dales 1995, p. 107).

The reason for hesitation in categorizing the human soul as a form, Dales claims, is because it leads to problems with the categorization of humans as rational beings, the origin of its rational capacity from biological processes, and the relationship between the rational, sensitive, and vegetative powers.

> If it [i.e. the human soul] was the form of the body in any sense, the relation of the rational soul, which placed man in his species, to the vegetative and sensitive,

> became a major problem. If the rational soul itself was the only substantial form of a living human being and was the source of all the vital functions, then one had to account for the development of the embryo (which certainly had some kind of life) before the infusion of the rational soul (Dales 1995, p. 107).

Among those Scholastics who did treat the rational soul as a form, they presented a handful of solutions that, Dales claims, shared the same shortcoming, *viz.* "that the whole soul was not immortal; only its rational constituent was" (Dales 1995, p. 107). As such, their solutions were incapable of providing a theory of human nature that treated the human person as a unity. On the other hand, treating the soul as a form-matter composite "guaranteed the soul's substantiality but made it virtually impossible to consider it the form of the body, since . . . if it were already a complete substance it would be unable to enter into a further relationship with matter" (Dales 1995, p. 107). Finally, the intellectual act that made the soul rational required that it not be conditioned by matter. Nevertheless, as Dales notes, "it also had to have some sort of contact with matter in order to function as a soul," and, therefore, be "a form of matter without being a material form" (Dales 1995, p. 108).

By treating the human soul and body as having a common existence that the soul gives to the composition in its capacity as form, Dales takes Aquinas to have overcome the weaknesses of his predecessors, since Aquinas could use his position to consistently address each of the aforementioned questions without compromising either the unity of the human person as a psychosomatic entity or the immortality of the soul. First, as a being capable of intellectual activity, it is a spiritual substance, and, therefore, a *hoc aliquid*, having its own existence. However, it is unlike other spiritual substances insofar as it is by nature a form of matter, and so cannot be considered complete in its species

unless it informs matter. The human soul having its own existence guarantees the survival of the soul when apart from the body; the soul's being a form of matter, "the principle through which the soul exists and is living" (Dales 1995, p. 110) guarantees that the body is an essential element in any human person. Finally, Aquinas accounted for the advent of the intellectual soul as a form by positing a succession of embryonic forms during fetal development. These forms come to be and are corrupted, each carrying with it a greater perfection than the last, until the intellectual soul is infused by divine action at the final stage of human generation, carrying with it the vegetative and sensitive perfections found in the previous forms, solving "the vexing problem of how the rational soul was related to the vegetative and sensitive soul" (Dales 1995, p. 111).

As the above summary illustrates, Dales sees Aquinas's philosophical anthropology as the product of his clearing up the confusion that resulted from the unsuccessful attempts of previous 13th century Scholatics to resolve the problems bequeathed to them in Aristotle's works. Dales's presentation of Aquinas thus gives the impression that the sole sources of Aquinas's theory of human nature are Aristotle and his fellow Scholastics. Although Dales acknowledges that the work of Avicenna contributed to the background of 13th century Scholastic discussions of human nature (Dales 1995, p. 7-9), Avicenna is not mentioned as a factor in his treatment of Aquinas. Dales also dedicates a chapter to discussing Aquinas's reaction to Averroes's doctrine of intellect, which Aquinas presented in his *De Unitate Intellectus*. However, there is no mention of Averroes having constructive influence on Aquinas's own position.

1.2.3 B. Carlos Bazan

B. Carlos Bazan maintains that early in Aquinas's career, Aquinas interpreted the Scholastic doctrine of soul as substantial form and subsistent substance in a dualistic manner that emphasized the human soul as a separate intellectual substance. In his essay, "13th Century Commentaries on *De Anima*: From Peter of Spain To Thomas Aquinas," Bazan argues that two central tasks of Aquinas's philosophical anthropology are to avoid, first, the anthropological dualism of Scholastic thinkers who, motivated by the religious concerns of immortality, took the human soul and body to be two distinct things, and, second, the metaphysical dualism of Averroes and his followers, who maintained that intellect lay outside the human soul.[4] Aquinas attempted to fulfill these tasks by promoting a "conception of the human soul as a subsistent-substantial-form, a notion that secures both the unity of the human composite and the incorruptibility of the intellectual soul, and that evolves from the Aristotelian notion of form as actuality" (Bazan 2002, p. 122). However, Aquinas would come to this position only after holding in his earlier works a position that resembles anthropological dualism. For instance, Bazan notes in his essay "The Human Soul: Form and Substance?" that Aquinas maintains in no uncertain terms at the beginning of his career that the human soul is a *hoc aliquid* in a manner akin to the "ecletic Aristotelians" who envision the human soul both as a substance in its own right and as a form, insofar as it is a perfection of the body:

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4 For Bazan's discussions of anthropological vs. metaphysical dualism, see (Bazan 2002, p. 121-122, 178) and (Bazan 2005). In the former work, Bazan argues favorably that Aquinas managed to avoid both dualisms (see: Bazan 2002, 182-184) and harmonize Aristotelian philosophy with the Christian worldview.

> At the beginning of his career, Thomas also held [with the eclectic Aristotelians] that the human soul was form and substance: "*anima rationalis praeter alias formas dicitur esse substantia, et hoc aliquid, secundum quod habet esse absolutum, et quod distinguitur; quia anima potest dupliciter considerari, scilicet secundum quod est substantia, et secundum quod est forma*" (*In Sent.* II, d. 19, q. 1, a. 1 ad 4m) The notion of *hoc aliquid* in this text is still imprecise and when Thomas discusses its meaning he points out other theoretical implications of the notion (universal hylomorphism and individuation). At this stage of development of his philosophical anthropology, Thomas has not yet reached the level of precision that will be found later in his *Questions on the Soul* (Bazan 1997, p. 12).

Similarly, Bazan remarks in his "Radical Aristotelianism in the Faculties of Arts," that Aquinas's use of *hoc aliquid* is indication that early in Aquinas's career, he envisioned the soul to be a spiritual substance in a similar vein to the Christian anthropological dualists that preceded him and who used that very term in characterizing their conception of the ontological status of the soul (Bazan 2005, p. 597)[5] Moreover, Bazan notes in the same essay that, like Aquinas, the Latin Aristotelian eclectics employed two metaphysical principles within their treatment of the soul as a spiritual substance, namely, the form-matter distinction of Aristotle and the *quo est-quod est* distinction of Boethius, to maintain that "a substance, itself composed of matter and form performs also the role of form or perfection of the body" (Bazan 2005, p. 598). It should be noted that the Latin Eclectic doctrine of soul as form and substance cannot serve as the sole source for Aquinas's position, since Aquinas in fact rejects the notion that the soul is a form-matter composition, and instead argues that the human soul and all intellectual substances are simple in comparison with hylomorphic composites. Nevertheless, Bazan's work indicates that something like Aquinas's view of the human soul as an intellectual

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5 Here Bazan mentions William of Auvergne, Philip the Chancellor, Alexander of Hales, John of La Rochelle and Bonaventure as promoting the notion that the soul is a *hoc aliquid*.

substance was an acceptable view of the soul-body relation, an acceptable interpretation of Aristotle during his time, and that the principles of Aquinas's solution were already being actively used by his predecessors and contemporaries.

Bazan maintains that encountering Averroes's doctrine of a shared intellect for all human beings, led Aquinas to make a decisive break away from the dualistic-leaning doctrines of his earlier writings and towards a theory that emphasized the human soul as a subsistent-substantial form. Bazan writes:

> It is in the course of his refutation of Averroes's doctrine that Thomas fully realizes that in order to justify how a particular human being, who is a composite of body and soul, is the subject of an intellectual operation, he has to consider him or her the subject of an intellectual being, for second acts (operations) depend upon first act (being). But the principle of being in composite substances is their substantial form; consequently, if human beings think, it is because their substantial form is intellectual in nature. The essence of the human soul is then to be a substantial form. It is in his confrontation with Averroes that Thomas realizes that the conception of the soul as a complete intellectual substance is fundamentally flawed and leads to an inconsistent view of human nature. It is in this confrontation that he also realizes that being essentially "intellectual" is not necessarily synonymous with being a complete intellectual substance, because a co-principle of a substance, like the human soul, or even an accident of a substance, like the intellectual power (*potentia intellectiva*), can also be intellectual by nature. Thomas's critique of Averroes in the *Summa contra Gentiles* is the catalyst of his new conception of the soul and sets the framework for the important series of psychological works that he later writes in Italy before returning to Paris in 1269 (Bazan 2012, p. 163-164).

Although Bazan acknowledges that Aquinas's position is shaped in *reaction* to Averroes's view on the nature of intellect, Bazan focuses disproportionately on the historical narrative of Latin eclecticism as the framework for Aquinas's theorizing, with little consideration of how certain principles in the works of Avicenna and Averroes may have constructively contributed to the formation of Aquinas's theories.

1.2.4 Summary Remarks on the "Latin Christian Interpretive" Approach

We have seen that Pegis, Dales, and Bazan offer distinctive analyses of the genesis, development, and intent of Aquinas's philosophical anthropology. Nevertheless, they share in common, tacitly or otherwise, the view that Aquinas was influenced in his thinking mostly by his Latin Scholastic and Augustinian predecessors, and by the doctrines of the Church. Since Aquinas was a theologian of the Roman Catholic tradition, it is of course natural to treat that tradition as perhaps the principle source of his thought. I acknowledge that Aquinas's concern with constructing a philosophically defensible conception of human nature that purported both to demonstrate certain aspects of Roman Catholic anthropology (e.g. immortality of the soul) and to make belief in other aspects of Roman Catholic anthropology intellectually possible (e.g. bodily resurrection) accords with Aquinas's overarching view that the doctrines of Roman Catholicism are not contrary to philosophical understanding.[6] To this extent, the religious and intellectual tradition of the Latin West can be said to have shaped the *issues* that Aquinas faced, and therefore must be factored into a complete account of Aquinas's philosophical anthropology. However, the coming chapters shall illustrate that Aquinas utilized certain philosophical principles available to him in the Arabic/Islamic philosophical tradition to devise *solutions* to those issues. Consequently, an accurate historical account of Aquinas's theory of human nature also requires consideration of how and to what extent Aquinas's Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic sources contributed to the statement of his solutions.

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6 See *Summa Contra Gentiles* I.7; *Summa Theologiae* I Q1, A1, ad. 2; *Summa Theologiae* I Q1 A8.

1.3 The "Aquinas as Aristotelian" Approach

The AAA approach, taken by scholars such as Robert Pasnau, Eleonore Stump, and Anthony Kenny, have attempted to construct various aspects of Aquinas's conception of human nature through argument analysis and, consequently, to provide an assessment of its usefulness in addressing contemporary philosophical issues in areas such as philosophy of mind, philosophy of biology, and ethics. The approach taken by these scholars tends to be ahistorical in the sense that they employ contemporary devices directly to the text of Aquinas with little or no consideration of his direct sources besides Aristotle. Moreover, Aquinas is seen as working out a theory of human nature from the vantage-point of an unadulterated Aristotelian hylomorphism. This comes with the peril of ignoring the more than millenium long commentary tradition on Aristotle that shaped Aquinas's interpretive context of Aristotle's works. Treating Aquinas as a direct interpreter of Aristotle and engaging Aquinas's ideas as contemporary leads to an anachronistic depiction of Aquinas's philosophical anthropology. Consideration of Aquinas's Arabic and Neoplatonic sources can prove a corrective to this anachronism, which would serve to provide a more accurate rendition of Aquinas's arguments and, consequently, clearer assessment of their relevance for addressing contemporary philosophical issues.

1.3.1 Robert Pasnau

In *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature,* Robert Pasnau argues that the metaphysical scheme underlying Aquinas's philosophical anthropology treats actuality as

the fundamental constituent of reality, such that matter does not appear as something additional to actuality in making up the reality of hylomorphic substance, but is seen as "no more than a particular manifestation of actuality: complex actuality in motion, subject to alteration, generation, and corruption" (Pasnau 2002, p. 131). On this view, hylomorphic substances are not caused to be complete by separate formal and material principles (Pasnau 2002, 133), since this would compromise the unity of substance (Pasnau 2002, 80-84). Rather, hylomorphic substances are understood to be "bundles of actuality unified by organization around a substantial form" (Pasnau 2002, p. 131).

Though Pasnau admits that his reading of Aquinas's metaphysics of substance as a sort of reductive actualism goes beyond the letter of the Thomistic corpus (Pasnau 2002, p. 138), Pasnau nevertheless sees evidence of it insofar one can use it to make sense of certain otherwise peculiar features of Aquinas's philosophy, such as his doctrine of the human soul as a subsistent immortal substance. Pasnau writes,

> It often strikes readers as incoherent for Aquinas to argue that the soul, the form of a body, could exist without the body. But that is because we are so accustomed to thinking of bodies as the ultimate reality, the stuff on which everything rests. We have, in other words, accepted the ancients' theory of matter. Aquinas believes that we have the story backward, and that it is forms or actuality on which everything rests (Pasnau 2002, p. 138).

This gestalt switch from reductive materialism or from metaphysical dualism to a reductive "actualistic" metaphysics leads Pasnau to proclaim that Aquinas's hylomorphic account of the human person shares an allegiance to certain 'non-reductive' theories in contemporary philosophy and that "Aquinas gives us a theory of the soul that actually solves the mind-body problem, and does so in a thoroughly satisfying way" (Pasnau 2002, p. 140).

In the introduction to *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature,* Pasnau notes that he intended to provide an extensive study that would have placed Aquinas's philosophy in the context of the various intellectual traditions that influenced him, but never managed to complete the study due to its "overwhelming" nature (Pasnau 2002, p. 2). Pasnau nevertheless sees Aristotle as an indispensable source for Aquinas's thought. As a result, Pasnau interfaces Aquinas's arguments directly with Aristotle's works. It is my contention that Aquinas's arguments were not the result of Aquinas directly engaging Aristotle's works. Rather, his reading of the Aristotelian corpus was significantly impacted by the Arabic philosophers and the commentary tradition. As such, they are as indispensable as Aristotle's works for gaining a correct understanding of the meaning of Aquinas's positions. I will show that once Aquinas's doctrines are read in light of the broader interpretive context that Pasnau did not consider in his study, one cannot maintain with Pasnau that Aquinas's doctrines rest on "reductive actualism."

1.3.2 Eleonore Stump

In *Aquinas,* Eleonore Stump argues that although one might be tempted to categorize Aquinas's philosophical anthropology as dualist, "since he thinks that there is an immaterial and subsistent constituent of the subject of cognitive function," *viz.*, the intellectual soul, it would be mistaken to do so. Drawing on the fact that Aquinas holds the following two propositions in tandem,

a) Human beings are composites of form and matter.

b) The subject of mental activity belongs to the whole human being.

Stump argues that Aquinas's position entails two further propositions:

c) The subject of mental activity is a material substance,

d) Mental activity can be an object of study for the natural sciences.

Both (c) and (d) clash with dualism, which according to its contemporary characterization, maintains that "the mind is not composed of matter and that scientific investigation of the brain cannot teach us anything about the mind" (Stump 2003, p. 212). Moreover, Stump argues that since Aquinas maintains the "intellectual soul is the form *constituting the human body as a whole*" (Stump 2003, p. 123; emphasis mine), Aquinas's position shares with contemporary physicalism the view that "mental states will be implemented in the matter of the body" (Stump 2003, p. 123) as configurations of neural stuff, including intellectual activity (Stump 2003, p. 210). Stump sees in Aquinas's position a philosophy of mind that overcomes the contemporary division between dualism and materialism:

> The real lesson . . . of Aquinas's account of the soul is to show how misleading the dichotomy between materialism and dualism is. What Aquinas's account of the soul shows us is that a certain kind of (restricted rather than global) materialism – one that takes mental states to be bodily states – is compatible with a certain sort of dualism – one that is non-Cartesian in character (Stump 2003, p. 215).

And later, Stump claims that Aquinas's hybrid dualist/physicalist approach will help in developing a comprehensive theory of mind:

> Aquinas's account of the soul . . . suggests that to make progress on a philosophical understanding of the nature of the mind (as distinct from a biological understanding of the mechanisms by which the mind operates), it would be good to break down the dichotomy between materialism and dualism that takes them to be incompatible positions (Stump 2003. p. 216).

Stump's treatment of Aquinas's "philosophy of mind" as a middle way between materialism and dualism ignores Aquinas's remarks about intellect as an actuality without being an actuality of a body or a bodily organ, thus having its own existence (*per se esse*) unconditioned by the body. Moreover, since, according to Aquinas, the intellectual power belongs to the human soul, Aquinas argues that the human soul has *esse per se,* which *esse* the soul communicates to the body (*ST* Ia 75 a. 2). As a consequence of the expanded role of the human soul in Aquinas's conception of human nature, this conception goes beyond Aristotle's hylomorphism in a way that Stump does not address, and which required Aquinas to draw on the Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic tradition.

1.3.3 Anthony Kenny

Anthony Kenny argues that certain elements of Aquinas's theory of human nature seem to contradict the fundamentally Aristotelian framework that Aquinas uses to develop his theory of human nature. For instance, Kenny notes that if the soul is supposed to be the form for a body (or, more properly, as Kenny claims, form for a subject or supposit), then it cannot also itself be a supposit. For instance, in *Aquinas on Mind,* Kenny states:

> There are serious philosophical difficulties in the identification of soul with form; or, to put the point in another way, it is not clear that the Aristotelian notion of 'form', even if coherent in itself, can be used to render intelligible the notion of 'soul' as used by Aquinas . . . Aquinas believed that the human soul was immortal and could survive the death of the body, to be reunited with it at final resurrection. Hence, by identifying the soul with the human substantial form he was committed that the form of a material object could continue to exist when that object had ceased to be. (Kenny 1993, p. 28).

As Kenny sees it, the central problem Aquinas faces in his attempt to construct an Aristotelian philosophical anthropology that allows for the soul to survive bodily death is that he mistakenly treats the soul as a concrete entity, i.e. a subsistent substance, while at the same time supposing that the soul can be the form of the body, which is an abstract relation between abstract principles of concrete entities. Kenny argues that in doing so, Aquinas's position contradicts itself:

> The first two articles of question seventy-five in a manner cancel each other out. The first argues to the conclusion that the soul is incorporeal in the sense that it is abstract and not concrete: it is not a body but an actuality of a body. The second argues to the conclusion that the soul is incorporeal in the sense that it is a non-physical part of a human being: it is an agent with no bodily organ. But an agent cannot be an abstraction, and what is abstract cannot be a part of what is concrete (Kenny 1993, p. 145).

Although Kenny takes Aquinas's purported confusion between the abstract and concrete to illustrate a deep-seated deficiency in Aquinas's theory of human nature, I will contend that Aquinas's controversial remarks illustrate that the framework for Aquinas's theory of human nature is not drawn fundamentally from Aristotle. What distinguishes Aquinas's framework from other hylomorphic accounts of human nature is the principles he inherits from Avicenna and Averroes, which principles make it possible for Aquinas to maintain that the soul is a substantial form and a substance.

1.3.4 Summary Remarks on the "Aquinas as Aristotelian" Approach

Taken in isolation from Scholastic, Arabic, and Neoplatonic influences, the AAA approach leads to anachronistic depictions of Aquinas's philosophical anthropology. While Aquinas worked within a framework of *an* Aristotelian hylomorphism in

developing his theory of human nature, it was not *Aristotle's* hylomorphism. If Aquinas's arguments are to be analyzed and assessed properly, Aquinas's philosophical anthropology must be accurately presented, which requires consideration of how the principles Aquinas derived and developed from Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic sources informed his arguments.

1.4 "Source-Based Contextualism"

The central thesis in this dissertation is that a SBC approach to Aquinas's philosophical anthropology includes what the LCI and AAA accounts sketched above have misssed: the formative role that Aquinas's Neoplatonic and Arabic sources had on his philosophical anthropology. Whereas the LCI or AAA scholarship has focused on Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas's spiritual tradition, or the problems of prior Scholastics as formative sources for Aquinas's theory of human nature, a SBC approach adds to this a concern for considering the principles Aquinas uses to devise solutions to the issues of his day in their proper historical context.

The issue that Aquinas faces with respect to the human soul is that he must explain how the following statements can all be maintained to be true:

1. The soul is a first act of an organic body having life potentially. The soul is related to the body as form is related to matter (Aristotle, *De Anima* 412^{b}5-6).
2. The actuality of intellect is not the actuality of a body or a bodily organ (Aristotle, *De Anima* 3.4).

3. The intellect is a power (i.e. a first act) of the human soul (*Summa Theologia* I Q76. A1).

A combination of (1) and (2) would at first encounter seem to commit an Aristotelian to the view that intellect and human soul are separate from one another, since (1) requires that the human soul is a principle of a hylomorphic composition and (2) denies that intellect has such a relation to body/matter. This leaves one with the task of explaining how are soul and intellect related – an issue of fundamental importance to the Aristotelian commentators. On the other hand, a combination of (2) and (3) taken together would seem to require that the human soul is a separate substance or something like a separate substance.[7] This leaves one with the task of explaining how the soul and body are related. Finally, a combination of (1) and (3) would seem to require that intellect is an act of an organic body, which leaves one with the task of having to explain how this combination does not contradict an Aristotelian account of intellect as a non-bodily act. Taking all three statements together renders the view that the human soul is a first act of a body, yet somehow possesses a power that is not an act of a body, and inherits all of tasks outlined in the three prior combinations. That is to say, Aquinas is faced with providing a framework that can explain how the human soul includes intellect as one of its powers,

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7 Aquinas sometimes refers to the human soul as a separate substance. For instance, in the opening lines of *De Ente et Essentia,* Chapter 4, Aquinas states "It remains to see in what way there is essence in separate substances, namely in the soul, the intelligences, and the first cause. // Nunc restat videre per quem modum sit essentia in substantiis separatis, scilicet in anima, intelligentia et causa prima" (43.375.1-3). Moreover, in the *Commentary on the Sentences* 1 d. 8, q. 5, a 2*,* Aquinas remarks, "The angel or the soul can be called quiddity or nature or simple form, insofar as their quiddities are not composed from diverse things. // Unde Angelus vel anima potest dici quidditas vel natura vel forma simplex, inquantum eorum quidditas non componitur ex diversis" (See Appendix I).

without treating the soul as a separate substance or the intellect as a bodily act. Moreover, since Aquinas's orientation as a theologian is to show that truths of reason do not contradict the doctrines of Roman Catholic faith, we shall see that Aquinas thinks his framework can satisfactorily account for both the immortality of the soul and the possibility of bodily resurrection.

The previous paragraph illustrates the importance of Aristotle's work and the role of Aquinas's spiritual tradition as factors in shaping the issues he faces concerning the human soul. This dissertation will focus on the principles Aquinas uses in framing his response to those issues. Just as familiarity with Aristotle's works and the Latin Christian tradition clarifies the problems Aquinas faces when dealing with the ontology of the human soul, so also familiarity with the sources that Aquinas derives his principles from will clarify his solution to the problems. We shall see in the coming chapters that Aquinas's account of the human soul a) employs principles from Avicenna and Averroes and b) inherits through Avicenna an approach to substantial form developed by Neoplatonic commentators. These contributions of the Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic commentators are indispensable to Aquinas's argument that the human soul can be both a substantial form and a subsistent intellectual substance. To illustrate this, I will first provide background on the principles as they are found in the works of the Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic commentators. I will then show how Aquinas uses these principles to construct his ontology of soul, after which I will provide an assessment of LCI and AAA accounts of Aquinas presented earlier in this chapter.

1.4.1 A Brief Sketch of the Coming Chapters

The second chapter of the dissertation will cover three doctrines that serve as principles for Aquinas but have their origin in Arabic philosophy and/or the Neoplatonic commentary tradition. The chapter will focus on the expression of those doctrines by Aquinas's sources without providing a sustained treatment of those principles as they appear in Aquinas's works. The first part of the chapter will focus on Avicenna's distinction between form and essence in hylomorphic composites. The second part of the chapter will focus on the manner in which Neoplatonic commentators and Avicenna conceive of the possibility that a separate substance can be a substantial form. The third section will investigate how Averroes applies a notion of potentiality to separate intellectual substances.

The third chapter focuses on how Aquinas uses the doctrines discussed in the previous chapter to construct his theory of human nature in his early works. I will treat in order how i) the form/essence distinction, ii) communicability of the soul's *esse,* and iii) potentiality of the human intellect factor into the *De Principiis Naturae, Commentary on the Sentences, De Ente et Essentia,* and *Summa Contra Gentiles,* in forming Aquinas's early to middle view of human personhood.

The fourth chapter focuses on the same topic and follows the same procedure as the previous chapter, except that it treats the works of Aquinas that appeared later in his career**.** I will treat in order, again, how i) the form/essence distinction, ii) communicability of the soul's *esse,* and iii) potentiality of the human intellect factor into the *Disputed Questions on the Soul, Commentary on De Anima, On Spiritual Creatures,*

Commentary on Metaphysics, and *Summa Theologia,* in forming Aquinas's mature view of human personhood.

The final chapter contrasts the accounts of Aquinas's philosophical anthropology provided in Chapters 3 and 4 with LCI and AAA accounts. This constrast highlights the shortcomings that result from precluding or neglecting to account for the influence that Arabic and Neoplatonic sources had on Aquinas's thought. The chapter concludes with a discussion of assessing Aquinas's anthropology in light of an SBC study of Aquinas, and of the general value of SBC for research in philosophy.

CHAPTER 2: AQUINAS'S INTERPRETIVE CONTEXT – NEOPLATONIC AND ARABIC-ISLAMIC INFLUENCES

This chapter provides a survey of the positions of the Neoplatonic and Arabic-Islamic commentators that had significant influence on Aquinas's ontology of soul. First, I discuss Avicenna's account of the relationship between form and essence in sensible substance, which he treats as distinct principles. Avicenna argues that since essence determines substances to be the kinds of things they are, and since sensible substances are hylomorphic composites, the essence of any sensible substance includes both form and matter. On the other hand, the form of any sensible substance is the principle that determines its matter to be actual. Consequently, Avicenna treats sensible substances as a combination of essence and supposit in addition to being a hylomorphic composition. This differs in important ways from Aristotle's conception of the form-essence relationship presented in *VII.7,* which identifies essence as form. On this view, there are no principles of sensible substance beyond that which constitute the hylomorphic composition, and, consequently, no essence-supposit combination. However, Aristotle also makes remarks in *Metaphysics* 7.7 that could be used to derive at least something akin to Avicenna's distinction between form and essence. Aristotle never definitively adopts either position, leaving to his interpreters the dilemma of having to reconcile or to argue for one of these two apparently conflicting accounts. Aquinas follows Avicenna's account of the form-essence distinction, and *ipso facto,* the ontological implications it has for hylomorphic substances. Aquinas consequently rejects the form-essence relationship presented in Aristotle's *Metaphysics VII.7,* opting instead for Aristotle's view in

Metaphysics VII.11, which he identifies with Avicenna's form-essence distinction. In later chapters, I will show that Avicenna's hylomorphism plays an important role in Aquinas's arguments that the human soul is both a subsistent substance and a substantial form.

Second, I discuss Robert Wisnovsky's work, *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context*, which outlines how Arabic translations of and commentaries on Aristotle's works were heavily influenced by a strand of earlier Neoplatonic commentators who introduced new subtleties and distinctions in Aristotelian terminology in their attempt to harmonize Platonic and Aristotelian psychologies and to make sense of Aristotle's noetics. The end result was a Neo-Aristotelian account that treats the human soul as a form of the body, but which also has being separate from the body and is the cause of the body's existence. Wisnovsky argues that the Neoplatonic reading of Aristotle's psychology had such widespread influence in the Islamic world that Avicenna would not have viewed his dualist account of human nature, which accords with the Neoplatonic account, as at odds with Aristotle's account. However, the Neoplatonic reading conflicts with the standard reading of Aristotle, which treats substantial forms as distinct principles of and actually inseparable from hylomorphic substances, whereas pure forms are separate substances, incapable of being the formal actuality of matter. Thus a Neoplatonic inspired anthropology is faced with the task of explaining how a separate immaterial substance can also be a constituent of a determinate material particular. This task mirrors the problem Aquinas faces in constructing a philosophical anthropology that avoids the anthropological dualism of his Scholastic predecessors without denying that the human soul depends for its existence on, and therefore perishes with, the body. Aquinas's

solution maintains that the human person is a unified substance despite its soul, which is a substantial form, having *per se esse.* Since anything with *per se esse* is a substance and *hoc aliquid,* Aquinas has to explain how the human soul can be a substantial form of a human person, who is a substance and *hoc aliquid*, when the soul is already itself a substance and *hoc aliquid*. In later chapters, I show that although Aquinas's account of the relation between the human soul and its body does not agree in all aspects with the Neoplatonic account of the soul as a separate being and cause of the body, there is enough historical connection *via* Avicenna and enough similarity in formal features between the two views to suggest that Aquinas's account is an outgrowth of the general soul-body relation envisaged by the Neoplatonic tradition. This shared framework enables Aquinas to develop an account of soul that is compatible with Roman Catholic anthropology, but also commits Aquinas to a conception of the soul as substantial form that departs in important ways from Aristotle's account.

Finally, I discuss Averroes's arguments in his *Long Commentary on the De Anima* against treating intellectual potentiality as a type of matter and his view that this potentiality belongs to every substance besides the first unmoved mover, which is a purely intellectual act. Separate substances are ordered in a hierarchical fashion on the basis of the actualization of their intellectual potential. The first unmoved mover thus occupies the highest rank as a consequence of its pure actuality. By contrast, potential intellect occupies the lowest rank as a consequence of being in pure potential to receive intellectual content *via* a process of abstraction that begins with perception of sensible substances. As such, the potential intellect has an essential relation to the human body

and its psychological processes. In later chapters I discuss how Averroes's comments on incorporeal potentiality influenced Aquinas's defense of the human soul as being essentially related to the body and his rejection of both Platonic and universal hylomorphic accounts of the human soul.

Although the central aim of this chapter is to provide sufficient acquaintance with the positions of Avicenna, Averroes, and certain Neoplatonic commentators such that in later chapters it will be apparent that Aquinas utilizes these positions in constructing his own philosophical anthropology, it also serves to highlight that commentators had motivations and faced philosophical problems that were perhaps foreign to Aristotle, and certainly weren't explicitly dealt with in the Aristotelian corpus, but provided an opportunity for novel developments in Aristotelian thought. Given that Aquinas draws on these novel developments in presenting his unique theory on the soul-body relationship, it should be unsurprising that Aquinas's final position turns out different than Aristotle's. Moreover, despite Aquinas's own motivations and philosophical concerns stemming from the religious and intellectual tradition of the Latin West, Aquinas integrates the principles presented in this chapter in his response to those motivations and concerns. A survey of the positions presented by the Neoplatonic and Arabic-Islamic commentators therefore sets the foundation for the analysis of Aquinas's theory of human nature presented in later chapters and provides some constraints on what that theory logically entails.

2.1 The Form-Essence Distinction In Avicenna's *Metaphysics*

In *Metaphysics* 5, ch. 8, par. 5, Avicenna set out to explain his understanding of the difference between form and essence in sensible substance. Avicenna writes:

> **(1A)** Nor are composites [the things] they are through form alone. For the definition of a thing indicates all the things that render it subsistent. **(1B)** Thus, it also, in some respect, includes matter. **(1C)** It is through this that the difference between quiddity {i.e. essence} in composite things is known. **(1D)** Form is always part of the quiddity in composite things... **(1E)** As for the quiddity, it is that by which it {i.e. a singular sensible substance} is what it is; **(1F)** and it {i.e. a sensible substance} is what it is only by virtue of the form being connected with matter, which {matter} is something additional to the meaning of form. (Avicenna 2005, p. 187-8).[8]

As **1A** indicates, Avicenna begins with the notion that the definition of sensible substances include their essential properties. Let us call this the "Completeness of Definition " postulate:

> **Completeness of Definition:** For any sensible substance its definition will contain every essential property of that substance.

When one combines the Completeness of Definition postulate with the notion that form and matter are essential properties of sensible substances, it follows that every sensible substance will contain form and matter in their definition. Let us call this the "Avicennian Hylomorphic Definition" thesis:

> **Avicennian Hylomorphic Definition:** For any sensible substance its definition will contain both form and matter.

As **1C** makes clear, Avicenna takes the Avicennian Hylomorphic Definition thesis and the Completeness of Definition postulate as grounds for distinguishing between form and

8 All curly brackets in the passage from Avicenna's *Metaphysics* indicate my additions, whereas square brackets indicate Michael Maurmura's additions.

essence. However, Avicenna has made no mention of essence-quiddity up to this point. Unless it were the case that essences were identical with the definitions of things, the Avicennian Hylomorphic Definition thesis and the Completeness of Definition postulate would be insufficient by themselves to draw the distinction between essence and form. Avicenna did not subscribe to a deflationary linguistic or conceptual account of essence. To the contrary, Avicenna's remark at **1E** indicates that he understood the essences of things to be the principles by which those things possess their essential properties.

Essence$_{df}$= that principle by which a thing has its essential properties

Thus, Avicenna had to conceive of the essence-definition relation in a way that allowed him to move from the distinction between *part* of a thing's definition (*viz.* form) and the whole of the thing's definition to the distinction between the essence of things and their essential properties. In other words, Avicenna must take definitions to signify the essence of things such that the consideration of distinctions in a thing's definition accurately reflect distinctions in its essence. Let us call this the "Essence-Definition Isomorphism" hypothesis:

Essence-Definition Isomorphism: For any substance, the distinctions in its definition reflect distinctions in its essence.

Since the Avicennian Hylomorphic Definition thesis makes explicit that form is *part* of the definition of any sensible substance, and seeing as a part is non-identical with the whole, Avicenna reaches his conclusion *via* the Essence-Definition Isomorphism hypothesis, namely, that the forms of sensible substances are not identical to their essences. Let us call this the "Form-Essence Distinction."

Form-Essence Distinction: For any sensible substance, its form is not identical to its essence.

Avicenna's remark at **1F** makes his reasoning for the Form-Essence Distinction explicit: since a sensible substance is essentially a hylomorphic composition, i.e. a composition of form and matter, and essence is the principle by which things have their essential properties, then form is distinct from essence in the way that an essential property is distinct from the principle by which something has that essential property. Thus, being a hylomorphic composite is not due to form, but results from a sensible substance having an essence that determines a thing to have a form which actualizes matter. Thus, from the Form-Essence Distinction, one can derive what we shall call the "Essence as Principle of Hylomorphic Parts" thesis:

Essence as Principle of Hylomorphic Parts: For any sensible substance, its essence is the principle by which it has form and matter.[9]

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9 Avicenna appears to make some remarks in his *Physics* that correlate with the Essence as Principle of Hylomorphic Parts thesis. First, when distinguishing nature and form in composite bodies in Book 1, Ch. 6, Avicenna states:

> In the case of composite bodies, the nature is something like the form but not the true being of the form. [That] is because composite bodies do not become what they are by a power belonging to them that essentially produces motion in a single direction, even if they inevitably have those powers inasmuch as they are what they are. So it is as if those powers are part of their form and as if their form is a combination of a number of factors, which then become a single thing. An example would be humanness, since it includes the powers of the vegetative, animal, and rational soul; and when all of these are in some way "combined," they yield the essence of humanness (Avicenna 2009, *Physics,* p. 46).

Avicenna primarily uses "nature" throughout the *Physics* to indicate "the power [of a body] that gives rise to its producing motion and change." Moreover, in the context of Book 1, Ch. 6, Avicenna identifies form as the "essence by which {a bodily substance} is what it is" (Avicenna 2009, *Physics,* p. 45). I take Avicenna's point in the above passage, then, to be that the nature of composite substances is the principle of their varied activities, whereas their form/essence is what makes them be the kind of thing that has those activities. Thus, some power intrinsically belonging to a

As the Essence as Principle of Hylomorphic Parts thesis indicates, essence has a type of ontological priority over form and matter. This has important implications for Avicenna's views on the constitution of sensible substances.

Immediately after concluding his argument for the Form-Essence Distinction, Avicenna writes,

> **(2A)** The composite is also not this meaning [*viz.,* of form] but is the assemblage of form and matter. For this is what the composite is, **(2B)** and the quiddity is this composition. **(2C)** Form is thus one of the things to which composition is added. **(2D)** The quiddity is this very composition that combines form and matter. The unity that comes about through both is due to this one [composition] (Avicenna 2005, p. 188).

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human (e.g. the soul) is the cause for his or her growth, digestion, reproduction, sensation, reasoning, etc., whereas the form/essence *humanness* is the principle whereby any individual human has that power, among other characteristics that are required to be human. In other words, the soul is the nature of human activities, and *humanness* is the form/essence, i.e., the principle by which humans have souls. Second, when detailing the variety of things form is predicated of in Book 1 Ch. 10, Avicenna states:

> The form taken as one of the principles {of a composite substance} is relative to what is composed of it and the matter – namely, that it is a part of it that necessitates its being actual in its instance, whereas the matter is a part that does not necessitate it being actual... So the thing {i.e. the composite substance} is not what it is through the matter; rather it is through the existence of the form that something becomes actual. *As for the form that makes the matter subsist, it stands above [any] other kind.* The formal cause might be related to either a genus or species – that is, the form that makes the matter to subsist. (Avicenna 2009, *Physics,* p. 70; emphasis added).

Avicenna distinguishes two types of form: a) the form as a part or principle of composite substances, which actualizes matter (their other principle/part), and b) the form that makes matter subsist. Though Avicenna does not state it explicitly, the basis for his distinction seems to be that since the form as a part of composite substances presupposes that composite substances have matter as a part to be actualized and thus cannot account for the presence of matter in composite substances, there must be an ontologically prior form (which Avicenna identifies as essence or quiddity, and which Aquinas later calls *forma totius*, or "form of the whole") that causes composite substances to have matter as a principle (and, presumably, form as a principle as well). See McGinnis 2012, p. 41-44 for a summary of Avicenna's analysis of definition and how it reflects the form-essence distinction.

At **2A**, Avicenna makes the observation that substances with hylomorphic composition are a substantial unity of form and matter and so must be distinct from their form. Let us call this the "Form-Substance Distinction:"

> **Form-Substance Distinction:** For any sensible substance, it is non-identical with its form.

The non-identity of form and sensible substance seems to indicate for Avicenna that form is not by itself capable of accounting for the substantial unity of form and matter in hylomorphic compositions, since form does not encompass all of the constituents that make up the hylomorphic unity. Let us call this the "Hylomorphic Unity Explanation" requirement:

> **Hylomorphic Unity Explanation:** For any sensible substance, whatever explains its hylomorphic unity must encompass its constituent parts (i.e. form and matter).

We have already seen with the derivation of Essence as Principle of Hylomorphic Parts thesis from the Form-Essence Distinction that Avicenna's conception of the essences of sensible substances encompasses both form and matter, which Avicenna restates in **2B**. As such, the essences of sensible substances turn out to be ripe for fulfilling the Hylomorphic Unity Explanation and therefore play the additional role of accounting for the substantial unity of form and matter in sensible substances. Avicenna's remark at **2D** makes this clear. Let us call this the "Essence as Principle of Hylomorphic Unity" thesis:

> **Essence as Principle of Hylomorphic Unity:** For any sensible substance its essence unifies its form and matter to be a substance.

The general picture that emerges from the Essence as Principle of Hylomorphic Unity thesis is that Avicenna envisions sensible substances as being constituted by two parts, form and matter, such that their forms actualize their matter. However, in order to account for the totality of the hylomorphic composition, the essences of sensible substances are an actuality of the whole sensible substance. Thus, Avicenna sees sensible substances as having an essence-substance combination (where substance is taken in the sense of primary substance) in addition to the hylomorphic composition of form and matter: Form and matter are the components, the sensible substance is the thing composed, and essence is that which composes.

In light of the above analysis, we can summarize Avicennian hylomorphism as follows:

> **Avicennian Hylomorphism:** for any sensible substance, it **a)** is a composition of form and matter and **b)** has an essence that causes its composition.

2.1.1 The Form-Essence Relation In Aristotle's *Metaphysics*

Avicenna's hylomorphism contrasts with the hylomorphism presented by Aristotle in *Metaphysics VII*, where he identifies form as *to ti en einai*, i.e. as the essence or principle which makes things be what they are, to the exclusion of matter. For instance, Aristotle states in Chapter 7 that form should be taken to indicate "the essence of each thing" (*Metaph.* $1032^{b}1$-2), and that "essence [is] substance without matter" (*Metaph.* $1032^{b}14$-15). Moreover, in keeping with the identification of form and essence, Aristotle states in chapter 10 that "only the parts of the form are parts of the formula [i.e. the

definition]" (*Metaph.* 1035^{B}33). If definition signifies essence (in accord with Essence-Definition Isomorphism), this would require that the contents of a thing's essence would *not* include matter, which is at odds with the Essence as Principle of Hylomorphic Parts thesis as well as the consequent theses.[10] Aristotelian hylomorphism can thus be summarized as holding:

> **Aristotelian Hylomorphism$_1$:** For any sensible substance it is **a)** a composition of matter and form, **b)** it is what it is by way of its essence, and **c)** its essence is its form.

However, Aristotle also presents what appears to be a conflicting account of definition and its parts in *Metaphysics VII.11,* one which seems to agree with the Avicennian Hylomorpic Definition thesis in maintaining that matter is in some sense included in the definition of certain sensible substances. For instance, Aristotle states that:

> Some things surely are a particular form in a particular matter, or particular things in a particular state... It is not possible to define [animal] without reference to movement – nor, therefore to the parts and to their being in a certain state" (*Metaph.* 1036^{B}23-30), and "the soul is the primary substance and the body is matter, and man or animal is the compound of both taken universally" (*Metaph.* 1037^{A}5-6).

Again, if definition signifies essence, one could use the view expressed in *Metaphysics VII.11* to derive an alternate version of Aristotelian hylomorphism:

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10 I leave aside the question of whether Aristotle actually maintained Essence-Definition Isomorphism for now. My interest here is to present an interpretation of Aristotelian hylomorphism that, as we shall see, Aquinas considers and rejects as inadequate.

> **Aristotelian Hylomorphism$_2$:** For any sensible substance, **a)** it is what it is by way of its essence, **b)** it is composition of matter and form, **c)** and its essence causes its composition.[11]

Avicennian hylomorphism is in agreement with both accounts of Aristotelian hylomorphism that sensible substances are understood to be composed of form and matter. However, as indicated earlier, Aristotelian Hylomorphism$_1$ does not treat the definitions of sensible substances as signifying a distinct principle from which those substances have formal and material parts, and from which those parts are brought together in a substantial unity. Rather, it treats definitions as signifying the forms of substances, without reference to matter. Consequently, all that would be required to account for a hylomorphic unity would be form actualizing matter, since form has everything within it to make a thing be the kind of thing it is. By contrast, Aristotelian Hylomorphism$_2$ has the potential to render something like Avicennian hylomorphism: if definitions express the essence of things, then essence is a cause that makes the hylomorphic composition be a hylomorphic composition, since the definitions of sensible substances contain both form and matter.

2.1.2 Relevance to Thomas Aquinas

The interpreter of Aristotle is faced with two apparently conflicting accounts of the relation between essence, definition, form, and matter. Moreover, the Aristotelian

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11 If one grants the Essence-Definition Isomorphism thesis, it isn't clear whether Aristotle himself would have accepted Aristotelian Hylomorphism$_2$. In the closing remarks of *Metaphysics VII.11*, he seems to reject it: "we have stated that in the formula of the substance the material parts will not be present" (*Metaph.* 1037^{A}24-5).

corpus is absent any statements that clearly and definitively favor either of the two versions of Aristotelian hylomorphism presented above, leaving Aristotle's commentators the task of explaining the relation between essence, definition, etc., and detailing its entailments for hylomorphism. Unsurprisingly, commentators have responded to this task with a dizzying variety of solutions.[12] Though it is beyond the scope of this work to explore any solutions besides Aquinas's and those relevant to Aquinas's work, it should be noted that the *prima facie* indeterminacy concerning the form-essence relationship in *Metaphysics VII* (and Aristotle's relative silence on the topic in other works) enables his predecessors to offer their solutions in the first place. Since Aristotle appears to have offered different and incompatible accounts of the relationship between essence, definition, form, and matter, if the relationship between essence, definition, etc. makes a significant contribution to one's concept of hylomorphism, it would be inaccurate to speak of *Aristotle's* hylomorphism as if Aristotle had a singular and clearly defined concept by which the hylomorphic theories of later commentators might be measured. Instead, a more accurate portrayal would be that a range and variety of potential hylomorphisms could be built from the theoretical components strewn across Aristotle's work. As such, *any* account of hylomorphism derived from those components and combined in a logically consistent way would be Aristotelian, even if each of the various accounts on offer are incompatible. For instance, Averroes argues in his commentary on *Metaphysics VII* that the definitions of sensible substances refer only to formal properties, and, consequently, presents an account of hylomorphism that accords with Aristotelian

12 See Galluzzo (2006 p. 64-70 and 74-79) for discussion of contemporary interpretations of *Metaphysics,* Book 7 on the relationship between essence, form, and composite, as well as the essence-definition relation.

Hylomorphism$_1$.[13] This stands in contradistinction to the position of Avicenna, which, as we have seen above, distinguishes form from essence and argues on the basis of this distinction that essence is an additional principle in hylomorphic compositions, which is at least similar to Aristotelian Hylomorphism$_2$. The fact that the two versions of hylomorphism are derivable from Aristotle's work marks them as Aristotelian. The fact that two incompatible accounts of hylomorphism can be derived from Aristotle's work is a consequence of the *prima facie* indeterminacy (or incompleteness) inherent in the work. What is of importance historiographically, then, isn't whether Avicenna or Averroes have interpreted Aristotle correctly, but why they have offered their interpretations and how it affects the rest of their metaphysics and natural philosophy. Likewise for Thomas Aquinas.

In coming chapters we shall see that Aquinas adopts Avicenna's hylomorphism in his early works and maintains it throughout his career, while interpreting Aristotle's remarks in *Metaphysics VII* in kind. Aquinas was aware of an account of hylomorphism based on form-essence identity but explicitly argues against it. Although Aquinas partly bases his rejection of form-essence identity on textual considerations, a version of hylomorphism that presupposes form-essence identity appears in multiple works of Aquinas as an objection to a doctrine central to his anthropology, *viz.*, that the human soul is both a subsistent substance and a substantial form. Aquinas's responses either draw implicitly or explicitly on the form-essence distinction (for which he often credits Avicenna, not Aristotle) as providing an alternative hylomorphism that allows for the

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13 See Galluzzo (2013, p. 199-217) for an extensive discussion of Averroes's account.

possibility that the human soul can be both a substantial form and subsistent substance. Aquinas appears to have adopted the form-essence distinction rather than alternative accounts of the form-essence relation precisely because of that possibility, which makes the Avicennian form-essence distinction an indispensable feature of Aquinas's anthropology.

2.2 Avicenna, The Neoplatonic Commentary Tradition & Separate Souls as Perfections of Body

The first section of Wisnovsky's *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context* (Wisnovsky 2003) and the second section of Wisnovsky's section on Avicenna in the *Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy* contain an analysis of subtle developments in terminology that appear in certain Neoplatonic commentaries on Aristotle's psychological works. According to Wisnovsky, these developments find their origin in attempts by Alexander and Themistius to clarify Aristotle's use of the term "*entelekheia"* in *De Anima* 2 and in his description of motion in *Physics*. The Neoplatonists made use of these clarifications in their project of harmonizing Aristotle's noetics with the rest of his psychology and Aristotle's psychology with Plato's psychology (Wisnovsky 2005, 97), which culminated in a view of the human soul as a form of the body that has being separate from the body and is the cause of the body's existence. The resulting Neoplatonic account of the soul and its relation to the body influenced Arabic translations and commentaries on Aristotle, and, through this, provided background for Avicenna's "Aristotelian" account of the soul. My primary aim here is to highlight the defining characteristics of the Neoplatonic account of the soul inherited by Avicenna and contrast

it with standard interpretations of Aristotle's account of the soul. However, Wisnovsky's research on how interpretive issues concerning the meaning of *entelekheia* lead to the emergence of the Neoplatonic account of soul that influenced Avicenna's reading of Aristotle is necessary background, so first I will provide a brief sketch of Wisnovsky's work.

2.2.1 Some Hermeneutical Problems Connected to Aristotle's Use of *Entelekheia*

In the opening remarks of *De Anima,* Book 2, Aristotle distinguishes form and matter in terms of actuality (*entelekheia*) and potentiality (*dunamis*), and, moreover, states (without further explanation) that there are two kinds of *entelekheia*: the first kind is like knowledge (*episteme*) whereas the second is like reflection (*theoria*). Drawing on these notions – i.e., that hylomorphic compositions are determinate particulars with formal and material constituents corresponding respectively to *entelekheia* and potentiality, Aristotle reasons that the soul, which is the active principle of life, cannot be a body, since the body of a substance possessing life is both the subject of and stands in potential to living activities such as nutrition and growth. Thus, the soul must not only be distinguished from the body, it must be related to the body as its form and, consequently, is its *entelekheia.* Moreover, Aristotle identifies the soul as a first *entelekheia,* on account of the priority of having to possess an ability before one engages in it, just as knowledge precedes reflection. With this, Aristotle has arrived at a complete definition of soul as "an actuality [*entelekheia*] of the first kind of a natural body having life potentially in it" (*De Anima* 412^{a} 11-28)

Wisnovsky finds Aristotle's use of *entelekheia* to indicate form and to contrast it with matter is clear and consistent. However, Wisnovsky also remarks that Aristotle's attempt to illustrate the distinction by citing the difference between *episteme* and *theoria* ends up introducing an interpretive tension. Since *theoria* is an actuality, whereas *episteme* appears as a potentiality for *theoria*, the first/second *entelekheia* distinction could be seen as a special type of potentiality/actuality distinction. Taking this together with Aristotle's identity of the soul as the form and *entelekheia* of hylomorphic composites in contrast to their matter/potentiality, one might be inclined to identify soul as a second *entelekheia,* which is associated with *theoria*. Yet, Aristotle ends up defining the soul as a first *entelekheia,* the type associated with *episteme*. If first *entelekheia* turns out to be a kind of potentiality, the actualization of first *entelekheiai,* such as the soul, would be the subject of and stand in potential to alteration, which characteristics, according to Aristotle's own reckoning, are associated with matter rather than form.

As Wisnovsky notes, however, commentators generally are in agreement that Aristotle's intention in distinguishing first and second *entelekheiai* is to track *hexis*, i.e., possessing an ability to do something, and *khrêsis,* i.e. using that ability. For instance, acquiring or possessing *episteme* provides one with the ability to reflect, whereas *theoria* is the actual use of one's *episteme*, based on whether an object of thought is absent from or present to the thinking soul (Wisnovsky 2003, p. 23-24). Interpreting the distinction between first and second *entelekheia* as a possession/use distinction gets around having to take first *entelekheia* and the soul as a special case of potentiality/matter, since exercising

an ability does not necessarily involve alteration to the exercising entity, but is simply an issue of whether the actuality possessed by the entity is dormant or displayed.

The possession/use interpretation would therefore seem to resolve the issue of how to interpret the first/second *entelekheia* in a way that preserves the connection Aristotle makes between *entelekheia* and form. However, Wisnovsky argues that Aristotle's employment of *entelekheia* in *Physics,* Book 3.1, when he defines change as "the fulfillment [i.e., *entelekheia*] of what is potentially, as such" (*Physics* 201^{a} 11-12), differs significantly from his employment of *entelekheia* in *De Anima* (henceforth, I shall use "*P-entelekheia,*" to refer to *entelekheia* in the *Physics* and "*D-entelekheia*" to refer to *entelekheia* in *De Anima*). First, Aristotle identifies *D-entelekheia* as a state of actuality/form in contrast to matter/potentiality, whereas he makes no such identity or contrast in relation to *P-entelekheia,* leaving open the possibility that *P-entelekheia* may refer to the process of actualization rather than a state of actuality. Second, although Aristotle makes no direct reference to a first/second *entelekheia* distinction in relation to *P-entelekheia*, Wisnovsky points to a passage in *Physics,* Book 3.2, in which Aristotle states that change "is thought to be a sort of *actuality* (*energia*), but incomplete (*atelês*), the reason for this view being that the potential whose actuality (*energia*) it is is incomplete (*ateles*) (*Physics* 201^{b} 32-33). This passage implies something like the first/second *entelekheia* distinction of *D-entelekheia*, but puts it in terms of incompleteness (*ateles*) and completeness (*teleion*) rather than possessing an ability (*hexis*) and using it (*khrêsis*) (Wisnovsky 2003, p. 24-27).[14] Moreover, in *Physics,* Book

14 Wisnovsky notes that the perfect/imperfect distinction implied in *Physics,* Book 3.2 is also referenced in *De Anima,* Book 2.5: "For movement is a kind of activity – an imperfect kind, as has elsewhere been explained" (*De Anima* 417^{a} 16-

3.1 (201[a] 6), Aristotle originally mentions *ateles* and *teleion* specifically as contraries of quantity. This contrasts with *hexis* and *khrêsis,* which are not contraries, but rather, as Wisnovsky puts it, "indications of the presence or absence of a relation" (Wisnovsky 2003, p. 30). This left the early commentators, who generally treated Aristotle as a systematic thinker, with an interpretive quagmire of resolving the discrepancy between *P-entelekheia*, *D-entelekheia*, and their related distinctions.

Wisnovsky lays out the following interpretive possibilities for reconciling the difference between *P-entelekheia* and *D-entelekheia*:

> **Strong Identity:** The identity of *P-entelekheia* and *D-entelekheia* is such that both the first/second distinction and the complete/incomplete distinction equally apply to both types of *entelekheiai*.
>
> **Weak Identity:** The identity of *P-entelekheia* and *D-entelekheia* is such that either **a)** the first/second distinction pertains to both types of *entelekheiai,* but the complete/incomplete distinction pertains exclusively to *P-entelekheia,* or **b)** the complete/incomplete distinction pertains to both types of *entelekheiai,* but the first/second distinction pertains exclusively to *D-entelekheia*.

Adopting strong identity would require ascribing a change in quantity/magnitude to the soul when it passes from a first *entelekheia* (e.g. having *episteme*) to second *entelekheia* (e.g. engaging in *theoria*). There are two problems with such an ascription. First, it entails predicating differing quantities at different instances to the soul. In order for the soul to be a proper subject of quantitative properties and for those properties to change, the soul would have to be a hylomorphic substance; but, as we have seen, Aristotle wants to

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maintain that the soul is the form of living substances. Second, strong identity entails that the soul would be subject to change (*kinêsis*) and thus altered during any transition from first to second *entelekheia*; but Aristotle explicitly denies that passing from first to second *entelekheia* is kinetic and that the soul is altered:

> The expression 'to be acted upon' has more than one meaning; it may mean either the extinction of one of two contraries by the other, or the maintenance of what is potential by the agency of what is actual and already like what is acted upon, as actual to potential. For what possesses knowledge becomes an actual knower by a transition which is either not an alteration of it at all... or at least an alteration in a quite different sense. Hence it is wrong to speak of a wise man as being 'altered' when he uses his wisdom, just as it would be absurd to speak of a builder as being altered when he is using his skill in building a house (*De Anima* 417^{b} 2-9).

Since the transition from first to second *entelekheia* does not involve the destruction of a contrary, its transition is not kinetic, and, therefore, doesn't involve alteration (at least in the sense that pertains to beings subject to *kinesis*). Likewise, strong identity would require that the completion of any expansion or contraction in quantity also be treated as a second *entelekheia,* the consequences of which are absurd. For instance, one must say that an oak, at the point of reaching the absolute limit of its size, would be exercising a capacity that it merely possessed during its period of growth. But this gets things backward: the oak actually possesses the absolute limit of its size after and only after its growth is complete. Since a strong identity interpretation doesn't show any promise, the early commentators pursued weak identity interpretation, favoring version (**b**) (Wisnovsky 2003, p. 27-32).

According to Wisnovsky, the main reason the early commentators opted for version (b) over (a) was that "Aristotle simply provides more textual raw material with which to construct an interpretation along the lines of [(b)]." The first aspect of this "raw

material" comes from *Metaphsyics,* Book 5.16, in which Aristotle discusses the semantic range of "completeness" (*to teleion*) beyond the quantitative considerations of the *Physics*:

> **Possessing all proper parts:** "We call complete that outside of which it is not possible to find even one of the parts proper to it" (*Metaph*. 1021^{b} 12-13).
>
> **Highest Excellence:** "That which in respect of excellence and goodness cannot be excelled in its kind" (*Metaph.* 1021^{b} 14-15).
>
> **End (terminus):** "The end is something ultimate... is at its last point" (*Metaph.* 1021^{B} 25-28).
>
> **End (purpose):** "The ultimate thing for the sake of which is also an end." (*Metaph.* 1021^{B} 30).

The benefit to the commentators of having a multitude of meanings of "completeness" at their disposal is that it potentially enables them to find one sense of "completeness" that is appropriate to *D-entelekheia* and another sense that is appropriate to *P-entelekheia,* thus avoiding the sort of conflict that arose with a strong identity interpretation. Wisnovsky summarizes:

> The result of having so many meanings of *teleion* to choose from is that a commentator had more tools at his disposal with which to subsume the first/second distinction under the incomplete/complete distinction... Change could be held to be an *entelekheia atelês* because it has not reached its *telos qua* "limit" or "terminus." The changing thing either remained in an unfinished process which had not reached its terminus or itself possessed the state of not having reached its terminus. On the other hand, knowledge and contemplation could each be held to be *telia* because both are "ended;" that is, both have a *telos qua* "end" or "purpose." Knowledge, the first *entelekheia* of the *De Anima,* is "ended" in the sense of "having an end:" it refers to a capability which is *directed towards* an end. Contemplation, the second *entelekheia* of the *De Anima,* is "ended" in the

> sense of "being an end:" it refers to a function which *serves as an end.* (Wisnovsky 2003, p. 35-36)

The second aspect comes from "*teleiotēs*" and "*teleôsis,*" abstract nouns derived from *teleion,* appearing in contexts in which Aristotle also uses *entelekheia*. Aristotle employs *teleiotēs* together with *ateleia* to indicate contraries involved in change of quantity, which would associate it primarily with *P-entelekheia.* On the other hand, Aristotle also uses *teleôsis* to describe states in which change is absent (e.g. possessing a virtue or a vice) as well as instances of changes, which would seem to make it ripe for application to both *D-entelekheia* and *P-entelekheia* (Wisnovsky 2003, p. 36-37). Nevertheless, Wisnovsky notes that commentators such as Alexander of Aphrodisias and Themistius ended up settling on the term *teleiotēs* as an interpretation of *entelekheia,* applying it to Aristotle's definition of the soul and his definition of change. Wisnovsky thinks that their rejection of *teleôsis* as an interpretation of *entelekheia* stems from Aristotle using *teleôsis* to refer primarily to processes of change, which conflicts with the *entelekheiai* pertaining to the first/second distinction referring to states (Wisnovsky 2003, p. 38).[15]

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15 The above summary of Wisnovsky's work on the hermeneutical issues surrounding Aristotle's use of *entelekheia* is limited by the concerns of the present study. It should be noted, however, that Wisnovsky includes an argument at (Wisnovsky 2003, p. 39-41) that every possible way of conceiving *teleiotēs* or *teleôsis* in relation to *P-entelekheia, D-entelekheia,* and their related distinctions leads to unsavory results, leading Wisnovsky to suggest that the weak identity approach of the early commentators is an interpretive *cul de sac.* Better, then, to treat *P-entelekheia* and *D-entelekheia* as unique cases of *entelekheia,* each of which pertain to their own specific domain (e.g. *P-entelekheia* pertains to change and *D-entelekheia* pertains to the soul).

2.2.2 Wisnovsky on Alexander, Themistius, and the Expanded Meaning of *Teleiotēs*

Alexander of Aphrodisias contributes to the tradition of interpreting *entelekheia* as *teleiotēs* by expanding the meaning of *teleiotēs* beyond its initial association with only quantitative completeness so that it can equally apply, first, to each of the four changes that Aristotle introduces in his initial discussion of *kinêsis* in *Physics,* Book 3 (i.e. change of substance, quality, quantity, and location), and, second, to any non-kinetic transition from a state of first actuality to a state of second actuality (Wisnovsky 2003, p. 45). Alexander achieves this by making two interpretive moves. In *Physics* 5, Books 1 and 2, Aristotle distinguishes substantial change (*genesis*), which involves passage from one state to a contradictory state, from the other types of *kinêsis* (change of quality, quantity, and location), which involve alteration of a substance that passes from one state to a contrary state. To uphold the distinction between *genesis* and the other types of change, Aristotle adopts *metabolê* to refer to the four types of change generally. So Alexander's first interpretive move is to associate *teleiotēs* with *metabolê,* so that *teleiotēs* can be applied to each of the four kinds of change, rather than to quantity only, as it was in *Physics,* Book 3. Second, since Aristotle distances *genesis* from *kinêsis* in *Physics* 5, Alexander takes this as an opportunity to categorize non-kinetic transitions such as the reception of intelligible form in the intellect as instances of *genesis.* Moreover, since *genesis* is a sub-category of *metabolê,* this second move allows Alexander to claim that any non-kinetic transition is a *metabolê,* as well, and will therefore have a *teleiotēs* (Wisnovsky 2003, p. 45). Wisnovsky succinctly summarizes how Alexander envisions this interpretation:

> In his comments on *Metaphysics* 2.2 (*ad* 994a19-b6), Alexander says (*in Metaph.* 2.2, 153, 14-28) that the *teleiotēs* is the end-state following various *metabolai*: the *metabolê* from boy to man; the *metabolê* from learner to one with scientific knowledge; and the *metabolê* from not-contemplating to contemplating... The *teleiotēs* is the end-state following each of these types of *metabolê,* regardless of whether the *metabolê* is with respect to growth (*auxêsis*), as in the first case; with respect to quality (*alloiôsis*), as in the second case; or with respect to form (*kat' eidos*), as in the third case. (Wisnovsky 2003, p. 46)

Thus, since Alexander defines *teleiotēs* as an end state of *metabolê,* and since he treats both the four types of causes and the transitions from first to second *entelekheia* as *metabolê,* he can identify both *D-entelekheia* and *P-entelekheia* as *teleiotēs.* Moreover, since, per Aristotle's remarks in *De Anima,* Book 2, the soul is said to be a substantial form on account of its being *entelekheia, teleiotēs* can be predicated of the soul and of substantial form.

Themistius follows Alexander in interpreting *entelekheia* as *teleiotēs* and acknowledges Alexander's use of *teleiotēs* to refer to the limit or end state of a *metabolê.* However, Themistius also broadens the meaning of *teleiotēs* so that it also can refer to the extent to which something "is either directed at or serves as a *telos,* or 'end'" (Wisnovsky 2005, 99). I shall refer to Alexander's use of *teleiotēs* as A- *teleiotēs* and Themisus's expanded senses as T-*teleiotēs*$_1$ and T-*teleiotēs*$_2$, respectively.

A-*teleiotēs*$_1$: the end state of a *metabolê.*

T-*teleiotēs*$_1$: being directed at a *telos.*

T-*teleiotēs*$_2$: serving as a *telos.*

Adding the two senses of T-*teleiotēs* to the mix provides Themistius the advantage of greater precision in determining how something is an *entelekheia*. For instance, consider Aristotle's claim in *Physics,* Book 3 that *kinêsis* is an *entelekheia* in conjunction with A-

teleiotēs, the notion that *entelekheia* is synonymous with the end state of a *metabolê.* These two notions are contradictory to one another: how can *kinêsis* at the same time be a *metabolê* and an *entelekheia*, i.e. an end state of a *metabolê*? Wisnovsky points out that Alexander's account of *teleiotēs* generates precisely this problem, and that Alexander was not able to resolve it successfully (Wisnovsky 2003, p. 50-52). On the other hand, Themistius isn't limited to A-*teleiotēs* when discussing how something is an *entelekheia,* Themistius has at his disposal the two senses of T-*teleiotēs,* as well, and therefore he can claim that *kinêsis* is an *entelekheia* insofar as it is directed at an end. That is, any entity undergoing *kinêsis* is in a state of T-*teleiotēs*$_1$ and is therefore still in potential to its end state. The upshot for all this with regard to the soul is that it enables Themistius to specify just how the soul is an *entelekheia* in each of its roles, as Wisnovsky outlines:

> The soul is the substantial form of the body and in that sense it is the end-state of the *metabolê* by which the matter of the body came to be informed by the soul. The soul is also a structure of faculties or capabilities which is ended in the sense that these faculties or capabilities are either... directed towards the coming-to-be of new actualities (as with the faculty of reproduction, whose activity is directed towards the coming-to-be of offspring); or... in their activities are ends in themselves (as with the faculty of intellection, whose activity is directed at no end other than itself) (Wisnovsky 2003, p. 57).

In other words, the soul is an *entelekheia* as substantial form in the sense of A-*teleiotēs,* and the soul is an *entelekheia* as an organization of faculties in the sense of either T-*teleiotēs*$_1$ or T-*teleiotēs*$_2$, depending on the orientation of the faculty in question.

2.2.3 *Teleiotēs* in the Neoplatonic Commentary Tradition

Themistius's two senses of T-*teleiotēs* introduced causal import into *teleiotēs* and, consequently, *entelekheia*. That is, by Themistius adding the notion of *telos* to *teleiotēs*, Wisnovsky notes that the "concepts of actuality and activity were on their way to being viewed less as *states of being* and more as *causes of being*, and particularly as *final causes of being*" (Wisnovsky 2003, p. 61). This shift to conceiving of actualities as final causes provided an opportunity for Neoplatonic commentators,[16] who were concerned with reconciling Platonic and Aristotelian conceptions of the soul, to "direct attention away from the problem of *what the soul is* (i.e., what the soul is in relation to the body), and toward the problem of *how the soul causes* (i.e. how the soul causes the body)" (Wisnovsky, 2005, 99). In particular, this shifted the conception of the soul away from being a form/actuality of the body, and towards a conception of the soul as an efficient and final cause of the body.

Wisnovsky also notes that, the Neoplatonic commentators formulated a conception of Aristotle's four causes that treated formal and material causes to be inseparable from their effects and efficient and final causes were to be actually separate from their effects. This formulation began with Proclus and came to fruition in the works of Ammonias and his students (Wisnovsky 2005, 100; Wisnovsky 2003, p. 69-75). Combining the separability of efficient and final causes with the Alexandrian and Themistian glosses of *entelekheia* as *teleiotēs*, Ammonias and his students concluded that

16 Wisnovsky specifically cites Syrianus, Proclus, Ammonias, Asclepius, and Philoponus as members of this tradition. See Wisnovsky 2003, p. 64.

the soul is a final cause of the body, and therefore separate from the body. Wisnovsky calls this combination of ideas the "Ammonian Synthesis." Wisnovsky writes,

> The Ammonians... reasoned as follows: since Alexander, the most authoritative Aristotelian commentator, had glossed Aristotle's *entelekheia* with *teleiotēs*, and since Themistius had added endedness – being directed at or serving as a *telos*, or final cause – to the semantic range of *teleiotēs*, the most likely way in which the soul causes the body is therefore the way in which a final cause acts on its effect. And given the fact that final causes are separate from or transcend their effects, so the soul, as final cause, will be separate from or transcend its effect, the body (Wisnovsky 2005, 101).[17]

The Ammonian tradition therefore leaves us with the following account of the soul:

> **Ammonian Interpretation (AI):** The soul is **a)** the *entelekheia/teleiotēs* of the body, **b)** the final cause of the body, and **c)** has its being separate from the body.

Moreover, the Ammonian position appeals to the soul being the final cause of the body to account for its being both an *entelekheia/teleiotēs* of the body and separate from the body. So, to complete the characterization of **AI**, one must add the following:

> **AI1**: **d)** The soul is the *entelekheia/teleiotēs* of the body because it is the final cause of the body; and **e)** the soul has its being separate from the body because it is the final cause of the body.

AI has two noteworthy implications. First, since the soul is a form on account of its *entelekheia,* and *entelekheia* is synonymous with *teleiotēs,* form or *idieos* in the context

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17 It should be emphasized that the semantic groundwork of Themistius and Alexander enable the Ammonians to make the transition away from considering form strictly as hylomorphic principle, to considering soul as formal cause, where formal cause is interpreted as *teleiotēs.* This distinction between form as principle and formal cause frees the Ammonians from treating the being of the soul as necessarily dependent on the being of the composition. Instead, by emphasizing the soul's causality within a framework where form is interchangable with *teleiotēs*, the Ammonians can use the language of Aristotle to address Neoplatonic concerns about how the soul, a separate intellectual substance, can cause bodily substance.

of psychology is synonymous with *teleiotēs* . This would allow one to speak of the soul as having being separate from the body while also giving being to the body. Thus, given that the soul is a perfection or form of the body and that the soul is separate from the body, **AI** seems to entail that the soul may be both a form of the body and a separate being, which I shall call the "Form and Separate Being" doctrine, for short:

Form and Separate Being: The soul is a form of the body and a separate being.

In fact, the Ammonian position is that the soul is a form of the body precisely because of its final causality, as **(d)** in **AI1** makes clear. This specifies why the Ammonians were committed to the Form and Separate Being doctrine. Note, however, that Form and Separate Being does not entail commitment to **(d)** in **AI1**.

The second implication of **AI** is that a separated being can cause the body's existence, which I shall call the "Cause and Separate Being" doctrine, for short:

Cause and Separate Being: The soul is the cause of the body's existence and a separate being.

For the Ammonian interpreter, both aspects of the Cause and Separate Being doctrine are wrapped up in the notion that the soul is the final cause of the body (see **(e)** in **AI1)**. That is to say, in specifying the mode of causation whereby the soul causes the body as the final cause, the Ammonian interpreter has the advantage of treating the soul as causing the body without entangling its own being with the being of the body. That is, soul and body could remain two substances of different and opposing genera, and yet still be causally related. In contrast, the Cause and Separate Being doctrine does not specify the mode of causation whereby the soul causes the body. Thus, the Cause and Separate Being doctrine

does not directly correspond with the notion that the soul is the final cause of the body. Nevertheless, **AI** still entails the Cause and Separate Being doctrine as a necessary condition for the soul being the final cause of the body. That is to say, the soul cannot be the final cause of the body unless the Cause and Separate Being doctrine is true, whereas the Cause and Separate Being doctrine could be true without holding the soul as a final cause.

Wisnovsky notes that **AI** had such widespread influence that Arabic translations of Aristotle's works almost invariably translated *entelekhia, teleiotēs,* and *telos* as the same Arabic term, *tamam*. Given that the Form and Separate Being and the Cause and Separate Being doctrines were effectively baked into the translations of Aristotle in the Islamic world, Avicenna would not have seen any conflict between his understanding of the soul as a separate being and Aristotle's psychology. Wisnovsky concludes,

> When viewed in its proper context, as the product of a thousand-year history of shifting interpretive projects, Avicenna's theory that the soul comes into existence with the body but that it survives bodily death – or at least that the intellectual part of the soul survives the body's death – is in no sense contradicted by his close reading of and deep commitment to the Arabic Aristotle's texts and theories (Wisnovsky 2005, 102).

Indeed, if Wisnovsky is correct, Avicenna's reading of Aristotle's psychology had to have been influenced by the Ammonian tradition *via* the Arabic translators of Aristotle's works.[18] In other words, Avicenna at least would have treated the Form and Separate Being and the Cause and Separate Being doctrines as authentic aspects of Aristotle's psychology.

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18 Wisnovsky sees the influence of the Neoplatonic tradition on Avicenna to be indirect. However, (Bertolacci 2006, Chapter 3) and (Bertolacci 2005) argue that the Neoplatonic tradition had a more direct influence on Avicennian Metaphysics through Al-Farabi's *On the Goals of Aristotle's Metaphysics*.

2.2.4 Aristotle's View of Hylomorphic Form and Separate Substance

The previous three sections are intended to illustrate how interpreting *entelekheia* as *teleiotēs* ultimately produced a context in which the Form and Separate Being and the Cause and Separate Being doctrines could be treated as compatible with an Aristotelian account of the soul. Beyond this interpretive development there are also various passages in the Aristotelian corpus that lend credence to the notion that the soul is a separate substance and cause.[19] Nevertheless, the Ammonian approach and those influenced by it conflict with key aspects of Aristotle's conception of substance in two ways. The first conflict arises from Aristotle's commitment to treating forms of sensible mobile substances as principles that **a)** can be distinguished from both their substances and from matter, which is the other principle that constitutes those substances, but **b)** cannot exist apart from the substances for which they are a principle.[20] The second conflict comes from Aristotle's account of separate substances as essentially immobile and therefore lacking matter. This entails separate substances are form alone, or pure actuality; i.e. they cannot serve as the formal actuality of matter, since this would make them principles of mobile

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19 In *Generation of Animals,* Book 2, Chapter 3, Aristotle claims that only the rational faculty of soul enters from without and is divine on account of the fact that it is not a bodily activity (*Generation of Animals,* 737^{b} 26-27). In *De Anima,* Book 2, Aristotle raises the possibility that some part or parts of the soul might be separable, due to their not being an actuality of the body. He also raises the question whether the soul is a substance distinct from the body and a cause of actuality in the body as a sailor is the actuality in a ship (*De Anima* 413^{a} 6-9). In *De Anima* Book 3, Aristotle affirms the separability of the soul. In Chapter 4, Aristotle argues that the passive intellect is non-bodily and separable on account of its receptivity of all forms (*De Anima* 429^{a} 18 – 429^{b} 5), and in Chapter 5, Aristotle describes active intellect as actually separate (*De Anima* 430^{a} 17-18). For further discussion of other passages suggesting causal interaction between soul and body, implying dualism, see (Menn 2002).

20 See: *Physics,* 193^{a} 30 -193^{b} 5; *De Anima,* 412^{a} 15-21, 414^{a} 15-21

substances.[21] Thus, if the overarching framework for understanding Aristotle's account of soul as form is taken in the two strict senses above rather than treated as a stand-in for *entelekheia*-interpreted-as-*teleiotēs*, one is left with the following results:

1. If the soul is a form of the body, then the soul cannot be a separate substance.

2. If the soul is a separate substance, then it cannot be the form of a body.

Both results conflict with the Form and Separate Being doctrine. Recall that the Form and Separate Being doctrine states that the soul is both a form and a separate being. But adopting (1) requires denying that the soul is a separate being, and adopting (2) requires denying that the soul is a form of a body. Moreover, (1) conflicts with the Cause and Separate Being doctrine, which states that the soul is both the cause of the body's existence and a separate being, when it specifies the soul as a formal cause of the body, since this entails that the soul cannot be a separate being. Note, however, that the Cause and Separate Being doctrine does not conflict with (2); it only requires that if the soul is a separate being, it must cause the existence of the body in terms of efficient or final causality. This further entails that any reference to the soul as form would be analogical, which is precisely what treating *entelekheia* as *teleiotēs* seems to have accomplished.

2.2.5 Relevance to Aquinas

The discrepancy outlined in the previous section highlights how a proponent of the Form and Cause of Separate Substance doctrines could potentially face the problem of accounting for the unity of the human person: even though the body is nothing without the causal influence of the soul, body and soul are nevertheless viewed as having separate

21 See: *Metaphysics* 1071^{b} 12-22

being. How, then, does the human person, which is body and soul together, constitute one being? On the other hand, the problem of the unity of the human person never arises for any account that takes the soul to be a substantial form of the body: the soul is not a substance by itself, but a principle of a determinate particular human, and therefore already the constituent in a/the unified being.

Aquinas's position that the soul is both a substantial form and a separate substance accords with the Form and Cause of Separate Substance doctrine, and thus finds itself facing the problem of the unity of the human person. Aquinas seems to have been aware of this fact, since, as we shall see in later chapters, he regularly presents objections that recite the mutual exclusivity presented in the previous section between treating the soul as a form of the body and treating it as a separate substance. Aquinas consistently replies to these objections by presenting what I call the "Communicability of Being" doctrine, which holds that the soul plays the dual role of perfecting the body as its form and communicating its *per se esse* to the body. As we shall see, the Communicability of Being doctrine assigns a role to hylomorphic form and to separate substance that conflicts with Aristotle's. The reason for the conflict is that Communicability of Being doctrine shares enough formal features with the Ammonian approach that Aquinas could be understood as presenting a variant of this tradition of interpreting Aristotle's psychology.

2.3 Averroes on Potentiality in Separate Substances

This section traces how Averroes develops his conception of intellectual potentiality from Aristotle's remarks about potential intellect in *De Anima* 3.4. Averroes

argues that introducing potential intellect as a feature of intellectual cognition required Aristotle to posit incorporeal potentiality as a class of being distinct from both the form and matter of sensible substances and from the pure actuality of the first unmoved mover. Moreover, Averroes maintains that Aristotle's remarks on intellection require a) incorporeal potentiality to be a property of all separate substances besides the first unmoved mover, and b) that separate substances are ordered in a hierarchical fashion on the basis of the actualization of their intellectual potential. Thus, the first unmoved mover marks the highest position in the hierarchy as a result of it being a purely actual intellectual act of self thinking thought, whereas the human potential intellect marks the lowest position within the hierarchy as a result of its being a pure potentiality to receive the forms of sensible substances abstracted from matter. Since abstraction depends on perceptive and imaginative activities, both of which require a body, the potential intellect is essentially related to the human body and its psychological processes despite being ontologically separate.[22]

2.3.1 The Potential Intellect In Aristotle's *De Anima*: What is it?

In *De Anima* 3.4, Aristotle remarks that the potential intellect "can have no nature of its own, other than that of having a certain capacity," and that it is "not actually any

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22 It should be noted that although elements of Avicenna's noetics influenced Aquinas, we shall see that Aquinas nevertheless follows Averroes in maintaining that human intellectual content is acquired, *viz.* as impressions of intelligible forms on the potential intellect after having been abstracted from sensible form. Human intellectual content is derived from sensible content, consequently, the forms of sensible substances. By contrast, Avicenna maintains that the receptivity of sensible forms prepares the soul for conjunction with the agent intellect, which already contains all intelligible forms. (See Gutas 2016; Ivry 2012)

real thing" before intellection occurs (*De Anima,* 429^{A} 20-24). This raises the question: if intellect has no nature of its own, what sort of entity is it? One possibility might be to classify intellect as matter, given that Aristotle claims matter is a potentiality to receive form and is indeterminate in its pre-receptive state; but the context of Aristotle's remarks in *De Anima* excludes such a classification. If intellection entailed actualization of *material* potentiality, the process would result in a hylomorphic composition (e.g. the process of understanding *redness* would require that intellect has become a red individual). However, Aristotle tacitly denies this when he likens the receptivity involved in intellection to the receptivity of sense perception. Both intellectual and perceptive processes, he says, consist of a thinker/perceiver taking in the form of their objects without becoming a determinate particular hylomorphic substance. (*De Anima,* 424^{A} 18-19, 429^{A} 13-17). To put it another way, the capacity (*qua* capacity) to understand or to perceive remains unaltered after understanding or (*ceterius paribus*) perceiving an object has taken place.[23] Thus, the receptivity of intellect is of a different sort than the receptivity of matter.

Despite the above-noted similarity between intellectual and sensory receptivity, Aristotle also draws a crucial distinction. Sense perception occurs through an organ (*De Anima,* 424^{A} 24, 429^{A} 25-27), and each sensory capacity is restricted to perceiving only specific classes of objects based on the makeup of its organ (*De Anima* 418^{A} 13-19). Moreover, damage to an organ *via* excessive exposure to a sense object can impair or

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23 This should not be taken to claim that no alteration whatsoever takes place during sense perception. My concern here is to consider the import of Aristotle's analogy between sense and intellect while remaining neutral with regards to whether Aristotle's account of sense perception is primarily physiological or is purely cognitive.

extinguish its corresponding sensory capacity (*De Anima* 424^{A} 29-31, 429^{A} 29 – 429^{B} 2). By contrast, the range of intelligible objects extends to everything that is (429^{A} 18), and no intelligible object, regardless of its degree of intelligibility, can impair further intellectual receptivity (*De Anima* 429^{B} 2-5). For Aristotle, this contrast indicates that intellectual receptivity is free from "admixture" (*De Anima* 429^{A} 19) and cannot be "blended with the body" (*De Anima* 429^{A} 25), which is to say that, unlike the senses, intellect is not first an actuality of an organ before proper engagement in its activity.

2.3.2 Averroes: incorporeal potentiality is a Fourth Kind of Being

Though the context of *De Anima* precludes treating the potentiality of intellect as either material or a first actuality of a bodily organ, it provides no clear statement addressing what the potential intellect *is*. The reader is thus faced with the task of explaining the ontology of the potential intellect by drawing on elements of the broader context of the Aristotelian system. One explanation on offer is that of Averroes in his *Long Commentary on De Anima.* There Averroes argues that since the potential intellect is not a material potentiality, a capacity of a body, or an actuality, it belongs to an entirely different class of being than sensible substances, their properties, or the first unmoved mover. He first argues this in the opening paragraphs of Book 3, Comment 5. Averroes writes:

> **(3A)** The definition of the material Intellect... is that which is in potency all the intentions of universal material forms and is not any of the beings in act before it understands any of them. **(3B)** Since that is the definition of the material intellect, it is evident that according to him it differs from prime matter in this respect: it is in potency all the intentions of the universal material forms, while prime matter is in potency all those sensible forms [and is] not something which knows or

> apprehends [things]. **(3C)** The reason why that nature {of material intellect} is something which discerns and knows while prime matter neither knows nor discerns, is because prime matter receives diverse forms, namely, individual and particular forms, while this [nature] receives universal forms. **(3D)** From this it is apparent that this nature is not a determinate particular (*aliquid hoc*)[24] nor a body nor a power in a body. For if it were so, then it would receive forms inasmuch as they are diverse and particular; and if it were so, then the forms existing in it would be intelligibles in potency; and thus it would not discern the nature of the forms inasmuch as they are forms, as is the disposition in the case of individual forms, be they spiritual or corporeal. **(3E)** For this reason, if that nature which is called intellect receives forms, it must receive forms by a mode of reception other than that by which those matters receive the forms whose contraction by matter is the determination of prime matter in them. **(3F)** For this reason it is not necessary that it be of the genus of those matters in which the form is included, nor that it be prime matter itself. **(3G)** Since if this were so, then the reception in these would be of the same genus; for the diversity of the received nature causes the diversity of the nature of the recipient. **(3H)** This, therefore, moved Aristotle to set forth this nature {i.e., incorporeal potentiality}, which is other than the nature of matter, other than the nature of form, and other than the nature of the composite.[25] (Averroes 2009, *De Anima*, p. 304-5)[26]

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24 An *aliquid hoc* or, *hoc aliquid* is equivalent to the Aristotelian notion of *todi ti*, or primary substance.

25 All curly brackets in the passage from Averroes's *Long Commentary* indicate my additions, whereas square brackets indicate Taylor's additions.

26 The concluding line of this passage presents what Averroes a few pages later in the *Long Commentary* calls the "question of Theophrastus," Aristotle's remarks about the potential intellect as a receptive disposition commit him to maintaining that it a) has intellectual being, b) is without form, and c) isn't a material potentiality. "Since {the potential intellect} is a being and does not have the nature of a form, then it remains that it has the nature of prime matter, which is altogether unthinkable, for prime matter is neither apprehensive nor discerning. How can this be said regarding something the being of which is such that it is separate?" (Averroes 2009, *De Anima*, p. 315) Commentators such as Themistius addressed the question of Theophrastus in their own ways, but Averroes found their solutions unsatisfactory, see (Averroes 2009, *De Anima*, p. 315-325). Richard Taylor has noted in the Introduction to his translation of the *Long Commentary* that the question of Theophrastus leads Averroes to treat the potential intellect as "both intellect and also recptivity so that the intelligibles may be understood as received into an immaterial intellect. The novelty lies in the contradiction of the common notion of the Greek and Arabic tradition that immaterial intellect – that is, separate existing form – must be actually without potency. Yet the solution of the problem of the understanding of intelligible in act requires that these be in an immaterial intellect, indeed, in an immaterial intellect which is not a determinate particular of a species" (Averroes 2009, *De Anima,* p. lxxx).

Averroes's conclusion at **3H** that the potential intellect has a nature distinct from the other three classes of being (*viz.,* form, prime matter, and sensible substance) hinges on three axes. The first axis is the claim that "the diversity of the received nature causes the diversity of the nature of the recipient," which Averroes introduces at **3G.**[27] I shall call this claim the "Diversity Thesis." The second axis is the definition of the potential intellect that Averroes settles on, at **3A**. The final axis is his comparison of the potential intellect and prime matter, at **3B-E**.

Averroes's remarks at **3C** make apparent that when he speaks of something as "diverse" he should be taken to be speaking of something as having particularized content and, therefore, cognizable as a distinct individual. Thus, the Diversity Thesis implies that a being with particularizing conditions has two constitutive principles, 1) a potential principle that makes a being receptive to particularizing content, and 2) an active principle from which the potential principle receives the particularizing content. For instance, the enumerability of individual pine trees in an evergreen forest depends

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27 The Latin for the second half of **3G** reads as follows: "Diversitas enim nature recepti facit diversitatem nature recipientis" (Averroes 1953, *De Anima*, p. 388, 53-54). It would be tempting to take "diversity" here to mean "difference," and read the passage as saying that different natures or forms are received into different kinds of recipients. Averroes's position certainly is not at odds with such a claim, but Averroes seems to be making the stronger claim that the form or nature received determines the recipient to have the nature it possesses. This is consistent with the context of the passage, as well as with his larger commitment to the view that being is solely determined by form. For instance, both **3C** and **3D** mention that a form with particularizing content will determine the recipient of that form it to be of a particularized nature, whereas a form with universal content will determine its recipient to be of a universal, non-particularized nature. Moreover, Deborah Black has argued that Averroes simply didn't think that one could distinguish the types of receptivity without first determining the forms they receive, since form has priority over matter and makes things be what they are (Black 2011, p. 174). Thus, I take Averroes at **3G** to be saying that formal content determines its recipient to be what it is.

upon each having particularizing conditions, thanks to their forms determining prime matter with particularizing content, that make them sensibly apprehensible as distinct individuals. By contrast, the "diversity" of an intelligible form is such that it has been stripped of particularized content, and is therefore cognizable as a universal. Thus, the Diversity Thesis also implies that a being with universalized content, which that lacks particularizing conditions, has two constitutive principles, 1) a potential principle that makes a being receptive to universalized content, and 2) an active principle from which the potential principle receives the universalized content. For instance, the universality of 'pine tree' depends on that form bearing all and only the characteristics that constitute what a pine tree is, thanks to it determining some non-particularizing potentiality, which makes it cognizable in an intelligible manner.

In light of the above, a generalized statement of the Diversity Thesis would be that the content of the active principle (i.e. form) determines the potential principle (either prime matter or intellectual potentiality) to be of the nature of the active principle.

> **Diversity Thesis:** For any being, if that being can have particularizing or universalizing conditions, it has a receptive principle in potency to receive the respective conditions and it has an active principle from which the respective conditions are actually received, and the content of the active principle causes the particularization or universalization of the receptive principle.

Moreover, in treating the active principle as the cause of particularization or universalization of the receptive principle, the Diversity Thesis entails what I shall call the Condition for Diversity:

> **Condition for Diversity:** If an active principle has particularizing or universalizing conditions, then the receptive principle it acts upon has particularizing or universalizing conditions.

The Condition for Diversity further entails that a receptive principle which cannot have particularizing conditions would have an active principle that altogether lacks particularizing conditions, and *vice versa*. Thus, universalization would involve altogether different types of principles than active and receptive principles that possess particularizing conditions. Averroes wants to argue that the definition of potential intellect entails that it could never fulfill the particularization side of the Condition for Diversity. Consequently, the Condition for Diversity requires that intellectual potentiality be categorized as its own class of potentiality.

Averroes defines the potential intellect as "that which is in potency all the intentions of universal material forms and is not any of the beings in act before it understands any of them" (see **3A**). This definition produces several consequences in relation to what we've discussed so far. First, since potential intellect is in potency to be the intelligible forms, it is a receptive principle. Second, whatever kind of receptive principle potential intellect is, it must be capable of receiving "the intentions of universal material forms." Finally, potential intellect is nothing more than a potentiality to receive the intentions of universal material forms. The first and second of these consequences indicate that the receptivity of potential intellect cannot be classified in any way with form. But Averroes's primary concern is to establish that the receptivity of potential intellect is such that it cannot have particularizing conditions. The claim that potential

intellect is nothing more than a potentiality to receive won't get him very far in meeting his concern, since this is also in its own way true of prime matter, which takes on particularizing conditions when actualized by material form. As Averroes points out at **3B**, the difference in receptivity between prime matter and potential intellect is that prime matter is a receptive principle for all (and only) sensible forms, whereas potential intellect is a receptive principle for all (and only) intelligible forms. Thus Averroes directs his comments at showing that the potential intellect is only capable of receiving intelligible forms.

At **3C**, Averroes remarks that material forms have particularizing conditions and therefore individuate their receptive principle. On the other hand, intelligible forms are universal and therefore lack particularizing conditions. Were the receptivity of potential intellect such that it could receive material forms, then *via* the Diversity Thesis, potential intellect would be a receptive principle that belongs to an individual sensible substance, i.e., a being capable of having particularizing conditions. Furthermore, as Averroes notes at **3D**, *any* form that the potential intellect received would have particularizing conditions and, consequently, preclude potential intellect as the receptive principle in intellection. Thus, Averroes concludes that if the potential intellect receives intelligible forms, it must lack particularizing conditions (see **3E**). As such, not only is it not necessary to place the receptivity of potential intellect in the same category as prime matter, but one must also treat this receptivity, which I shall call incorporeal potentiality, as its own class of being (see **3F&G**).

We have seen that Averroes has given a positive answer to what the potential intellect is: it is pure intellectual potentiality, distinct in kind from both the form and matter of sensible substances and from pure form. Later in *Long Commentary,* Book 3, Comment 5, Averroes expands on his positive answer:

> **(4A)** The... question how the material intellect is a being and [yet] is not one of the material forms nor even prime matter is resolved in this way. One should hold that it {i.e., intellect} is a fourth kind of being. **(4B)** For just as sensible being is divided into form and matter, so too intelligible being must be divided into things similar to these two, namely, into something similar to form and into something similar to matter. **(4C)** This {division of intelligible being into potentiality and actuality} is [something] necessarily present in every separate intelligence which understands something else. And if not, then there would be no multiplicity in separate forms. **(4D)** It was already explained in First Philosophy that there is no form free of potency without qualification except the First Form, which understands nothing outside itself. **(4F)** Its being is its quiddity. Other forms, however, are in some way different in quiddity and being. **(4G)** If it were not for this genus of beings which we have come to know in the science of the soul, we could not understand multiplicity in separate things, to the extent that unless we know here the nature of the intellect, we could not know that the separate moving powers ought to be intellects.
>
> **(4H)** This was unknown to many modern [thinkers] to the extent that they denied what Aristotle says, in the Eleventh Book of First Philosophy, that the separate forms moving the bodies must be in accord with the number of celestial bodies. **(4I)** To this extent knowledge of the soul is necessary for knowledge of First Philosophy. **(4J)** That receptive intellect must understand the intellect which is in act. **(4K)** For while it understands material forms, it is even more befitting that it understand immaterial forms. **(4L)** What it understands of separate forms, for example, of the agent intelligence, does not impede it from understanding material forms. (Averroes 2009, *De Anima*, p. 326-8)

In the above passage we see that Averroes's response to the question raised at the beginning of this section and posed again at **4A –** i.e., what kind of being is the potential intellect if it has no nature of its own and can't be identified with matter – is that the analysis of intellection requires an expansion of the Aristotelian ontological scheme. In the *Physics,* Aristotle identifies two states of sensible substance: a potential (material)

state and an actual (formal) state. Additionally, *Physics* 8 and *Metaphysics* 12 trace the motion of sensible substances to an initial mover that is itself unmoved (*Physics* 8.5 258^{B} 4-9), "whose very substance is actuality" and "without matter." (*Metaphysics* 12.6 1071^{B} 20-1). Thus, Aristotle's analysis of motion in sensible substance renders three states of being: 1) corporeal actuality, 2) corporeal potentiality, and 3) incorporeal actuality. As we have seen, the discussion of intellection in *De Anima* 3.4 reveals that intellectual receptivity is a) of a different sort than the material receptivity of sensible substances, and b) not an actuality/form on account of its ability to receive all intelligible forms. Moreover, we have seen Averroes argue that prime matter and the potential intellect contrast in their manner of receptivity: whereas prime matter receives form with particularizing conditions, the potential intellect receives form universally, or with no particularizing conditions. For these reasons Averroes maintains that intellectual receptivity cannot be identified with any of the three states of being presented in Aristotle's *Physics,* which entails that intellection reveals a fourth state of being, *viz.,* incorporeal potentiality. Averroes thus concludes that the discovery of incorporeal potentiality indicates that some separate substances operate on an act-potency model similar to the one governing sensible substances, as **4B** states.

At **4C**, Averroes notes two consequences of introducing incorporeal potentiality as a fourth kind of being. First, Averroes identifies incorporeal potentiality as an essential attribute of separate substances who think something other than themselves, which distinguishes these substances from the first unmoved mover. Second, it allows for a multiplicity of separate substances ordered in a hierarchical fashion. Averroes expands on

this at **4G-H**, arguing that the discovery of incorporeal potentiality in the study of psychology provides insight into Aristotle's claim in *Metaphysics* 12.8 that the number of unmoved movers (i.e. separate substances) is identical to the number of celestial bodies (each body has its own mover). I shall treat each of these consequences in kind.

2.3.3 Simplicity vs. Complexity of Thought and Distinctions Among Intellectual Substances

The Aristotelian position that the potential intellect must receive the form of a sensible substance before it actually thinks implies several factors that underpin this first consequence. To begin, actualization of intellectual potentiality requires a potential thinker, an object of thought, and an act of thinking that object. Moreover, if a thinker must receive the form of a substance in order for the thinker actually to think about its object, as in the case of human intellection, then the object of thought can be neither the thinker itself, nor thought by the thinker essentially; rather a) the object of thought must be distinct from the thinker and b) the first thought of the thinker would be of its object. Finally, in light of (b), the thinker would remain forever in potential to think in the absence of exposure to its object. Thus, while the *potential* to think necessarily belongs to such thinkers, one cannot attribute actual thought to them *pe se,* since the presence of such a thinker alone meets only one of the three requirements for thought.

Averroes covers several of the above-mentioned factors in commenting on a passage in *Metaphysics* 12.9, in which Aristotle explicitly draws on the distinction between thinker, thought, and object of thought:

> **(5A)** Evidently knowledge and perception and opinion and understanding have always something else as their object, and themselves only by the way. **(5B)** Further, if thinking and being thought are different, in respect of which does goodness belong to thought? For being an act of thinking and being an object of thought are not the same. (**5C**) We answer that in some cases the knowledge is the object. In the productive sciences (if we abstract from the matter) the substance in the sense of essence, and in the theoretical sciences the formula or act of thinking, *is* the object. **(5D)** As, then, thought and the object of thought are not different in the case of things that have not matter, they will be the same, i.e. the thinking will be one with the object of its thought. (*Metaphysics* 12.9 1074^{b} 35 - 1075^{a} 4)

It should be noted that Aristotle is dealing with an objection that the thought of the unmoved movers cannot be considered a "a thinking on thinking" (*Metaphysics* 12.9 1074^{b} 34), since as **5A-B** states, thought and object of thought are distinct in every instance of cognition. Let us call this the "Universalized Thought-Object Distinction"

> **Universalized Thought-Object Distinction:** For every thinker, their act of thinking is a) distinct from, and b) something other than, its object of thought.

However, Aristotle follows up at **5C-D** by pointing to cases of human cognition in which the object of thought is a thought. In scientific reasoning or in the blueprint-design stage of the crafts, one reflects on forms independent of the particular conditions that pertain to them as substantial forms. Isolation of form from matter and, consequently, particularizing conditions, renders forms intelligible. Thus, thinking about form in isolation from matter involves a thinker thinking about one of its thoughts. Since even humans can think about form in isolation from matter, the thought-object distinction is not universalized and therefore needn't apply to the cognition of the unmoved movers.

In the *Commentary on Metaphysics,* Averroes uses Aristotle's rejection of the Universalized Thought-Object Distinction as an occasion to outline why human intellection cannot be essentially self-reflective. Commenting on **5A**, Averroes highlights

Aristotle's qualification of the claim that instances of human cognition involve a distinction between the cognitive act and the object of cognition:

> **(6A)** It is seen that comprehension (*fahm*), which is what he {i.e. Aristotle} meant by knowledge, perception, thought, and intellection, is distinct from that of which it is (comprehension)... **(6B)** for these acts of these powers are *of* other things, not *of themselves*, except by accident... (**6C**) in other words, our intellect does not think itself except by accident, I mean insofar as it happens to the object of intellection to be form of the intellect... **(6D)** This is only because the intellect is not our object of intellection in any way. (Averroes 1986, *Metaphysics,* p. 194)

Although Aristotle's concern was to argue that the notion of thought-object identity in the case of the unmoved mover isn't absurd since even human cognition sometimes has this feature, Averroes focuses on how Aristotle presents thought-object identity in human cognition as accidental. Averroes seems to have two points in mind. First, at **6B**, Averroes notes that the various powers of cognition are oriented towards their proper objects. For instance, human intellectual cognition is oriented towards the forms of sensible substances, which are its proper objects. However, as we have seen, intellect is not itself the form of a sensible substance. Thus, intellect cannot in any way be considered a proper object to itself, which Averroes concludes at **6D**. Second, Averroes also seems to be claiming that a human cannot think about its own intellection until it first understands a proper object, since there would otherwise be no intellectual act for thought to think about. That is to say, self-intellection is accidental in the case of human intellection because a) the proper object of thought is the forms of sensible substances, not intellect itself, and b) self-intellection is dependent on intellect having first understood its proper object of thought.

Averroes's comment on **5B** expands on the two points discussed in the above paragraph to make explicit the relationship between human intellect, its act of intellection, and its proper objects of understanding. Moreover, Averroes uses **5C-D** as an occasion to highlight how the intellection of separate substances contrasts with human intellection. Averroes writes:

> **(7A)** If this [human] intellect thinks something other than itself, there will be a subject of intellection, a process of intellection, and an object of intellection; **(7B)** from which one of the two will the subject of intellection acquire excellence? From the process of intellection, or from the essence which is the subject of intellection, or from the thing which is the source of the process of intellection? **(7C)** For these three things are similar but distinct in everything which thinks something other than itself. Therefore, as he [i.e. Aristotle] says, the essence of the intellect is not the same as intellection, which is the act of our intellect, and the object of our intellection (is not) the same thing in any respect; the reason for that is that the object of our intellection is distinct from the subject of intellection. **(7D)** As for the intellects which are not in matter, their objects, the intellect and the act of the intellect must be one and the same thing... **(7E)** Just as it is correct to say that knowledge is the object known and the object known is knowledge in matter, as in the case of art and the artifact, and we say that the form of the artifact which is in matter and which is in the soul of the artisan are one and the same thing, how much more fitting it is that the same should apply to intellective things with which matter is not mixed and which are only a form and an essence denoting the existence of the thing. (Averroes 1986, *Metaphysics,* p. 194-5)

In **7A-C**, Averroes states unambiguously the distinction between thinker, thought, and object of thought that is implied in the *Long Commentary*, Book 3, Comment 5 (see passage **4**, above). Thus combining Averroes's remarks from passage **6** and **7A-C**, we can summarize Averroes depiction of human intellect as follows:

> **Human Intellect:** an intellect that **a)** is distinct from its proper object of thought, **b)** is distinct from its act of thinking, **c)** is in potential to receive its proper object,

> **d)** has a proper object of thought that is not itself an act of thought, and **e)** can think about its thinking only after it has thought about its proper object.

Averroes's depiction of non-human separate intellects in **7D-E** thus contrasts directly with human intellect:

> **Separate Intellect:** an intellect who is identical with its object of thought and act of thinking.

It would seem at this point that Averroes is committed to maintaining that any separate intellect must be an active self-thinker by its very essence, since it is identical with its object of thought and its act of thinking. However, we have already seen Averroes remark in the the *Long Commentary* that essential self-thought belongs to the first unmoved mover alone.

According to Averroes, the distinction between the first unmoved mover and the other separate intellects concerns simplicity *versus* complexity in their object/s of thought. The thought of the first unmoved mover is altogether simple, which requires that its thought have only one object (i.e. itself). By contrast, the thoughts of the other separate intellects admit of varying degrees of complexity, which requires that their thoughts have multiple objects; the greater complexity, the more objects their intellect thinks. Moreover, the more objects they think, the more their thought refers to and is dependent upon things outside themselves. Averroes summarizes the reasoning as follows:

> There remains a doubt concerning the object of its [i.e. the first unmoved mover's] intellection, (namely) whether it is simple or composed of many intelligibles; but if it is composed of many intelligibles, it will necessarily have parts different one from another, not similar to another; and that which is of such a nature thinks

> many things, and that which thinks many things thinks something external to itself and the objects of its intellection are the cause of itself (Averroes 1986, *Metaphysics,* p. 195-6).

Averroes's remarks in the above passage clarify what he means when he notes at **4D** that the first unmoved mover has itself as an object of thought, free of any potency. Not only is the first unmoved mover a separate intellect (and thus identical with its thought and its object), its object is altogether simple, which entails that the object refers to nothing outside itself. Consequently, the thought of the first unmoved mover depends on nothing outside itself: it must always by its very essence be active in thought. On the other hand, since other intellects admit of grades of complexity and thus refer to external objects, their thought depends on another; they are by their essence in potency for thought and made active in thought by their objects, which clarifies Averroes's remarks at **4C** that there would be no multiplicity in the thought of separate intellects without incorporeal potentiality. Hence, at **4F** Averroes draws a contrast between the being of the unmoved mover as identical to its quiddity, versus the being of other separate substances as different from their quiddity. This is to say that active thought belongs to the unmoved mover essentially and to other separate substances potentially. The first consequence of introducing incorporeal potentiality as a category of being therefore culminates in an ontological distinction between the first unmoved mover and the rest of the separate substances, which I shall call "P-separate substance," where "P" denotes that such substances possess incorporeal potentiality.

> **First Unmoved Mover**$_{df}$= a separate intellect **a)** whose essential object of thought is itself only, and **b)** actively thinks.

P-separate substance $_{df}$= a separate intellect **a)** whose objects of thought are multiple, and **b)** potentially thinks.

The above distinctions, based as they are on the discovery of incorporeal potentiality in psychology, therefore, have important consequences for metaphysics, as we have seen Averroes state at **4G-I**. For instance, the following passage from Averroes's *Commentary on Metaphysics* employs the above definition to contrast the simplicity of the first unmoved mover from the diversity of thought in other intellects:

> The absolutely one is that in which there is no multiplicity at all, neither on account of the differentiation between the intellect and the intelligible, nor on account of the multiplicity of intelligibles; for the multiplicity of intelligibles in the same intellect, as happens with our intellect, is the consequence of the differentiation which exists in it, that is between the intellect and the intelligible; for when the intellect and the intelligible are completely united, it follows that the many intelligibles of this (intellect) are united and become, for this intellect, one and simple in every respect, because if the intelligibles occurring in one intellect are many, then they are not united with its essence and its essence is distinct from them (Averroes 1986, *Metaphysics,* p. 196-7).

2.3.4 The Hierarchy of Intellectual Substances

The previous section sketches how Averroes distinguishes human intellect from separate intellects and, among separate intellects, the first unmoved mover from P-separate substances. This section shows how Averroes utilizes a Platonic concept, which Matteo Di Giovanni has called synonymic analogy, to rank the distinct intellectual substances according to a hierarchical ontological scheme (Di Giovanni 2006, p. 452-3). Briefly, beings that are synonymically analogous have the same essence but differ in the degree to which their essence is realized (Di Giovanni 2006, p. 451). Those with greater realization of their essence are ranked as better, more noble, more excellent, and more

simple than those with lesser realization of their essence. For instance, Averroes illustrates the concept in his *Commentary on Metaphysics* by drawing on the differences in degree of heat as an example:

> The excellent in every genus is whole and simple and indivisible; it is something isolated by itself, outside the composite, I mean its essence is not in the composite. For instance, hot things surpass one another by the small or great amount of heat; therefore, the absolutely hot thing is that in which there is no composition, that is to say fire, since no other body is mixed with it because it would become low in heat and abate (Averroes, 1986 *Metaphysics*, p. 196).

Averroes's view in the passage above implies not only that a superlative predication is a sufficient condition for simplicity, but also that it is a necessary condition for simplicity. That is to say, simplicity entails occupying the highest position within a class of being, and *vice versa*. Moreover, any comparative predication is both a sufficient and necessary condition for multiplicity.

Intellectual substances are related to one another by synonymic analogy.[28] We have already seen in the previous section that the first unmoved mover is distinguished from P-separate substances on the basis of its absolute simplicity of thought. Applying the logic of synonymic analogy to intellectual substances entails that the first unmoved mover occupies the top rank in the hierarchy: As pure thinking on thinking, it does not depend on anything else for realization of its essence. Moreover, as Aristotle states in

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28 Di Giovanni's work is primarily concerned with the the difference and rank of celestial bodies. However, Di Giovanni notes that the rank of celestial bodies is dependent on their movers, which are the separate intellects:

> [In the case of celestial substances,] intellects are identical with souls and souls are the essence of celestial bodies. This amounts to saying, clearly, that separate intellects are the very essence of celestial bodies... If intellects are the essence of celestial bodies, then what belongs to the former must belong to the latter by virtue of its essence. And this is why, according to Averroes, degrees of being belong by essence to celestial bodies: since they belong in practice to separate intellects (Di Giovanni 2006, p. 459).

Metaphysics 12.9, the unmoved mover cannot be the best substance if its thought depended on something else, as would be the case if it were in potential to think.[29] By contrast, the P-separate substances vary in the actualization of their intellect. As we have seen, their object of thought refers to something other than the thinker, which entails that their thought admits of some complexity. Thus the intellectual substances besides the first unmoved mover are ranked in descending order below the first unmoved mover in accord with the degree of their complexity of thought. The descent terminates in the human potential intellect, which is the lowest possible realization of intellectuality, since its intellect is actualized through a process of abstracting the form of objects that are ontologically distinct from thought, i.e. the forms of hylomorphic substances:

> He {i.e., Aristotle} said: For the agent is always more noble than the patient. That is, the former is always activity in its substance, while the latter is found in each disposition. It was already explained that the relation of the agent intellect to the patient intellect is just as the relation of the moving principle in some way to the moved matter. The agent, however, is more noble than the patient and the principle [more noble] than the matter. For this reason it should be held according to Aristotle that the last of the separate intellects in the hierarchy is that material intellect. For its activity is less [immaterial] than the activity of those other

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29 See Aristotle's remarks at *Metaphysics* 12.7 1074^{b} 15-34. Averroes expresses the ontological dependency of the thought of P-separate substances on the principle(s) of their existence as early as the *Epitome on Metaphysics*:

> The [actual] intelligible is the entelechy and form of him who is able to think [618]. Hence, if we assume that one of these [intellects] thinks something other than itself, it reaches its entelechy through thinking this. Thus, this other [thing] must be prior to it and the cause of its existence. Likewise, if we assume that some of these [intellects] are caused through others, that which is caused must conceptualize its cause, so that these two meanings become convertible, I mean that if these principles conceptualize something other than themselves, this other [thing] must be their cause, and that if these [principles] have a cause, that which is caused must conceptualize this [cause]. For that which is caused cannot conceptualize its own essence without conceptualizing that which constitutes its essence. Having shown that each of them conceptualizes itself, it thus follows necessarily that that which is caused among them conceptualizes its cause (Averroes 2010, *Epitome,* p. 157).

> separate intellects since its activity seems more to be affection rather than activity. (Averroes 2009, *De Anima,* p. 354)

Thus the second consequence of establishing incorporeal potentiality is that it reveals the hierarchical relation among separate substances, and, consequently, the rank of the agent and potential intellects.

2.3.5 Abstraction Requires Bodily Activity

We have seen Averroes argue against the notion that intellectual receptivity can be treated as a material receptivity; rather it must be treated as a distinct kind of receptivity that only belongs to beings that are incorporeal. Moreover, among intellectual beings, the human potential intellect is the lowest of intellectual substances as result of being a pure potentiality for thought. That is, the human potential intellect is altogether distinct from its objects of thought (the natures of hylomorphic substances), and comes to think of its object only after having been actualized by those natures through the process of abstraction. For Averroes, the early stages of abstraction involve stripping away all particularizing conditions of the cognized form still present in the faculties of sensation until only the bare particular nature remains.[30] Only after this stripping away occurs can

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30 "There are three powers, the being of which was explained in *Sense and Sensibilia*, namely, the imaginative, the cogitative, and the memorative. For those three powers are in human beings for presenting the form of a thing imagined when the sense is not present. For this reason it was said there that when those three powers assist each other, perhaps they will represent the individual nature of the thing insofar as it is in its being, even though we may not sense it. He {i.e., Aristotle,} meant here by passible intellect the forms of the imagination insofar as the cogitative power proper to human beings acts upon them. For that power is a kind of reason and its activity is nothing but the placing of the intention of the form imagined in its individuality in memory or the discerning of it from [the individual] in conception and imagination. And it is evident that the intellect which is called material receives the imagined intentions after this discernment. That passible intellect, therefore, is necessary for

the image be made intelligible by the illuminative activity of the agent intellect and be received into the potential intellect:

> For to abstract is nothing other than to make imagined intentions intelligible in act after they were [intelligible] in potency. But to understand is nothing other than to receive these intentions. For when we found the same thing, namely, the imagined intentions, is transferred in its being from one order into another we said that this must be from an agent cause and a recipient cause. The recipient, however, is the material [intellect] and the agent is [the intellect] which brings [this] about. (Averroes 2009, *De Anima,* p. 351)

Sensory cognition, which culminates in the formation of an image, is therefore a necessary condition for the actualization of potential intellect.[31] Since sensory cognition is dependent on a body, Averroes's account of abstraction and, *ipso facto,* his account of incorporeal potentiality, imply that the actualization of the potential intellect requires a body despite the potential intellect being a separate substance.

2.3.6 Relevance to Aquinas

Averroes's position to some extent precludes treating the potential intellect in ways that Aquinas intends to maintain. That is, since Averroes maintains that the potential intellect is a separate substance in its own right, it cannot be treated as a power of a soul that is related to a body as its form.[32] Moreover, a sizable portion of the Thomistic corpus is occupied with arguing against Averroes's view that humans share a singular intellect. It therefore may seem odd to suggest that Averroes's account of intellect has had a constructive influence on Aquinas's philosophical anthropology. However, my thesis for

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conceptualization. (Averroes 2009, *De Anima,* p. 359)

31 See: Averroes 2009, *De Anima,* pp. 308, 316, 359, 374.

32 Taylor (Forthcoming) illustrates that Albert the Great, at an early point in his career, read Averroes to have maintained that the Agent and Material intellects are powers of the soul.

the coming chapters is that Aquinas weaves select features of Averroes's account of intellect into his own account of the human soul as a substantial form and subsistent substance.

Averroes has drawn several conclusions that Aquinas works into his account:

1. Aristotle's discussion of intellectual receptivity in *De Anima* 3.4 requires introducing a new category of being, *viz.* incorporeal potentiality.

2. The reception of form in the human intellect involves something that is wholly characterized by incorporeal potentiality, *viz.* the potential intellect.

3. Among intellectual substances, the potential intellect has the highest degree of incorporeal potentiality/weakest degree of incorporeal actuality, and thus its actualization depends on abstraction of the forms of objects external to it, *viz.* the forms of hylomorphic substances.

4. Abstraction terminates in a) the illumination of the form as present in the imagination, and b) the reception of the form in the potential intellect.

5. Both the presence of images and their formation require a body.

Aquinas's employs Averroes's reasoning behind (1-2) to combat universal hylomorphism,[33] which is the first stage of Aquinas's arguments against the notion that the soul is a composition of form and matter and in favor of the immateriality of intellect. The intellect having a potentiality that is *not* material and belongs to intellect in its own

33 Briefly, universal hylomorphism is the view that 1) God alone is absolutely simple, whereas every other being admits of composition, and 2) all compositions are composed of matter and form. Universal hylomorphism seems to have originally been proposed by Avicebron/Ibn Gabirol, and was adopted by a number of thinkers in the Latin Christian tradition, including Bonaventure. Aquinas's understanding of universal hylomorphism – especially as it relates to issues surrounding the immortality of the human soul – will be presented in full in later chapters.

right (as opposed to intellectual receptivity belonging to or being reducible to some other part of the soul or arrangement of bodily parts) is necessary for understanding Aquinas's doctrine that the soul is a subsistent substance. Moreover, Aquinas treats intellectual substances as having various degrees of actualizing incorporeal potentiality, with human intellect being of the lowest degree as a pure potential for thought, dependent on abstraction of form from hylomorphic substance to actually think, in line with (3). Likewise, Aquinas conceives abstraction in line with (4), which stands in contrast to the account of abstraction offered by other commentators.[34] Finally, since (4) implies (5), the

34 For instance, Avicenna treats the imagined form as a trigger for the soul to be united to the agent intellect, which contains all forms:

> Just as the Sun is actually visible in itself and through its light it makes actually visible what is not actually visible, so likewise is the state of this {Active} intellect vis-a-vis our souls; for when the intellecting faculty reviews the particulars that are in the imagery [faculty], and the Active Intellect sheds light onto us upon them, the things abstracted from matter and its associations are altered and impressed upon the rational soul. ["Being altered" is] not in the sense that [the particulars] themselves are transferred from the imagery to our intellect, nor [is "being impressed"] in the sense that the connotational attribute immersed in the [material] associations which in itself and with regard to its very being is separate from matter) makes something like itself. Quite the contrary, [the alteration and being impressed] is in the sense that reviewing [the things abstracted from matter and its associations] prepares the soul in order that the thing separate from matter [coming] from the Active Intellect [i.e., the intellectual forms] flows down upon them; for discursive thought and selective attention are certain motions that prepare the soul in a way to receive what flows down. (Avicenna 2007, *De Anima,* p. 199-200).

Since the Active Intellect already contains form, the imagined form need not be something made intelligible by the illumination of agent intellect for intellection to occur. Nor would there be any need to posit that incorporeal potentiality belongs to the intellect. Hence Avicenna's view that intellectual potentiality comes in degrees of ability of the theoretical faculty of soul to conjoin with the agent intellect. See: (Avicenna 2007, *De Anima,* p. 184-185; D'Ancona 2008; Davidson 1992, p. 83-88; McGinnis 2007). This effectively denies that intellect receives intelligible form from hylomorphic substances, making the relationship between intellectual activity and the body accidental, at best. Avicenna thus could not have been a source for Aquinas's account of potential intellect, though Avicenna influenced Aquinas's noetics in other ways.

human intellect's dependence on abstraction for its content of thought enables Aquinas to reject the Platonism that would otherwise seem to be entailed by treating the human soul as a subsistent substance. That is to say, the process of abstraction depends on sensitive and imaginative acts, which require a body. Therefore, the human soul must have an essential relation to the body for its proper intellectual activity.

Chapter 2: Summary

The next two chapters will discuss the manner in which Aquinas utilized the philosophical positions of the Neoplatonic and Arabic-Islamic commentators in constructing his ontology of soul. It should be helpful to recap those positions before moving on. First, we saw that Avicenna presents an account of form and essence as being distinct principles in sensible substances. Avicenna reasons that the essence of any sensible substance must include both form and matter, since essence determines substances to be the kinds of things they are, and sensible substances are hylomorphic composites. Moreover, Avicenna argues that sensible substances have a combination of essence and supposit in addition to having a hylomorphic composition. That is, since form is a principle that determines only *matter* to be actual, it must be essence, not form, that determines the entire sensible substance to be a homomorphic composition. Aristotle had presented something like Avicenna's position in Aristotle's *Metaphysics VII.7,* yet in that same book Aristotle also presents a seemingly contrary position, which identifies essence as form. That is, treating essence as form and *vice versa* entails that the only principles that make up a sensible substance are the principles that make up its

hylomorphic composition. Therefore, form-essence identity has no need for introducing an essence-supposit combination. Nothing in the Aristotelian corpus indicates whether Aristotle himself endorsed form-essence identity or form-essence distinction, leaving it to commentators to explain whether the two apparently conflicting theories could be reconciled, or which of the two theories fit best within the context of the Aristotelian corpus and other philosophical commitments of the commentators. We shall see in the coming chapters that Aquinas rejects form-essence identity, opting instead to follow Avicenna's account of the form-essence distinction. One (if not the only) reason for Aquinas endorsing the form-essence distinction is that it has ontological implications for hylomorphic substances that enable Aquinas to argue that the human soul is both a separate substance and subsistent substantial form.

Second, we saw that Robert Wisnovsky's work illustrated how the Ammonian Neoplatonic commentators on Aristotle helped shape the Arabic tradition's understanding of Aristotle's psychology in such a way that it would have been natural for them to treat the human soul as a form of the body, but which also has being separate from the body and is the cause of the body's existence. Of course, the Ammonian reading conflicts with the standard reading of Aristotle, which treats substantial forms as distinct principles of and actually inseparable from hylomorphic substances, whereas pure forms are separate substances, incapable of being the formal actuality of matter. The task of any Ammonian inspired anthropology is to explain how a separate immaterial substance can also be a principle of a particular hylomorphic substance. Although Aquinas's account of the relation between the human soul and its body does not agree in all aspects with the

Neoplatonic account of the soul as a separate being and cause of the body, the coming chapters will highlight how Aquinas presents a variant of the Ammonian interpretation in presenting what I call the "Communicability of Being" doctrine. As such, Aquinas's conception of separate substance and hylomorphic form deviates from Aristotle's.

Finally, we saw that Averroes argues against treating intellectual potentiality as a type of matter and instead indicates that it requires us to introduce another category of being besides the pure actuality of the first unmoved mover, and the active and passive principles of hylomorphic substances. We also saw that Averroes combines intellectual potentiality/actuality with synonymic analogy to schematize separate substances in a hierarchical order: the first unmoved mover occupies the highest rank as a consequence of its pure actuality, whereas the potential intellect occupies the lowest rank as a consequence of being in pure potential to receive intellectual content *via* abstraction. This entails that the potential intellect must be related to the human body and its psychological processes. We shall see over the next two chapters how Aquinas adopts Averroes's approach to intellectual potentiality. Aquinas replicates Averroes's argument for the reality of incorporeal potentiality in his critique of universal hylomorphism, and adopts the hierarchical approach that treats the human soul as being the lowest of intellectual substances, such that it depends on the body for its content. This serves as a basis for Aquinas to argue that the human soul is essentially related to the body, contrary to the Platonic accounts of the human soul presented by his Latin Christian peers.

CHAPTER 3: HUMAN CONSTITUTION IN AQUINAS'S EARLY WORKS

This chapter provides an exposition of key texts from the early works of Thomas Aquinas (ca. 1252-1265), proceeding chronologically. These texts illustrate that Aquinas presents a conception of the human soul that that is closer to the account of form and separate substance presented by the Ammonian tradition than it is to Aristotle's account. Moreover, Aquinas adopts Avicenna's form/essence distinction and employs it in defending his view that the soul is both a subsistent substance and substantial form, against objections inspired by form/essence identity. Finally, Aquinas employs Averroes's arguments for the ontological reality of incorporeal potentiality in his criticism of universal hylomorphism, and draws on the extreme degree of incorporeal potentiality in human potential intellect to reject a Platonic interpretation of the human soul's subsistence.

3.1 Aquinas's Conception of Form in *De Principiis Naturae*

Although *De Principiis Naturae* does not deal directly with the human soul, Aquinas presents an account of substantial form as "giver of *esse*" that enables Aquinas to develop an account of soul that, on one hand, accords with the Form and Separate Being and the Cause and Separate Being doctrines of the Ammonian tradition, but, on the other hand, avoids the implication that the body has its own being distinct from the soul.

3.1.1 Form as "Giver of *Esse*"

Aquinas's first mention of form in *De Principiis Naturae* comes at Chapter 1: "Matter has *esse* from that which comes to it, because it has incomplete *esse* of itself. Thus, simply speaking, form gives *esse* to matter" (*De Principiis* 1).[35] Aquinas's concern in the opening chapter is with establishing what causes a potential sensible substance to have *esse*.[36] The conclusion that it is form which gives *esse* to matter would not be obvious to the reader without first taking for granted a hylomorphic analysis of sensible substance. As such, Aquinas wants the reader to consider that either form or matter explains what causes a potential sensible substance to have *esse*. Since matter is nothing more than a potentiality for *esse*, matter a) cannot by itself be the cause of *esse,* and b) is the subject that receives *esse.* This leaves form as the only remaining candidate for explaining what causes a potential sensible substance to have *esse.* Hence, Aquinas writes:

> **(8A)** Everything from which something has *esse*, whether the *esse* is substantial or accidental, can be called form. **(8B)** For instance, man, since he is potentially white, is made actually white by whiteness; and sperm, since it is potentially man, is made actually man by the soul. **(8C)** Because form makes *esse* in act, form is said to be an act.[37]

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35 Materia habet esse ex eo quod ei advenit, quia de se habet esse incompletum. Unde simpliciter loquendo forma dat esse materie (*De Principiis,* Chapter 1, 43.39.30-33). All translations from the works of Thomas Aquinas are mine.

36 See the opening line of *De Principiis Naturae*: "Note that some things are able to be although they are not, whereas others truly are. Those that are able to be are said to be in potential. Those that are, are said to be in act. / Nota quod quoddam potest esse licet non sit, quoddam vero est. Illud quod potest esse dicitur esse potentia; illud quod iam est, dicitur esse actu" (*De Principiis,* Chapter 1, 43.39.1-4).

37 Omne a quo aliquid habet esse, quodcumque esse sit sive substantiale, sive accidentale, potest dici forma; sicut homo cum sit potentia albus, fit actu albus, per albedinem et sperma, cum sit potentia homo, fit actu homo per animam. Et quia forma facit esse in actu, ideo forma dicitur esse actus. (*De Principiis,* Chapter 1, 43.39.37-

Several consequences follow from Aquinas's reasoning that form causes sensible substance to have *esse*. First, in light of Aquinas's remarks at **8A** and **8C**, his general conception of form can be summarized as follows:

> **Form:** For any act, that act is a form if and only if it causes some subject to have *esse*.

Second, Aquinas's examples at **8B** illustrate that the nature of a form's subject determines whether that form is substantial or accidental. Man as a primary sensible substance and the subject of the accidental form whiteness indicates that the subjects of accidental forms are primary substances, whereas sperm being the matter of man and the subject of the soul indicates that the subjects of substantial forms are matter:[38]

> **Accidental Form$_{df}$:** For any act, that act is an accidental form if and only if it causes a sensible substance to have *esse*.
>
> **Substantial Form$_{df}$:** For any act, that act is a substantial form if and only if it causes matter to have *esse*.

Third, Aquinas's examples at **8B** clarify that *esse* has two senses, *viz.,* as existence, and as properties that determine a sensible substance to belong to a species. To say that white exists (accidentally) in a human because of whiteness is to imply that whiteness causes white to exist in a human. Moreover, to say that a human exists (substantially) from sperm because of the soul is to imply that the soul causes both a) sperm to exist as the matter of a human and b) essential properties to exist in a particular human, which

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38 Aquinas earlier refers to both types of subjects as matter. Substances proper are "matter in which / materia in qua," (*De Principiis,* Chapter 1, 43.39.15-16) whereas the matter of a substance is "matter from which / materia ex qua" (*De Principiis,* Chapter 1, 43.39.17).

determine him or her to be a member of humanity. To generalize, accidental forms cause substances to exist in some way under one of the nine accidental categories, whereas substantial forms cause matter to exist[39] and to be actualized under the category of substance, which causes the subsequent sensible substance both to exist and to belong to a species. In light of this, the descriptions of accidental and substantial form can be reformulated as follows:

> **Accidental Form$_{dfl}$:** For any act, that act is an accidental form if and only if it causes an accidental property to exist in a sensible substance.
>
> **Substantial Form$_{dfl}$:** For any act, that act is a substantial form if and only if it causes a sensible substance a) to exist (*via* giving existence to matter) and b) to have essential properties of a species.

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39 When Aquinas says that form causes matter to exist, he does not mean that, for instance, the human soul causes the sperm and ovum to exist, absolutely speaking, since the latter must pre-exist for the soul to actualize it and make it to be a human being. Nor does Aquinas mean that the soul makes the sperm and ovum to be matter for a human. Rather, Aquinas's remark that form causes matter to exist should be considered in light of his view that prime matter, which he calls "matter from which," is a "potency to substantial existence," and therefore "has existence by reason of what comes to it" (*De Principiis,* Chapter 1, 43.39.14-25). Note that Aquinas's analysis of matter is expressed in terms of potential for existence, rather than simply as a substrate which receives the quiddative characteristics of a species. An existent form gives its existence to what it actualizes. To return to the above example, then, sperm and ovum, as a potential human, are already matter because they possess potential for the substantial existence the soul would give to them. Yet sperm and ovum, as, each give existence to some substrate that are in potential to substantial existence, and so on until one arrives at prime matter. As we shall see below, this is consistent Aquinas's ontological distinction between existence, form, and essence. Form, as such, doesn't have existence, but is related to existence as a potency is to actuality. Thus something must cause form to exist, and Aquinas argues in *De Ente et Essentia,* Chapter 4, that cause must be God. Thus, when Aquinas says that form gives *esse* to matter, this is equivalent to saying that God causes prime matter to exist through form. Or, to put it another way, form acts as an instrument for God to give substantial existence to matter.

Finally, the dual role of substantial form results in a chain of ontological priority. The existence of accidental forms depends on the existence of the sensible substances they inhere in, despite accidental forms actualizing primary sensible substances *to be* in some way.[40] By contrast, the existence of a sensible substance depends on a substantial form giving its existence to matter. That is to say, without form giving existence to matter, there would be no primary sensible substance, and therefore no subject to bear essential properties or for accidental forms to inhere in. Aquinas's conception of substantial form therefore entails what I shall call the "Existential Priority of Substantial Form" thesis (EPSF):

> **EPSF:** The existence of a sensible substance, the essential properties of that substance, and the accidents that inhere in it depend on substantial form causing matter to exist.

EPSF makes clear that although both form and matter are necessary for a sensible substance to exist, matter is the subject of the causal activity of substantial form, but has no existence in the absence of that activity, and, therefore, serves strictly as a necessary condition for the existence of sensible substance.[41] Hence Aquinas remarks that matter

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40 The figure [imprinted in bronze], because of which it is called an idol, is the form, but not a substantial [form], because bronze, before it receives the form or figure, has *esse* in act, and this [i.e. having *esse* in act] does not depend on that figure // figura autem a qua dicitur idolum, est forma, non autem substantialis quia cuprum ante adventum formae seu figurae habet esse in actu, et eius esse non dependet ab illa figura (*De Principiis,* Chapter 1, 43.40.74-78)

41 But [prime matter] is never by itself able to exist. Because it does not have some form within its *ratio*, it does not have *esse* in act, since nothing is an *esse* in act except by form, but is only in potential. // Sed per se nunquam potest esse, quia cum in ratione sua non habeat aliquam formam, non habet esse in actu, cum esse in actu non sit nisi a forma, sed est solum in potentia. (*De Principiis,* Chapter 2, 43.41.114-118)

can be called a cause of form to the extent that form requires matter for its causal activity. On the other hand, form is called a cause of matter precisely because it causes matter to exist.[42] Therefore, the existence of the sensible substance comes from form alone, even if form requires matter for its causal activity.

3.1.2 A Comparison of Form as "Giver of *Esse*" and the Ammonian Conception of Soul

The section above has made clear that, in treating substantial form as cause of the existence of matter, Aquinas has assigned more to the role of form than that of simply being the cause of essential act(s). In this section, I will argue that the role of form in the works of Aristotle does not necessarily present any analogue to the additional role Aquinas assigns to form. R. E. Houser (2012) has illustrated that it is Avicenna's *Physics,* rather than the works of Aristotle, that serves as a basis for Aquinas's treatment of physical principles in the *De Principiis Naturae.* Given the influence of the Ammonian conception of form on Avicenna, this establishes a historical link between the respective conceptions of form presented by Aquinas and the Ammonian thinkers. It should be unsurprising, then, to find that Aquinas's conception of form bears similarities with the Ammonian view.

Aristotle's first sustained treatment of form in the *Physics* appears in the opening chapter of Book 2, in which he identifies form over matter as the nature of a sensible

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42 Matter is called a cause of form, insofar as there is no form except in matter, and similarly, form is the cause of matter, insofar as matter does not have *esse* in act except through form. / Materia enim dicitur causa formae, inquantum forma non est nisi in materia; et similiter forma est causa materiae, inquantum materia non habet esse in actu nisi per formam. (*De Principiis,* Chapter 2, 43.44.37-40)

substance (*Physics* 193^{a}31-193^{b}6). Consider the following example: "What is potentially flesh or bone has not yet its own 'nature', and does not exist until it receives the form specified in the definition, which we name in defining what flesh or bone is" (*Physics* 193^{b}1-2). Although Aristotle says that the matter of flesh or bone does not exist until it receives the form of flesh or bone, this is not to be taken as saying that the form of flesh or bone causes its matter to exist simpliciter, and *in addition* to causing it to bear essential properties. Rather, Aristotle seems to be saying that matter does not exist as flesh or bone, i.e. it is not actively a part of that type of nature, until it receives either of those respective forms. This reading finds support in Aristotle's description of form as "the definition of the essence… and the parts of the definition" in his presentation of the formal cause later in chapter 2 (*Physics,* 194^{b}27). Finally, despite the controversy surrounding incongruity of form as presented in the *Physics* and the *Metaphysics,* Aristotle still envisaged the causal role of form to be the same. For instance, Aristotle writes in the *Metaphysics*:

> Natural comings to be are the comings to be of those things which come to be by nature; and that out of which they come to be is what we call matter; and that by which they come to be is something which exists naturally; and the something which they come to be is a man or a plant or one of the things of this kind, which we say are substances if anything is – all things produced either by nature or by art have matter; for each of them is capable both of being and of not being, and this capacity is the matter in each – and, in general, both that from which they are produced is nature, and the type according to which they are produced is nature (for that which is produced, e.g. a plant or an animal, has a nature), and so is that by which they are produced--the so-called 'formal' nature, which is specifically the same (though this is in another individual); for man begets man. (*Metaphysics* 1032^{a}15-25).

The general picture that emerges from the above citations is that Aristotle would conceive of the causal role of substantial form as follows:

> **Aristotle's Substantial Form:** For any act, that act is a substantial form if and only if it causes a sensible substance to have essential properties of a species (*via* actualizing matter).

To be sure, the above formulation entails that the matter of a sensible substance cannot be said to be a principle and, consequently, to exist, unless the substantial form first actualizes it. Note, however, that substantial form actualizing matter does not entail that the existence of the sensible substance and its properties depend on substantial form causing matter to exist, as Substantial Form_{dfl} and EPSF requires. Rather, the formulation of Aristotle's Substantial Form would have it that for Aristotle there is nothing more to the existence of a sensible substance than substantial form determining matter to bear essential properties, and consequently, the existence of both substantial form and matter consists in nothing more than their being principles of a sensible substance.

The causal role of Aristotle's Substantial Form ties its being to matter in a way that Aquinas's version of substantial form does not. For Aristotle, substantial form serves only as principle that determines sensible substance to have essential properties. As such, it depends on the presence of matter to satisfy its causal role as "giver of essence," and, therefore, to exist. By contrast, we have seen that Aquinas characterizes substantial form as the "giver of *esse.*" Since *esse* stands for both essential acts and the act of existence, respectively, Aquinas maintains that substantial form plays the dual role of "giver of essence" and "giver of existence." Consequently, we have seen with EPSF (see p. 4) that since substantial form causes matter to have existence in addition to causing sensible substance to have essential properties, substantial form enjoys a priority of existence that

simply isn't present on Aristotle's account. Although Aquinas does not explicitly draw the metaphysical distinction between essence and existence in the *De Principiis Naturae,* the dual role "existential essentialist" account of substantial form he presents provides a strong hint.[43]

R. E. Houser has noted that the expanded role of substantial form in Aquinas's *De Principiis Naturae* has been adopted from the *Physics* of Avicenna, who also unsurprisingly maintains a metaphysical distinction between essence and existence (Houser 2012, 591-94). To give the reader a sense of commonality between the Avicennian and Thomist accounts of substantial form, it should suffice to cite Houser's summaries of the two views. First, Houser writes of the comparison between Avicenna and Aristotle on substantial form in a way that mirrors the analysis presented over the last few pages:

> Avicenna explains the need for form very differently from Aristotle, who understood matter as potency for quiddity, and form as giving a being its actual quiddity. Avicenna does not deny that form causes the quiddity of the whole

43 In the *De Ente et Essentia*, which is contemporaneous with the *De Principiis Naturae*, Aquinas is explicit about the distinction between existence and essence in his so-called *intellectus essentiae* argument: "Whatever [belongs to a thing and] doesn't follow from the understanding of essence or quiddity, this is coming from without and making composition with essence, because no essence can be understood without those which are the parts of the essence. For, every essence or quiddity can be understood without this: that something is understood about its existence. For I can understand what a man is or what a phoenix is and nevertheless be ignorant about whether it has existence in reality. Thus it is evident that existence is other than essence or quiddity. // Quicquid enim non est de intellectu essentiae vel quiditatis, hoc est adveniens extra et faciens compositionem cum essentia, quia nulla essentia sine his, quae sunt partes essentiae, intelligi potest. Omnis autem essentia vel quiditas potest intelligi sine hoc quod aliquid intelligatur de esse suo; possum enim intelligere quid est homo vel Phoenix et tamen ignorare an esse habeat in rerum natura. Ergo patet quod esse est aliud ab essentia vel quiditate" (*De Ente et Essentia,* Chapter 4, 43.376.95-103). See (Houser 2007) for discussion of how Aquinas's *intellectus essentiae* argument is rooted in the works of Al-Ghazali and Avicenna.

> being, but by using his own expression—"has existence"—he shows that here he is thinking of the other function of form, to act as an instrumental cause of the very existence of matter. Matter is potency for existence, form is cause of existence, where quiddity and existence are two different principles, a point fully explained by Avicenna only in his *Metaphysics*. (Houser 2012, p. 589-90).[44]

Likewise, Houser's summary of Aquinas's account of substantial form restates in its own way what has been presented above, while additionally making explicit the connection between the dual role of substantial form and the essence/existence distinction:

> While form gives the whole being (ens) its quiddity, God gives existence to the creature by means of the form giving existence to matter. This is what makes such a being a "subject": it is a whole whose quiddity is caused by its form, while this form is the instrumental means God uses to bestow existence on its matter, and thereby on the whole subject… Its substantial form is the fundamental principle in both the existential and quidditative orders (Houser 2012, 592-3).

In conjunction with other similarities between Avicenna's *Physics* and Aquinas's *De Principiis Naturae,* the strong similarity between Aquinas's account of substantial form and the one presented by Avicenna indicates that Avicenna's *Physics* is the source of Aquinas's conception of substantial form at this early stage in his career.

We had seen in Chapter 2 that Avicenna's conception of the soul as a form was influenced by developments in Aristotelian commentary on the conception of form,

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44 The pertinent passage from Avicennia's *Physics* reads as follows: "Let it be posited for the science of physics, then, that body qua body has a principle that is material and a principle that is form, whether you intend an absolute corporeal form, or a species form from among the forms of bodies, or an accidental form ([as] whenever you regard body, insofar as it is white, strong, or healthy). Let it also be posited for [this science] that what is material is never separated from form so as to subsist in itself. In other words, [the material] does not actually exist unless form is present and so actually exists through [the form]" (Avicenna 2009, *Physics* 1.2, p. 15). Houser mentions that although Aquinas likely did not directly draw on the Avicenna's *Physics* as his source for the *De Principiis Naturae*, he nevertheless had a synopsis of the first book of Avicenna's *Physics* available to him, entitled *Liber primus naturalium: Tractatus primus de causis et principiis naturalium* (See: Houser 2012, p. 578).

culminating in the Ammonian position that the soul could be considered both a form and separate substance, as well as the cause of existence of the body (Chapter 2, p. 54). It was also noted that Aristotle's conceptions of hylomorphic form and separate substance stand in fundamental opposition to the Ammonian account of soul. That is, taking the soul to be a substantial form would exclude it from being a separate substance, and vice versa (Chapter 2, p. 56). This fundamental opposition between Aristotle and the Ammonian interpretation of soul is born out again in the summary of Aristotle's conception of substantial form presented above. That is to say, since substantial form serves the single role of actualizing matter, thereby causing the sensible substance to have its essential properties, it would be impossible for anything classified as substantial form to exist separate from matter. By contrast, the view of substantial form presented by Avicenna and Aquinas opens up the possibility that a substantial form could both cause matter to have existence and the essential properties of the sensible substance while also being capable of existing on its own. As Substantial Form_{dfl} indicates, an act is to be classified as a substantial form if it can fulfill the role of giving existence and essence to matter. This entails nothing about whether that existence belongs properly and *per se* to the substantial form,[45] which makes possible what I call the "Communicability of Being" Doctrine:

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45 In the *De Ente et Essentia,* which is contemporaneous with the *De Principiis Naturae,* Aquinas makes this very point: " The relationship of matter and form is discovered to be such that form gives existence to matter. Therefore, it is impossible that matter exists without some form. However, it is not impossible that some form exists without matter. For form does not have a dependence on mater in its essence (*in eo quod est*). // Talis autem invenitur habitudo materiae et formae, quia forma dat esse materiae. Et ideo impossibile est esse materiam sine aliqua forma. Tamen non est impossibile esse aliquam formam sine materia. Forma enim non habet in eo quod est forma dependentiam ad materiam" (*De Ente et Essentia,* Chapter 4, 43.376.45-50)

Communicability of Being: For any substantial form, if that substantial form has *per se* existence, it causes the sensible substance to have that existence (*via* giving existence to matter).

As we shall see, Aquinas maintains that the human soul is a substantial form with *per se* existence. He draws precisely on the Communicability of Being when responding to criticisms that the human soul cannot be a subsistent substance if it is a substantial form or *vice versa,* and so must be only one or the other.

3.2 The Form/Essence Distinction and the Communicability of Being Doctrine in the *Commentary on the Sentences*

This section provides an exposition of a representative article from Book 1 of Aquinas's *Commentary on the Sentences*. I show that Aquinas employs Avicenna's form/essence distinction as a way of conceiving the Boethian *quod est/quo est* distinction, which Aquinas uses as a framework to explain how the soul can be a spiritual substance (i.e., have *per se* existence) and give *esse* to the body as a substantial form. Moreover, I show that Aquinas uses the Communicability of Being Doctrine to defend his conception of the human soul as a subsistent substantial form against objections oriented around an Aristotelian conception of hylomorphism.

3.2.1 The Form/Essence and *Quod Est/Quo Est* Distinctions

In *In. Sent.* 1 d. 8 q. 5 a. 2, Thomas Aquinas addresses whether the soul is a simple substance.[46] We have seen that Aristotle treats the soul as a substantial form, which entails

46 See the Appendix for a complete translation of the article. The Latin text for all *Commentary on the Sentences* citations are from the Mandonnet and Moos edition,

that the soul is a principle of a hylomorphic substance. In light of what has been discussed in the last section, an Aristotelian inspired account of the soul would maintain that the soul is simple precisely because of its status as a principle of a composition. As such, its existence would be dependent on the existence of the composition. However, we have also seen that Aquinas's conception of substantial form deviates from Aristotle's, such that it allows for the possibility that substantial form might also be a subsistent substance. Aquinas wants to maintain exactly this about the human soul. To do so he draws on both Avicenna's Form/Essence Distinction and the Communicability of Being Doctrine. First, the form/essence distinction enables Aquinas to analyze the sense in which he understands the human soul to be a composition and the sense in which he understands it to be simple, thereby distinguishing the human soul from sensible substance on the one hand, and God, on the other. Second, the Communicability of Being Doctrine enables Aquinas to explain how a subsistent substance can also serve as a substantial form.

Speaking of the manner in which something might be a *quo est,* i.e. a principle by which a substance is in some way, Aquinas writes,

> In all those in which there is a composition of matter and form, there is a composition from *quo est* and *quod est*. In compositions from matter and form, *quo est* can be said in three ways. **(9A)** First, *quo est* can name the form of the part *(forma partis*), which gives being to matter. **(9B)** *Quo est* can also name the act of being (*actus essendi*), namely *esse*... Finally, **(9C)** *quo est* can name the very nature that remains from the conjunction of form with matter, for instance, humanity. **(9D)** The latter is so especially according to those who hold that the form of the whole (*forma, quae est totum*) – that is, the quiddity – is not the form of the part (*forma partis*), among whom is Avicenna. (*In Sent.* 1, d. 8, q. 5, a. 2, c.o.)[47]

Aquinas 1929.

We see that Aquinas expresses the Form/Essence Distinction through the technical terminology of *forma partis* and *forma totius* and that at **9D** he cites Avicenna as the originator of the distinction. In **9A** Aquinas presents form as the constituent part of a hylomorphic composite which functions as the actuality of the composite's other constituent part, namely, matter. To round out his picture of hylomorphism, Aquinas claims at **9C** that the essence of a hylomorphic composition can also be a thing's *quo est,* since its essence unifies the total composition to be a substance. This is a direct correlate to the Essence as Principle of Hylomorphic Unity thesis of Avicenna's hylomorphism:

> **Essence as Principle of Hylomorphic Unity:** For any sensible substance its essence unifies its form and matter to be a substance (Chapter 2, p. 35).

But the human soul cannot be a *quod est* for either of the two senses of *quo est* that Aquinas derives from the Form/Essence distinction, since a) they each determine a sensible substance to be a hylomorphic composition in their own way and b) the human soul does not have hylomorphic composition. First, this is because the human soul functions as *a substantial form for the body* and so is *quo est* in the sense of *forma partis* for the complete hylomorphic composite. Second, this is because Aquinas holds that the human soul is capable of intellectual activity and so must be "immune from matter" (*In*

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47 Unde in omnibus illis in quibus est compositio ex materia et forma, est etiam compositio ex quo est et quod est. In compositis autem ex materia et forma quo est potest dici tripliciter. Potest enim dici quo est ipsa forma partis, quae dat esse materiae. Potest etiam dici quo est ipse actus essendi, scilicet esse, sicut quo curritur, est actus currendi. Potest etiam dici quo est ipsa natura quae relinquitur ex conjunctione formae cum materia, ut humanitas; praecipue secundum ponentes quod forma, quae est totum, quae dicitur quidditas, non est forma partis, de quibus est Avicenna (Aquinas 1929, p. 229).

Sent. 1 d. 8, q. 5 a. 2, c.o.).[48] As such, its existence does not depend on its informing the body. This leaves only the act of existing to be *quo est* for the human soul, which stands in potentiality to receive it. To the extent that one emphasizes the intellectuality of the human soul, Aquinas remarks that it "can be called a quiddity or nature or simple form" (*In Sent.* 1 d. 8, q. 5 a. 2).[49] Thus, on Aquinas's Avicennian hylomorphism-inspired depiction of human nature, the essence humanity encompasses a hylomorphic composition of body and soul such that the soul is ordered to the body as its act. However, the soul has its own act independent of the body and can exist without it while retaining its role as *forma partis* within the essence humanity.[50]

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48 Avicenna dicit, quod aliquid dicitur esse intellectivum, quia est immune a materia. (Aquinas 1929, p. 228).

49 It should be noted that the simplicity of the soul is one type of simplicity that Aquinas derives from his analysis of the various senses of *quod est* and *quo est*. First, simplicity can be having existence through that of which they are a principle. Form would be simple in this sense, but so would matter, because both are principles of hylomorphic compositions. However, this sense of simplicity does not pertain to the human soul, because the human soul has existence *per se* rather than through the substance of which it is a principle. The second sense of simplicity would be the lack of form/matter composition. This sense of simplicity does apply to the soul as well as to the intelligences. The third and final sense of simplicity would be the non-difference of all *quo est* and *quod est*, including the difference between existence and essence. This final sense of simplicity pertains to God alone. See *In Sent.* 1 d. 8, q. 5 a. 2, c.o. in the appendix (Aquinas 1929, p. 229).

50 It should be noted that Aquinas took seriously Aristotle's remark that the human soul "comes from without" (*On the Generation of Animals,* 736^{b} 25), and subscribed to the view that the rational soul is immediately created by God and introduced at some point during embryonic development. At the early stage of his career, Aquinas maintained that ensoulment for males occurred around 40 days after conception and around 90 days for females. See: *In Sent.* 3. d. 3 q. 5 a 2. (Aquinas 1933, 145-146).

3.2.2 The Communicability of Being Doctrine as a Response to Aristotelian of Objections

Two of the objections against Aquinas's view that the soul is a subsistent substantial form hinge on the proposition that being a substantial form and having subsistence or *per se* existence is mutually exclusive. We have already seen that Aristotle's approach to hylmorphism entails just such exclusivity. Thus the objections are tacit arguments for Aristotle's hylomorphism. The first objection reads as follows: "It seems that the soul is simple. For just as the Philosopher says in *De Anima* II, the soul is the form of the body. He also says there that the form is neither matter nor a composite. Therefore, the soul is not a composite" (*In Sent.*1 d. 8 q. 5 a. 2. arg 1).[51] As a form of the body, the soul is taken to be a principle of a sensible substance; it constitutes one aspect of a hylomorphic composition, and is therefore not itself composed. In other words, being a principle of a sensible substance is the sole sense in which the human soul is said to be simple. Of course, Aquinas doesn't deny that the soul is simple in this sense, but his conception of the soul as a composition of existence and essence, as well as his distinction between form and essence are integral to his thesis that the soul also has *per se* existence. Aquinas counters this objection by considering the classification of the soul:

> Because the soul is an absolute form (*forma absoluta*), it does not depend on matter, which belongs to it on account of its likeness and proximity to God, and it has *esse* through itself (*esse per se*), which other corporeal forms do not. Therefore, there is found a composition of *esse* and *quod est* in the soul, and not in other forms, because *esse* itself isn't of corporeal forms absolutely. (*In Sent.*1 d. 8 q. 5 a. 2. ad 1) [52]

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51 Videtur quod anima sit simplex. Sicut enim dicit philosophus, anima est forma corporis. Sed ibidem dicit, quod forma neque est materia neque compositum. Ergo anima non est composita (Aquinas 1929, p. 227).

The soul is to be classified among spiritual and separate substances on account of its likeness and proximity to God. Although this appears to be drawing on a theological basis for justifying his alternative conception of the role of soul as a form, upon close examination, Aquinas holds that the human soul has a specific likeness to God, which is his definition of divine image. As it turns out, this specific likeness hinges on the human soul and other spiritual substances having an intellectual nature:

> It must be said that every form is a certain likeness to the First Principle, Who is pure act. Thus, the extent to which a form more a approaches the likeness of Him, the more it partakes of His perfections. Among corporeal forms, the rational soul more approaches toward likeness of God, and so it partakes of the God's nobility, namely that *it understands*, that it is able to move, and that it has existence through itself (*esse per se*)" (*In Sent.*1 d. 8 q. 5 a. 2. ad 5; emphasis mine).[53]

Aquinas is therefore stating in a different way what he had already said in the *Respondeo*: the human soul is to be classified as a substantial form with *per se* existence on account of its having an intellectual act, which is "immune from matter." As such, the Communicability of Being Docrtine can be applied to understanding how the human soul can have *per se* existence and also share its existence with the whole human substance.

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52 Quia anima est forma absoluta, non dependens a materia, quod convenit sibi propter assimilationem et propinquitatem ad Deum, ipsa habet esse per se, quod non habent aliae formae corporales. Unde in anima invenitur compositio esse et quod est, et non in aliis formis: quia ipsum esse non est formarum corporalium absolute, sicut eorum quae sunt, sed compositi (Aquinas 1929, p. 230).

53 Omnis forma est aliqua similitudo primi principii, qui est actus purus: unde quanto forma magis accedit ad similitudinem ipsius, plures participat de perfectionibus ejus. Inter formas autem corporum magis appropinquat ad similitudinem Dei, anima rationalis; et ideo participat de nobilitatibus Dei, scilicet quod intelligit, et quod potest movere, et, quod habet esse per se (Aquinas 1929, p. 231).

The second objection is inspired by the same viewpoint as the first objection, but argues that the human soul stands in the way of accounting for the unity of a human being if *per se* existence is ascribed to it:

> Everything that is composite has existence from its components. If, therefore, the soul were a composite, then it would have a certain existence in itself (*per se esse*), and that existence would never be removed from it. But from the conjunction of the soul to the body, the existence that is the existence of the human being remains. Therefore, in a human being existence is two, namely an existence of the soul and an existence of the conjunct. But this cannot be, since there is one existence of one thing (*In Sent.*1 d. 8 q. 5 a. 2. arg 2).[54]

The issue being raised is that if the human soul were to have composition, it would be a substance with *per se* existence. But such an entity cannot be a hylomorphic principle, since it would be an already existing substance conjoining to another existent. As such, the human being would be a conjunction of two existents, soul and body, rather than a unitary existent composed of formal and material principles. The supposed failure to account for the unity of the human being therefore results in forcing the same dichotomy that resulted from the first objection: if the soul is said to have *per se* existence, it would be composed rather than simple, and would not therefore be able to be conceived as a substantial form; or, if it is said to be a substantial form, it would be a simple principle of a substance rather than a substance itself, and therefore *per se* existence could not be ascribed to it. Aquinas is at pains to offer a third way between an Aristotelian hylomorphism that ties the existence of the soul to the sensible substance and body, and a dualist notion that the soul and body have two separate existences tied together in a

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54 Omne quod est compositum, habet esse ex suis componentibus. Si igitur anima sit composita, tunc ipsa in se habet aliquod esse, et illud esse nunquam removetur ab ea. Sed ex conjunctione animae ad corpus relinquitur esse hominis. Ergo esse hominis est esse duplex, scilicet esse animae, et esse conjuncti: quod non potest esse, cum unius rei sit unicum esse (Aquinas 1929, p. 227).

quasi-accidental relation. Aquinas counters the second objection by drawing on the Communicability of Being Doctrine to defend the view that something with *per se* existence can also serve as a substantial form:

> **(10A)** The soul has perfect existence in itself (*in se esse perfectum*), although this existence does not result from the component parts of its quiddity, (**10B)** nor is some other existence made through the conjunction with the body; rather this existence that is of the soul though itself (*animae per se*) becomes the existence of the conjunct. **(10C)** For the existence of the conjunct is nothing more than the existence of the form itself. **(10 D)** But it is true that other material forms, because of their imperfection, do not subsist through that existence, but are only principles of existence (*principia essendi*). (*In Sent.*1 d. 8 q. 5 a. 2. ad 2).[55]

The *Respondeo* and the reply to the first objection have already established that the classification of the human soul as a spiritual substance follows from it having an intellectual nature. Thus the intellectual act of the soul is the basis for ascribing it *per se* or "perfect existence," as Aquinas describes it at **10A**. However, the crux of the reply comes at **10B-C**, where Aquinas introduces the Communicability of Being Doctrine to preserve the substantial unity of a hylomorphic composition that has a substantial form possessing *per se* existence. Any substantial form is a "principle of existence;" that is, it causes the existence of sensible substance by causing the existence of matter. The Communicability of Being Doctrine entails that a substantial form possessing *per se* existence would not be different in this regard. The human soul has *per se* existence on account of its having an intellectual nature,[56] but since it is also a substantial form, it

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55 Anima sine dubio habet in se esse perfectum, quamvis hoc esse non resultet ex partibus componentibus quidditatem ipsius, nec per conjunctionem corporis efficitur ibi aliquod aliud esse; immo hoc ipsum esse quod est animae per se, fit esse conjuncti: esse enim conjuncti non est nisi esse ipsius formae. Sed verum est quod aliae formae materiales, propter earum imperfectionem, non sunt per illud esse, sed sunt tantum principia essendi (Aquinas 1929, p. 230).

56 It should be stressed here that Aquinas's conception of the human soul as a subsistent substantial form not only hinges on a particular conception of

gives its existence to the composite, and therefore the existence of the whole human being is no different than the soul's existence. Hence, Aquinas states at **10D** that the human soul is unique among substantial forms: its existence is *per se,* in addition to being a principle of existence for a hylomorphic composition.

The above considerations show that at the earliest stage in Aquinas's career, he moved towards the direction of Avicenna and the Ammonian thinkers with regard to the ontological status of the human soul as a form. In the next section, I will show that in the *De Ente et Essentia*, Aquinas adopts precisely the reasoning that Avicenna had presented in favor of the form/essence distinction. I will also show that Aquinas draws on Averroes's arguments for the reality of incorporeal potentiality as part of his critique of universal hylomorphism.

3.3 The Form/Essence Distinction and Incorporeal Potentiality in the *De Ente et Essentia*

In Chapter 2 of the *De Ente et Essentia*, Aquinas presents Avicenna's arguments for the form/essence distinction as a basis for rejecting form/essence identity. The relevant passage shows that Aquinas is consistent in maintaining the form/essence distinction early in his career. We have already seen that Aquinas employed the distinction in the *Commentary on the Sentences* to argue that the human soul is both a

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hylomorphism that allows for the possibility that a substantial form can subsist. He must also provide evidence that the soul is subsistent, and for Aquinas this rests both in the soul having an intellectual nature in which the process of intellection requires an immaterial act and in the human soul being the subject of that act. As we shall see in the expositions of *De Ente et Essentia* and the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, the receptivity of the intelligible form and all its entailments, which Aquinas draws from Averroes and develops in his own way, is the central piece to his argument that the soul is subsistent.

subsistent substance and substantial form. Aquinas's discussion in the *De Ente et Essentia* also indicates that Aquinas is committed to the form/essence distinction in its own right, beyond its usefulness for philosophical anthropology. Aquinas draws from Averroes's reasoning for treating incorporeal potentiality as an ontological reality in Chapter 4 of the *De Ente et Essentia.* Aquinas uses Averroes's argument as part of his criticism of universal hylomorphism, which maintains that spiritual substances have a composition of form and matter. Since Aquinas maintains that spiritual substances have their own non-material kind of potentiality, as is shown by an analysis of human intellection, Aquinas thinks the form/matter distinction can only pertain to corporeal substances. Moreover, like Averroes, Aquinas uses the ontological reality of incorporeal potentiality to outline a hierarchy of spiritual substances, of which human souls occupy the lowest position on account of being a pure potentiality to receive intelligible forms of hylomorphic substances. The human soul therefore requires a body that participates in its being if it is to fulfill its intellectual activity.

3.3.1 The Form/Essence Distinction

At the outset of Chapter 2 of *De Ente et Essentia,* Aquinas makes clear that he rejects the form/essence identity of strict Aristotelian hylomorphism in favor of the form/essence distinction:

> **(11A)** In complex substances, there is form and matter, just as in human beings there is soul and body. For we cannot say that essence is to be said of either of them... **(11B)** Form alone cannot be called the essence of composite substances, although some try to assert this. **(11C)** It is clear from what has been said that the definition of a thing signifies its essence, **(11D)** but the definition of natural substance does not contain form alone, but also matter... **(11E)** It follows,

> therefore, that the term "essence" in composite substances signifies that which is a composite from matter and form... **(11F)** This is reasonable, because the "to be" of the composite substance is not [predicated] of form alone nor of matter alone, but is of the composed thing itself. **(11G)** The essence is that by which a thing is said "to be." **(11H)** Therefore, it is necessary that the essence by which a thing is called a being cannot be form alone nor matter alone, but is both.[57] (*De Ente,* Ch 2)

Where **11A** and **11B** announce Aquinas's endorsement of the form/essence distinction and indicate that Aquinas was aware that one can conceive of essence as identical with form, the rest of the passage bears a striking resemblance in its content to Avicenna's *Metaphysics* 5, Ch. 8, par. 5. It is worth looking at the two passages side by side, in conjunction with the formulations that followed from the analysis of Avicenna's work in Chapter 2 (p. 31-34):

Avicenna, *Metaphysics* 5, Ch. 8	**Aquinas, *De Ente* 2**	**Formulation**
(1A) Nor are composites [the things] they are through form alone. For the definition of a thing indicates all the things that render it subsistent. **(1B)** Thus, it also, in some respect,	**(11C)** The definition of a thing signifies its essence, **(11D)** but the definition of natural substance does not contain form alone, but also matter.	**Completeness of Definition:** For any sensible substance, its definition will contain every essential property of that substance. **Avicennian Hylomorphic Definition:** For any sensible

57 In substantiis igitur compositis forma et materia nota est, ut in homine anima et corpus. Non autem potest dici quod alterum eorum tantum essentia esse dicatur... Neque etiam forma tantum essentia substantiae compositae dici potest, quamvis hoc quidam asserere conentur. Ex his enim quae dicta sunt patet quod essentia est illud, quod per diffinitionem rei significatur. Diffinitio autem substantiarum naturalium non tantum formam continet, sed etiam materiam... Relinquitur ergo quod nomen essentiae in substantiis compositis significat id quod ex materia et forma compositum est... Huic etiam ratio concordat, quia esse substantiae compositae non est tantum formae nec tantum materiae, sed ipsius compositi. Essentia autem est secundum quam res esse dicitur. Unde oportet quod essentia, qua res denominatur ens, non tantum sit forma neque tantum materia, sed utrumque. (*De Ente,* Chapter 2, 43.371-372.1-56

includes matter. **(1C)** It is through this {i.e. the definition} that the difference between quiddity {i.e. essence} in composite things is known.		substance its definition will contain both form and matter. **Essence-Definition Isomorphism:** For any substance, the distinctions in its definition reflect distinctions in its essence.
(1D) Form is always part of the quiddity in composite things. **(1E)** As for the quiddity, it is that by which it {i.e. a singular sensible substance} is what it is; **(1F)** and it {i.e. a sensible substance} is what it is only by virtue of the form being connected with matter, which {matter} is something additional to the meaning of form.	**(11G)** The essence is that by which a thing is said "to be…" **(11E)** It follows, therefore, that the term "essence" in composite substances signifies that which is a composite from matter and form…	**Essence$_{df}$=** that principle by which a thing has its essential properties **Form-Essence Distinction:** For any sensible substance, its form is not identical to its essence. **Essence as Principle of Hylomorphic Parts:** For any sensible substance, its essence is the principle by which it has form and matter.
(2A) The composite is also not this meaning [viz., of form] but is the assemblage of form and matter. For this is what the composite is, **(2B)** and the quiddity is this composition. **(2C)** Form is thus one of the things to which composition is added. **(2D)** The quiddity is this very composition that combines form and matter. The unity that comes about through both is due to this one [composition]	**(11F)** The "to be" of the composite substance is not [predicated] of form alone nor of matter alone, but is of the composed thing itself… **(11H)** Therefore, it is necessary that the essence by which a thing is called a being cannot be form alone nor matter alone, but is both.	**Form-Substance Distinction:** For any sensible substance, it is non-identical with its form. **Hylomorphic Unity Explanation:** For any sensible substance, whatever explains its hylomorphic unity must encompass its constituent parts (i.e. form and matter).

Aquinas is shown to have presented in his own way all of the propositions that inform Avicennian hylomorphism, which follows from the form/essence distinction. Avicennian hylomorphism states:

> **Avicennian Hylomorphism:** for any sensible substance, it a) is a composition of form and matter and b) has an essence that causes its composition (Chapter 2, p. 36).

Of course, Aquinas also mentions the form/essence identity approach, found in Aristotle's works, which offers an alternate way to conceive hylomorphism:

> **Aristotelian Hylomorphism$_1$:** For any sensible substance it is a) a composition of matter and form, b) it is what it is by way of its essence, and c) its essence is its form (Chapter 2, p. 37).

In light of Aquinas's remarks in **11A-H**, it is impossible to deny that Aquinas chose to adopt an Avicennian rather than an Aristotelian understanding of hylomorphism. Of course, we have already seen that Aquinas employs the form/essence distinction to clarify the Scholastic *quod est/quo est* distinction in the *Commentary on the Sentences* 1 d. 8 q. 5 a. 2. Moreover, we saw Aquinas argue that the human soul, which has *per se* intellectual activity and can therefore subsist when separated from the body, always maintains its status as a substantial form, since it is part of the essence humanity. Aquinas's argument presupposes Avicennian hylomorphism, and is therefore integral to Aquinas's demonstration and defense of the thesis that the soul is a subsistent substance and substantial form. However, Aquinas's restatement of Avicenna's argument in **11C-H** stands as a strong indication that that Aquinas found Avicennian hylomorphism to be

philosophically sound in its own right, and not simply because it could be useful for his philosophical project. We will see in the next chapter that Aquinas continued to present arguments in favor of the form/essence distinction and, consequently, Avicennian hylomorphism, as well as treat it as a staple in his reasoning for and defense of the thesis that the human soul is both a subsistent substance and a substantial form.

3.3.2 Incorporeal Potentiality and the Place of the Human Soul in the Hierarchy of Intelligences

Avicenna is not the only Arabic/Islamic thinker that Aquinas uses in the *De Ente et Essentia* to support his positions. One of Aquinas's aims in Chapter 4 of *De Ente et Essentia* is to critique universal hylomorphism, which maintains that all beings except God have a composition of form and matter. To do so, Aquinas recruits Averroes's argument that human intellection requires treating non-material or incorporeal potentiality as ontologically real. According to Aquinas, since the human soul is an intellectual substance with incorporeal potentiality, it cannot be classified as a being whose existence depends on the composition of form and matter. Therefore, the form/matter distinction would apply only to material sensible substances and not to intellectual substances such as the human soul. Moreover, like Averroes, Aquinas uses the degree of incorporeal potentiality in the human intellect to establish that the human soul occupies the lowest place among spiritual substances. This is important because it establishes that body is essential for the fulfillment of the intellectual activity.

3.3.2.1 The Reality of Incorporeal Potentiality, against Universal Hylomorphism

De Ente et Essentia, Chapter 4 is principally occupied with determining the manner in which essence is present in the soul, the intelligences/angels, and God. Though all admit the simplicity of God, universal hylomorphists maintain that the intelligences and the human soul have form-matter composition.[58] Aquinas argues against the view that

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58 As mentioned in Chapter 2, note 23, universal hylomorphism had a strong following among Franciscan contemporaries of Aquinas. Universal hylomorphists share the view that God alone is simple, whereas every other being admits of a form-matter composition. This was consistently used by universal hylomorphists as a gloss on the Boethian *quo est-quod est* distinction (See: Weisheipl 1979, p. 274). Although the human soul and angels are treated as having form-matter composition on this view, universal hylomorphists distinguished spiritual substances from corporeal substances on the basis that spiritual substances actualize spiritual matter, whereas corporeal substances actualize corporeal matter. For instance, John Francis Quinn says of Bonaventure's view concerning the human soul's composition (in contrast to God's simplicity) and its lack of corporeal matter (in contrast to bodily substances):

> For Bonaventure, the human soul is a substance existing through itself and, having its own matter and form, is a singular and incorruptible thing. The matter in the human soul is a spiritual matter created together with a form; so, because the form is also spiritual, the soul is self-subsistent as a spiritual creature. But the Soul is not a pure spirit. God alone is a pure spirit, since only He is entirely free from matter, from every sort of composition, and from dependence on any creature. Hence, God is a spirit through His essence. As a being (*ens*) through Himself, God has no need of another in which to subsist. Although a creature is not a being (*ens*) through itself because it is in another as in a subject, even so, a creature needs another for its own conservation. Consequently, God alone subsists perfectly in being (*esse*). The rational soul, then, is a spiritual being (*ens*), subsisting in itself and through its matter and form. As a creature, however, the soul depends on God for the conservation of its being (*esse*). As a created spirit, moreover, the rational soul is not free entirely from matter. It is free only from *corporeal* matter. Thus the rational soul is spiritual because it has no corporeity. (Quinn 1973, p. 140).

We shall see that Aquinas's critiques of universal hylomorphism encompass the position of Boethius, summarized above. Nevertheless, whenever Aquinas argues against universal hylomorphism, he only mentions Avicebron/Ibn Gabirol, who he takes to be the originator of the theory. There is some controversy over whether the universal hylomorphists of Aquinas's day were in fact following Avicebron or whether their view was developed from Augustine. Weisheipl (1979) argues that 13th century universal hylomorphists introduced novel ideas into the scholastic tradition

the human soul and the intelligences have such a composition, arguing instead that they are simple forms. The pertinent passage reads as follows:

> **(12A)** Although everyone concedes the simplicity of the First Cause, some have tried to introduce composition of form and matter into the intelligences and in the soul; the creator of this position appears to be Avicebron, the author of *Fontis Vitae.* **(12B)** But this view is incompatible with the common statements of the philosophers, because they call these substances separated from matter, and they prove them to be altogether absent of matter. The strongest possible demonstration is from the power of intellection that is in [these substances]. **(12C)** For we see that forms are not actually intelligible except as they are separated from matter and its conditions, nor are they made intelligible in act, except through the substance's power of intellection, by which the forms are made [intelligible] and are received into. **(12D)** Therefore, it is necessary that in any intelligent substance there is a complete immunity from matter, such that the substance has neither a material part itself nor is it like a form impressed in matter, as it is with material forms. **(12E)** Nor can it be said that matter does not [generally] impede intelligibility, but only corporeal matter [does]. For, if it were by reason of corporeal matter only (since matter is not called corporeal unless it stands under a corporeal form), then it would have to follow that matter would impede intelligibility of the corporeal form. But this cannot be, because the corporeal form itself, just as other forms, is an intelligible in act, insofar as it is abstracted from matter. **(12F)** Hence, there is no manner in which there is a composition of matter and form in the soul or the intelligences, in such a way that an essence is received in them like they are in corporeal substances.[59]

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because they drew on the ideas of Avicebron's *Fontis Vitae*, which was made available to them through the works and translations of Gundissalinus. By contrast, Sullivan (2010) argues that Avicebron was largely unimportant for universal hylomorphists, who instead drew on Augustine as their central source. Pessin (2013) (especially pp. 106-112) argues that the universal hylomorphism of the 13th century scholastics is not altogether congruent with Avicebron's theory of corporeal and spiritual matter, and that Aquinas misrepresents – or at least fails to capture the totality of – Avicebron's universal hylomorphism. Whether Aquinas found the views of his peers to originate from Avicebron's work leads to questions about the precise target of Aquinas's critiques of universal hylomorphism: is he primarily arguing against (a misreading of) Avicebron, or is he arguing against his peers under the guise of arguing against Avicebron? For present purposes, it should suffice to say that the version of universal hylomorphism Aquinas presents in his works provided a basis for presenting his alternate understanding of the difference between God and creatures, and the spiritual and corporeal beings, as well as his alternate gloss of the *quod est-quo est* distinction, each of which were explicated using principles derived from or traceable back to Avicenna, Averroes, and the Ammonian Neoplatonic tradition.

The basis for Aquinas's rejection of universal hylomorphism is presented in **12B**, where he observes that the consensus of the prior philosophers is that intellectual substances and the human soul are not composites of form and matter. Aquinas believes that the emergence of intellectual understanding through actualization of the power of intellection (*virtute intelligendi*) was the best explanation the philosophers had offered to account for the lack of composition in incorporeal substances. Aquinas therefore makes clear that the argument he recites at **12C** and the conclusion he draws at **12D** is not original, but has precedent in the work of at least one other previous thinker.

The argument in **12C** and Aquinas's characterization of the conclusion at **12D** presents a short summary of Averroes's argument in the *Long Commentary on De Anima* that the nature of intellectual receptivity requires that the potential intellect be treated as having a potentiality distinct in kind from the material potentiality of sensible substances.

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59 Quamvis autem simplicitatem cause primae omnes concedant, tamen compositionem formae et materiae quidam nituntur inducere in intelligentias et in animam, cuius positionis auctor videtur fuisse Avicebron, auctor libri Fontis Vitae. Hoc autem dictis philosophorum communiter repugnat, qui eas substantias a materia separatas nominant et absque omni materia esse probant. Cuius demonstratio potissima est ex virtute intelligendi, quae in eis est. Videmus enim formas non esse intelligibiles in actu nisi secundum quod separantur a materia et a condicionibus eius; nec efficiuntur intelligibiles in actu, nisi per virtutem substantiae intelligentis secundum quod recipiuntur in ea et secundum quod aguntur per eam. Unde oportet quod in qualibet substantia intelligente sit omnino immunitas a materia, ita quod neque habeat materiam partem sui neque etiam sit sicut forma impressa in materia, ut est de formis materialibus. Nec potest aliquis dicere quod intelligibilitatem non impediat materia quaelibet, sed materia corporalis tantum. Si enim hoc esset ratione materiae corporalis tantum, cum materia non dicatur corporalis nisi secundum quod stat sub forma corporali, tunc oporteret quod hoc haberet materia, scilicet impedire intelligibilitatem, a forma corporali. Et hoc non potest esse, quia ipsa etiam forma corporalis actu intelligibilis est, sicut et aliae formae, secundum quod a materia abstrahitur. Unde in anima vel in intelligentia nullo modo est compositio ex materia et forma, ut hoc modo accipiatur essentia in eis sicut in substantiis corporalibus. (*De Ente*, Chapter 4, 43.375-376.3-36).

It will be helpful to compare side by side Aquinas's argument with the heart of Averroes's argument in the *Long Commentary*:

Aquinas, *De Ente* 4	**Averroes, *Long Commentary on De Anima 3***
(12C) For we see that forms are not actually intelligible except as they are separated from matter and its conditions, nor are they made intelligible in act, except through the substance's power of intellection, by which the forms are made [intelligible] and are received into. **(12D)** Therefore, it is necessary that in any intelligent substance there is a complete immunity from matter, such that the substance has neither a material part itself nor is it like a form impressed in matter, as it is with material forms.	**(3C)** The reason why that nature {of material intellect} is something which discerns and knows while prime matter neither knows nor discerns, is because prime matter receives diverse forms, namely, individual and particular forms, while this [nature] receives universal forms. **(3D)** From this it is apparent that this nature is not a determinate particular nor a body nor a power in a body. For if it were so, then it would receive forms inasmuch as they are diverse and particular… **(3E)** For this reason, if that nature which is called intellect receives forms, it must receive forms by a mode of reception other than that by which those matters receive the forms whose contraction by matter is the determination of prime matter in them. **(3F)** For this reason it is not necessary that it be of the genus of those matters in which the form is included, nor that it be prime matter itself.

First, the dissimilarities between the two arguments: Aquinas includes the active principle of intellection in his argument. Averroes, who is commenting on the potential intellect presented in *De Anima* 3.4, does not. Averroes details that the separability of intelligible

forms is due to their universality. Aquinas does not mention this (though it is implied).[60] Aquinas does not mention that the intellectual substance is not a body, a power in a body, etc., whereas Averroes does. This is because Aquinas is concerned with responding to the universal hylomorphists, who agree that the human soul and intelligences are incorporeal but nevertheless maintain that they are a composition of form and matter; Averroes is instead concerned with determining the character of intellectual potentiality in contrast to material potentiality. Finally, Averroes's argument covers more detail, whereas Aquinas's argument is a summary.

Despite the differences between the two passages, one can see that Aquinas's passage in the *De Ente et Essentia* follows the core of Averroes's reasoning in the *Long Commentary on De Anima.* Moreover, with a bit of unpacking, Aquinas's summary argument can be shown to be committed to every detail that Averroes presents in his argument. Averroes's argument states that the process of human intellection requires that the intelligible form be received universally, or devoid of any particularizing content that a form has as a result of actualizing matter. Since corporeal forms are actualities of matter and, therefore, particularized forms, the intellect cannot be a corporeal composition, a body, or the power of a body. Moreover, intellectual receptivity cannot therefore be the same as material receptivity; the intellect must have its own kind of immaterial and, consequently, incorporeal receptivity.

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60 In the next chapter, we will see that Aquinas maintain in the *Summa Theologiae* and in other works that the universality of intelligible form entails complete separability from matter, and that form actualizing matter entails the particularization of form.

Aquinas presents a more generalized version of Averroes's reasoning, since he is not trying to show that intellection is a corporeal act; rather, he is dealing with universal hylomorphism, which holds that there is such a category as spiritual matter in addition to corporeal matter. Aquinas states that in order for an intellectual substance to make material forms actually intelligible and to receive forms separated from matter, the intellectual power and, consequently, the subject of this power must itself be separate from matter. Presumably the separability of the intelligible form from matter is due to its universality, or lack of particularization, as Averroes had stated. As such, materiality implies particularity. This reading is supported by Aquinas's argument at **12E**, which states that it is not the presence of corporeality that is an impediment to intellectual understanding, since corporeality is a form that can be understood; rather it is matter, that impedes the form from being intelligible. Again, this impediment is presumably due to the particularization found in forms that actualize matter. Thus Aquinas concludes that since the intellect receives intelligible forms, the receptivity of intellectual substances cannot itself be matter, nor can intellectual activity itself be seen as the actuality of matter. This requires that both the potentiality to receive an intelligible form and the active principle behind that receptivity are immaterial.[61] Having no matter whatsoever, the human soul and other intelligences must be simple in the sense that they are not hylomorphic composites.

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61 Implicit in Aquinas's conclusion is Averroes's classification of being into four genera, *viz.* matter/corporeal potentiality, form/corporeal actuality, intellectual receptivity/incorporeal potentiality, and intellectual/incorporeal actuality (See Chapter 2, p. 67-69).

3.3.2.2 The Place of the Human Soul in the Hierarchy of Intelligences

We have seen that incorporeal potentiality features in Aquinas's critique of universal hylomorphism, but this is not the only area that Averroes's notion had influenced Aquinas's philosophical anthropology. Aquinas also follows Averroes – explicitly citing him, even – in tracing the implication of incorporeal potentiality for determining the place of human intellect within a hierarchal ontology. At the end of *De Ente et Essentia* Chapter 4, Aquinas writes:

> **(13A)** Because there is potency in the intelligences as well as act, it will not be difficult to find a multitude of intelligences, which would be impossible if there were no potency in them. Thus, the Commentator says in *De Anima* 3 that, if the nature of the possible intellect were unknown, we would not be able to find a multitude in the separated substances. **(13B)** Therefore, there is a distinction among each of them from another according to their grade of potency and act such that a superior intelligence, which is of greater proximity to the First Cause, has more act and less potency, and so with the others. **(13C)** This [gradation of intelligences] is terminated in the human soul, which holds the lowest grade in intellectual substances. **(13D)** Therefore, the possible intellect is related to intelligible forms as prime matter, which holds the lowest grade in sensible existence, is related to sensible forms, as the Commentator says in *De Anima* 3. This is why the Philosopher compares it to a blank tablet on which nothing has been written. **(13E)** Because it has more potency among other intelligible substances, it follows that the human soul is in such proximity to material things that a material thing is drawn to it to participate in its existence, such that from soul and body results one existence in one composition, yet, so far as this existence is the soul's existence, it is not dependent on the body (*De Ente et Essentia,* Chapter 4).[62]

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62 Quia in intelligentiis ponitur potentia et actus, non erit difficile invenire multitudinem intelligentiarum; quod esset impossibile, si nulla potentia in eis esset. Unde Commentator dicit in III de anima quod, si natura intellectus possibilis esset ignorata, non possemus invenire multitudinem in substantiis separatis. Est ergo distinctio earum ad invicem secundum gradum potentiae et actus, ita quod intelligentia superior, quae magis propinqua est primo, habet plus de actu et minus de potentia, et sic de aliis. Et hoc completur in anima humana, quae tenet ultimum gradum in substantiis intellectualibus. Unde intellectus possibilis eius se habet ad formas intelligibiles sicut materia prima, quae tenet ultimum gradum in esse sensibili, ad formas sensibiles, ut Commentator in III de anima dicit. Et ideo philosophus

Aquinas follows Averroes in **13A-B** by maintaining that once one comes to know the reality of incorporeal potentiality through the science of psychology, one can come to know the differences among intellectual substances, because this discovery provides insight into the varying degrees to which intellectual substances possess incorporeal potentiality.[63] Aquinas's subsequent analysis of the consequence of admitting incorporeal potentiality as an ontological category aligns closely with Averroes's analysis, as well. As has been done with previous passages from the *De Ente et Essentia*, it is worth comparing side by side with the relevant passages in Averroes:

Aquinas, *De Ente* 4	**Averroes, *Long Commentary on De Anima***
(13B) There is a distinction among each of them [i.e., intellectual substances] from another according to their grade of potency and act such that a superior intelligence, which is of greater proximity to the First Cause, has more act and less potency, and so with the others.	**(4C)** This {division of intelligible being into potentiality and actuality} is [something] necessarily present in every separate intelligence which understands something else. And if not, then there would be no multiplicity in separate forms. **(4D)** There is no form free of potency without qualification except the First Form, which understands nothing outside itself. **(4F)** Its being is its quiddity. Other forms, however, are in some way different in

comparat eam tabulae, in qua nihil est scriptum. Et propter hoc quod inter alias substantias intellectuales plus habet de potentia, ideo efficitur in tantum propinqua rebus materialibus, ut res materialis trahatur ad participandum esse suum, ita scilicet quod ex anima et corpore resultat unum esse in uno composito, quamvis illud esse, prout est animae, non sit dependens a corpore (*De Ente,* Chapter 4, 43.377.167-192).

63 See the following two passages from Averroes's *Long Commentary on De Anima* in Chapter 2, p. 67: "**(4G)** If it were not for this genus of beings which we have come to know in the science of the soul, we could not understand multiplicity in separate things, to the extent that unless we know here the nature of the intellect, we could not know that the separate moving powers ought to be intellects." See (Taylor 1998) for discussion of the importance of the discovery of incorporeal potentiality in determining the subject of metaphysics, according to Averroes.

	quiddity and being.
(13C) This [gradation of intelligences] is terminated in the human soul, which holds the lowest grade in intellectual substances.	The agent… is more noble than the patient and the principle [more noble] than the matter. For this reason it should be held according to Aristotle that the last of the separate intellects in the hierarchy is that material intellect. For its activity is less [immaterial] than the activity of those other separate intellects since its activity seems more to be affection rather than activity.[64]
(13D) Therefore, the possible intellect is related to intelligible forms as prime matter, which holds the lowest grade in sensible existence, is related to sensible forms.	**(4B)** For just as sensible being is divided into form and matter, so too intelligible being must be divided into things similar to these two, namely, into something similar to form and into something similar to matter.

At **13B**, Aquinas remarks that the degree of incorporeal potentiality/actuality possessed by an intellectual substance determines its place within the hierarchy of being. Since God is an absolutely simple substance possessing all perfections, and his existence is identical with its essence,[65] he possesses no incorporeal potentiality and consequently

64 See Chapter 2, p. 76-78.

65 "Although [God] is existence alone, it is not necessary that he is deficient in the other perfections and nobilities. Rather he has all the perfections which are in every genus. This is why he is called simply perfect, as the Philosopher and the Commentator say in book five of the *Metaphysics*. But he has these perfections in a more excellent way than all things because in him they are one, but in others they have diversity. And this is so because all these perfections belong to him according to his simple existence. Just as if were able to perform operations of all the qualities through one quality, he would have all qualities in that one quality, so also God has all these perfections in his own existence itself. // Quamvis sit esse tantum, non oportet quod deficiant ei reliquae perfectiones et nobilitates, immo habet omnes perfectiones, quae sunt in omnibus generibus. Propter quod perfectum simpliciter dicitur, ut philosophus et Commentator in V metaphysicae dicunt. Sed habet eas modo excellentiori omnibus rebus, quia in eo unum sunt, sed aliis diversitatem habent. Et hoc est, quia omnes illae perfectiones conveniunt sibi secundum esse suum simplex; sicut si aliquis per unam qualitatem posset efficere operationes omnium qualitatum, in illa una qualitate omnes qualitates haberet, ita Deus in ipso esse suo omnes perfectiones habet (*De Ente,* Chapter 5, 43.378.30-43).

ranks as the highest being. For all other intellectual substances, the more intellectual actuality/less intellectual potentiality they possess, the greater their realization of an intellectual nature, and the greater their proximity to God. Similarly, Averroes argues that God's being, i.e. his essential activity, is identical with his essence. Consequently, God possesses no potency and is therefore the first among beings of intellectual natures, whereas the potency in other intellectual beings to realize their essential activity places them lower in the hierarchy. It should be noted, however, that despite the general agreement regarding the importance of the reality of incorporeal potentiality for establishing an ontological hierarchy of intellectual substance, Aquinas and Averroes differ in related metaphysical commitments. This affects their respective uses of incorporeal potentiality below the surface.

For Averroes, intellectual potentiality/actuality served as a basis for distinguishing and ranking the nature of the movers of the heavenly bodies.[66] As we saw in Chapter 2, Averroes's analysis concerning the distinction between human intellect, the intellect of the celestial souls, and the intellect of the first unmoved movers centers around the respective relationship between thinker, the act of thinking, and the object of thought. Since God is absolutely simple, thought, thinker and object thought are identical. Thought and thinker are identical in separate substances, but the object of their thought

66 See Chapter 2, p. 67: "**(4H)** This {i.e. the intellectual potentiality of the unmoved movers} was unknown to many modern [thinkers] to the extent that they denied what Aristotle says, in the Eleventh Book of First Philosophy, that the separate forms moving the bodies must be in accord with the number of celestial bodies. **(4I)** To this extent knowledge of the soul is necessary for knowledge of First Philosophy. **(4J)** That receptive intellect must understand the intellect which is in act. **(4K)** For while it understands material forms, it is even more befitting that it understand immaterial forms. **(4L)** What it understands of separate forms, for example, of the agent intelligence, does not impede it from understanding material forms."

have varying degrees of multiplicity and refer to something outside thought. Finally, since human intellect is in pure potential for thought, it is dependent on receiving the diversity of forms in sensible substances to be actualized; it has the greatest multiplicity in thought, the act of thinking is distinct from the subject of thought, and the content of thought almost always refers to the natures of sensible substance, which are outside the nature of thought.[67] Likewise, since God, the separate substances, and the human intellect have the same essence as intellectual beings but have different gradations of realizing that essence, Averroes uses synonymic analogy to distinguish them. That is to say, God occupies the highest place in the hierarchy because he realizes intellectual essence to the fullest degree, whereas intellectual substances fulfill the intellectual natures to varying degrees. Moving down the hierarchy, one ultimately arrives at the material intellect, which is in pure potentiality to understanding and depends on active intellect making sensible forms intelligible for it to have active thought.

In contrast to Averroes, Aquinas did not index the number of intellectual substances to the movers of the heavens, nor did he maintain that God, the intellectual substances, and the human soul share the same nature. Rather, Aquinas argues that since each of the intellectual substances (save the human soul) are pure forms, they are identical with their essence. As such, each intellectual substance constitutes its own species: "The nature or quiddity [of intellectual substances] is absolute, not received in any matter… this is why, as has been said, there is not found among such substances a multiplicity of individuals in one species, with the exception of the human soul on

67 See Chapter 2, p. 72-75 for discussion of the relationship between thought, thinker, and object in the human intellect, the separate substances, and in God.

account of the body to which it is united" (*De Ente Et Essentia,* Chapter 5).[68] Likewise, Aquinas's basis for analyzing the gradation among intellectual substances differs from Averroes. For Aquinas, the difference in gradations constitute specific differences,[69] although these differences are not known to humans, since the proper objects our understanding are the essences of sensible substances:

> Separated substances agree with each other in immateriality, and differ from each other in grade of perfection, according as they withdraw from potentiality and approach pure actuality. The genus is taken from that in them which follows upon their being immaterial; for example, intellectuality or something of this sort. But the difference, which is unknown to us, is taken from that in them which follows upon their grade of perfection (*De Ente Et Essentia,* Chapter 5).[70]

Finally, unlike Averroes, Aquinas maintains that the degree of potentiality found in creatures is indicative of having an essence that is in potential to receive existence from God:

> Everything that receives something from another is in potency to that which it receives, and what is received in it is its act. Therefore, it is necessary that the quiddity itself or the form, which is the intelligence, be in potency with respect to the existence which it receives from God; and this existence is received through the mode of an act. It is in this way that potency and act are found in the intelligences, but not form and matter, except equivocally (*De Ente et Essentia,* Chapter 4).[71]

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68 Sed natura vel quiditas earum est absoluta, non recepta in aliqua materia… Et ideo in talibus substantiis non invenitur multitudo individuorum in una specie, ut dictum est, nisi in anima humana propter corpus, cui unitur. (*De Ente,* Chapter 5, 43.378.49-59).

69 See De Giovanni 2004 (p. 449-53) for a detailed discussion of how Aquinas and Averroes develop their respective notions of the ordering of intellectual substances.

70 Una enim substantia separata convenit cum alia in immaterialitate et differunt ab invicem in gradu perfectionis secundum recessum a potentialitate et accessum ad actum purum. Et ideo ab eo quod consequitur illas in quantum sunt immateriales sumitur in eis genus, sicut est intellectualitas vel aliquid huiusmodi. Ab eo autem quod consequitur in eis gradum perfectionis sumitur in eis differentia, nobis tamen ignota (*De Ente,* Chapter 5, 43.379.106-115).

For Aquinas, the distinction between God and creatures is not therefore the degree of simplicity or perfection of a generically shared essential act. Rather, God is radically different from the intellectual substances because his existence and essence are identical; in all other beings, existence and essence differ.

In spite of Averroes's and Aquinas's respective metaphysical differences leading to some disagreements in the details that make up their accounts of the hierarchy of intelligences, both are committed to the implications of admitting the ontological reality of incorporeal potentiality and actuality, as **13C-D** and their corollaries in Averroes indicate. Although Averroes is known for maintaining that the potential intellect is not a power predicated of the human soul, Aquinas's position strongly accords with what Averroes presents in the *Long Commentary on De Anima.* Aquinas reasons that the similarity in breadth of receptivity between the potential intellect and prime matter indicates that each holds the lowest position within their respective orders. As a pure potentiality to receive sensible forms, prime matter is the lowest reality in the sensible order. So also, the human soul, which possesses the potential intellect as one of its powers, is a pure potentiality to receive intelligible forms.

As a consequence of the unique incorporeal potentiality possessed by the human soul, it sits at the cusp of both the intelligible and sensible worlds such that it naturally relies on the sensible world to receive intelligible forms. At **13E**, Aquinas draws the conclusion that such reliance on the sensible world requires that "a material thing is

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71 Omne autem quod recipit aliquid ab alio est in potentia respectu illius, et hoc quod receptum est in eo est actus eius. Oportet ergo quod ipsa quiditas vel forma, quae est intelligentia, sit in potentia respectu esse, quod a Deo recipit; et illud esse receptum est per modum actus. Et ita invenitur potentia et actus in intelligentiis, non tamen forma et materia nisi aequivoce (*De Ente,* Chapter 4, 43.377.147-154).

drawn to participate in its [i.e. the human soul's] existence, such that from soul and body results one existence in one composition." In other words, a body must belong to the human soul by its essence, because the fulfillment of its intellectual nature requires receptivity of intellectual form from sensible substance. Although Aquinas does not detail it here, he has in mind that the actualization of the potential intellect is the end product of the process of abstraction of intelligible form from sensible substances. In Chapter 2 we saw Averroes maintain that abstraction begins with the reception of form in the senses, which begins a process of de-particularization of cognitive content that culminates in the presence of a bare particular nature in the imaginative faculty. The agent intellect then illuminates that nature, which makes it intelligible and therefore capable of being received into the potential intellect.[72] Since sensory activity occurs through bodily organs, it follows that a body must participate in the actualization of the potential intellect. That is to say, the potential intellect requires a body by its essence, because abstraction is the process by which the potential intellect receives intelligible forms, sensory activity is an essential feature of abstraction, and the various sensory activities are forms of bodily organs. Since Aquinas maintains that the human soul possesses the potential intellect as one of its powers, the human soul must be part of an essence that orders it to a body. To put it another way, the human soul is therefore a principle of a composition conceived in terms of Avicennian hylomorpism.

Finally, at **13E** we see Aquinas maintain that the human soul belongs to the genus of intellectual natures and therefore has *per se* existence. This guarantees the soul's subsistence in the absence of a body, naturally leading one to suppose that the soul and

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72 See Chapter 2, p. 77-78.

body each have their own respective existence. However, such a supposition conflicts with the notion that the soul and body constitute a composition. Thus Aquinas remarks that the existence of both the soul and body is the same, because the body partakes of the soul's existence. Despite the Platonic way of expressing the point, Aquinas's remark is in line with his analysis of substantial form as the "giver of esse" in the *De Principiis Naturae* and with his usage of the Communicability of Being doctrine in the *Commentary on the Sentences* to explain how the soul shares its existence with the body. That is, the human soul, being a unique species of intellectual substance that requires a body, and thus a unique case of substantial form possessing *per se* existence, is part of the essence of a hylomorphic composition, and, consequently, communicates its *per se* existence to the body.

The above sections on the *De Ente et Essentia* show that Aquinas treats the form-essence distinction and, by extension, Avicennian hylomorphism as philosophically defensible doctrines in their own right, *contra* form/essence identity and the Aristotelian hylomorphism that follows from it. Moreover, we saw that Averroes's argument for the reality of incorporeal potentiality is crucial for Aquinas's defense of the immateriality of the human intellect against universal hylomorphism. Aquinas also followed Averroes in using the degree of incorporeal potentiality in the human intellect to determine its place as the lowest among intellectual beings. Since Aquinas treats the human intellect as a power of the human soul, it sits at the precipice of both the spiritual and material worlds; lowest among intellectual beings and highest among sensible substances. This puts the human soul in the unique position of being both an intellectual substance (thus possessing

per se existence) and a substantial form (thus having an essential relationship to matter), such that the body shares in this existence by way of its role as a substantial form. In the next section, I will show that Aquinas presents a more detailed account of the role of incorporeal potentiality in accounting for the unique intellectual nature of the human soul.

3.4 The Communicability of Being Doctrine and Incorporeal Potentiality in *Summa Contra Gentiles,* Book 2

Summa Contra Gentiles, Book 2 Chapters 56-68 contain Aquinas's most comprehensive treatment of the relationship between the body and the human soul. Chapter 56 raises the question as to whether an intellectual substance might be united to a body. At the outset, he dismisses the notion that intellect and body can be united by way of admixture, since this requires a common matter between the two, but intellect lacks matter altogether. Nor can intellect and body be connected by way of a contact such that they touch, since this would require that the intellectual substance be a body. However, Aquinas considers in a dialectical manner that the intellect might be in contact with the body such that it acts at a distance, just as the heavenly bodies act on the terrestrial elements. Such contact "impresses its form upon the body," and the agent in such a contact touches touches the body to the extent that it acts. Aquinas calls this a "contact by way of power." Contact by power has the advantage of allowing an incorporeal whole to be in contact with a body by way of actualizing the body's potentiality and by affecting the body without alteration of its nature. Contact by power has the further advantage of indicating that the unity of intellect and body would consist in acting and being acted

upon, rather than being a unity of absolute numerical identity. That is to say, the unity would be such that intellect would be related to the body as substantial form is related to matter.

Aquinas of course wants it to be possible for there to be an intellect-body relationship that is a form-matter relationship, but keeping with his dialectical investigation, he presents a series of potential problems with this view:

- If the intellect and body have two distinct acts, then they will be two things, not one.
- Form and matter are of the same genus, whereas intellect and body belong to different genera.
- If an intellectual substance were a form of a body, it would have material existence, because "every thing whose being is in matter must be material."
- The intellect is neither a body nor a power in the body, but has separate existence.
- If the intellect shares its existence in common with the body, as it would if it were the substantial form of the body, then its operation would be a body or a power in a body.

Aquinas maintains that the above considerations led prior thinkers to present alternative accounts of the human soul that eschewed treating it 1) as a form of the body if the soul were taken to contain intellect, or 2) treating human intellect as a power of the soul if the soul were taken as being a form of the body. The majority of Chapters 57-68 present Aquinas's critique of these alternatives, with a few chapters and stray sections dedicated to his defense of the thesis that the human soul can be both an intellectual substance and a

substantial form. As interesting as an investigation of Aquinas's critiques would be in its own right, this dissertation is concerned with Aquinas's use of Neoplatonic and Arabic/Islamic philosophical positions to construct his ontology of the human soul. Thus, the exposition below will focus on Aquinas's positive doctrine. I will first present Aquinas's key argument in Chapter 68, concerning how the intellectual soul can be related to the body as a substantial form. I will then turn the concluding lines of Chapter 68 to show that although Aquinas rejects Averroes's account of the potential intellect as having existence separate from the human soul, he nevertheless maintains that the degree of incorporeal potentiality possessed by the human soul places it at the boundary between composite and separate substances in the hierarchy of being.

3.4.1 The Communicability of Being Doctrine and the Soul as Formal Cause

In *Summa Contra Gentiles,* Book 2, Chapter 68, Aquinas presents his explanation of how an intellectual substance can be a substantial form:

> **(14A)** In order for one thing to be the substantial form of another, two things are required, the first of which is that the form be the principle of the substantial existence of that whose form it is. I predicate "principle" not as productive, but as formal, as that whereby something is and is called a being. **(14B)** The other [requirement] then follows from this, namely, that the form and the matter come together in one existence, which [unity] does not pertain to the efficient cause that gives it existence. **(14C)** This existence is that in which the composite substance subsists, which is one in being, consisting of matter and form. **(14D)** Now, the fact that an intellectual substance subsists, as has been proven, is not an impediment for it to be the formal principle of the existence of matter, as though communicating its own existence to matter. **(14E)** For it is not unsuitable that the same existence be that in which the composite and its form subsist, since the composite exists only by the form, and neither of them subsists separately.
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> **(14F)** However, one may object that an intellectual substance cannot communicate its own existence to corporeal matter such that the intellectual

> substance and corporeal matter are one existence, because there is a diverse mode of existence among diverse genera, and to the nobler substance belongs a nobler existence. **(14G)** This argument would be said to hold if that existence belonged to the matter in the same way as the intellectual substance. But it does not. For existence belongs to corporeal matter as its recipient and its subject, elevated to something higher. Existence belongs to the intellectual substance as its principle and in congruence with its proper nature. Therefore nothing prohibits an intellectual substance from being the form of the human body, which is the human soul.[73]

At **14A** and **14B**, Aquinas maintains that two criteria must be met in order to consider something a substantial form: 1) it must cause the existence of matter as a form, and 2) it must share the same existence with matter. Moreover, at **14C**, Aquinas maintains that the resulting hylomorphic composition subsists because of the existence given by form. Taken together, **14A-C** summarizes Aquinas's analysis of form in *De Principiis Naturae*, which resulted in the following definition:

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73 Ad hoc enim quod aliquid sit forma substantialis alterius, duo requiruntur. Quorum unum est, ut forma sit principium essendi substantialiter ei cuius est forma: principium autem dico, non factivum, sed formale, quo aliquid est et denominatur ens. Unde sequitur aliud, scilicet quod forma et materia conveniant in uno esse: quod non contingit de principio effectivo cum eo cui dat esse. Et hoc esse est in quo subsistit substantia composita, quae est una secundum esse, ex materia et forma constans. Non autem impeditur substantia intellectualis, per hoc quod est subsistens, ut probatum est, esse formale principium essendi materiae, quasi esse suum communicans materiae. Non est enim inconveniens quod idem sit esse in quo subsistit compositum et forma ipsa: cum compositum non sit nisi per formam, nec seorsum utrumque subsistat. Potest autem obiici quod substantia intellectualis esse suum materiae corporali communicare non possit, ut sit unum esse substantiae intellectualis et materiae corporalis: diversorum enim generum est diversus modus essendi; et nobilioris substantiae nobilius esse. Hoc autem convenienter diceretur si eodem modo illud esse materiae esset sicut est substantiae intellectualis. Non est autem ita. Est enim materiae corporalis ut recipientis et subiecti ad aliquid altius elevati: substantiae autem intellectualis ut principii, et secundum propriae naturae congruentiam. Nihil igitur prohibet substantiam intellectualem esse formam corporis humani, quae est anima humana. (*Summa Contra Gentiles,* Book 2, Chapter 68, 13.440.15-45).

> **Substantial Form$_{df1}$:** For any act, that act is a substantial form if and only if it causes a sensible substance a) to exist (*via* giving existence to matter) and b) to have essential properties of a species.[74]

We had seen in our discussion of *De Principiis Naturae* that the above definition allows for the possibility that something with *per se* existence can be a formal cause. Thus, Aquinas concludes at **14D** that there is nothing about intellectual substances as such that does not allow them to fulfill the criteria needed to be classified as a substantial form, so long as it be treated as a special case in which the *per se* existence of the intellectual substance is communicated to matter. That is to say, in such cases the Communicability of Being Doctrine will apply:

> **Communicability of Being:** For any substantial form, if that substantial form has *per se* existence, it causes the sensible substance to have that existence (*via* giving existence to matter).[75]

Aquinas therefore concludes at **14E** that the hylomorphic composition and the form that causes it will have the same existence regardless of whether that existence belongs to that form *per se.*

At **14F** Aquinas presents the objection that matter and intellectual substances must have distinct existences because they belong to distinct genera, which would render application of the Communicability of Being Doctrine useless. Aquinas responds at **14G** by stating that an intellectual substance as substantial form and its corresponding matter would have the selfsame existence but in different ways. Existence would belong to an

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74 See Chapter 3, p. 88.
75 See Chapter 3, p. 96.

intellectual substance as a principle, and in accordance with its nature as an intellectual being. Presumably, what Aquinas has in mind is that an intellectual act is an essentially immaterial act, and therefore doesn't depend on matter to exist. Thus, if there is an intellectual act, essence and existence are the two principles by which the subject of intellect is in act. Yet, as the above analysis of substantial form indicates, an intellectual substance that is a substantial form will be a principle of existence of a hylomorphic composition. By contrast, existence belongs to matter by way of receiving it from the substantial form, which enables it actually to be something, and, therefore, to belong to a genus in the first place. We have seen Aquinas present precisely this view of the human soul and the body in the *Commentary on the Sentences* and in *De Ente et Essentia.* Existence and essence are *quo est,* or the principles by which the soul exists and by which it is what it is, respectively. However, the soul, as *forma partis*, is the *quo est* of matter, or the principle by which matter exists and is the bearer of essential properties. Since existence belongs to the soul as a *quo est,* it is possible for it to remain in existence without actualizing its *quod est*, matter, which has, to use Aquinas's terminology, participated or communicated existence. Of course, Aquinas maintains that the human soul possesses *per se* existence as a result of its intellectual and therefore immaterial operation. It is therefore classified as an intellectual substance and continues to exist as such even when it is not communicating its existence to matter/the body.

Given that Aquinas is drawing on the Communicability of Being Doctrine and related ideas in **14A-G** both to devise his solution to how an intellectual substance might be related to a body and to defend his solution against critiques, we can conclude that

Aquinas's conception of substantial form is continuous with what was presented in the *De Principiis Naturae,* the *Commentary on the Sentences* and *De Ente et Essentia*. *Ipso facto*, the *Summa Contra Gentiles* presents a conception of substantial form that is heavily influenced by Avicenna and the Ammonian tradition. In the next section, we will that although Aquinas rejects Averroes's conception of the human intellectual operation as belonging to a substance that stands outside the human soul, he nevertheless continues to treat the reality of incorporeal potentiality as a basis for maintaining that the human soul stands at the threshold of intellectual and material being.

3.4.2 The Body is Essential to the Operation of the Potential Intellect

In the closing lines of *Summa Contra Gentiles,* Book 2, Chapter 68 Aquinas presents the position that the human soul occupies the lowest place in the hierarchy of intelligible substances, yet is the highest among substantial forms:

> **(15A)** Above all these [corporeal] forms, however, is a form similar to the superior substances with respect to the kind of knowledge proper to it, which is understanding. **(15B)** So it is capable of an operation that is completed absent any corporeal organ. And this is the intellective soul; for the act of understanding is not brought about through any bodily organ. **(15C)** Thus it is necessary that this principle whereby man understands, which is the intellective soul and which exceeds the condition of corporeal matter, must not be completely bound to or immersed in matter, as in the case of other material forms. This is shown by its intellectual operation, in which corporeal matter has no share. **(15D)** Nevertheless, since the act of understanding of the human soul requires powers that operate through corporeal organs, namely, imagination and sense, this itself shows that [the human soul] is naturally united to the body, to complete the human species.[76]

76 Super omnes autem has formas invenitur forma similis superioribus substantiis etiam quantum ad genus cognitionis, quod est intelligere: et sic est potens in operationem quae completur absque organo corporali omnino. Et haec est anima intellectiva: nam intelligere non fit per aliquod organum corporale. Unde oportet quod illud principium quo homo intelligit, quod est anima intellectiva, et excedit

At **15A**, Aquinas presents the conclusion that there is in fact an entity that is a substantial form and shares the same intellectual operation as the separate substances. At **15B**, Aquinas makes clear that intellectual operations are immaterial acts, and therefore do not come about through the activity of a bodily organ. Since it is through an immaterial operation that a human being understands, and since the soul is the principle of human acts, Aquinas concludes at **15C** that the human soul is unlike other material forms in that it has an immaterial act. However, the separateness of the human soul is tempered by the intellect's reliance on sensory and imaginative powers in the process of abstracting the intelligible form from sensible substances. Thus Aquinas concludes at **15D** that the peculiar intellectual powers possessed by the human soul require it to be naturally united to a body; or, to put it another way, the human soul must be united to the body as a substantial form is united to matter.

There are three points that deserve attention concerning the above passage. The first point has to do with Aquinas's treatment of incorporeal potentiality as ontologically real and as a basis for ordering bodily substances, the human soul, and separate intellectual substances into a hierarchy. The second point has to do with Aquinas's identification of the potential intellect as a power of the human soul and as the specific difference of humanity, which stands in contrast to Averroes's treatment of the potential intellect as a separate substance. The final point has to do with the modifications that

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conditionem materiae corporalis, non sit totaliter comprehensa a materia aut ei immersa, sicut aliae formae materiales. Quod eius operatio intellectualis ostendit, in qua non communicat materia corporalis. Quia tamen ipsum intelligere animae humanae indiget potentiis quae per quaedam organa corporalia operantur, scilicet imaginatione et sensu, ex hoc ipso declaratur quod naturaliter unitur corpori ad complendam speciem humanam. (*Summa Contra Gentiles*, Book 2, Chapter 68, 13.441.53-70).

Aquinas had to make to the Ammonian/Avicennian conception of soul as form as a consequence of adopting the view that the potential intellect is a power of the soul.

3.4.2.1 Implications for the Ontological Position of the Soul

In the discussion of Averroes's influence on *De Ente et Essentia* above, we saw that Aquinas was in agreement with Averroes's position that the intellectual receptivity involved in human understanding requires the introduction of incorporeal potentiality as its own category of being, and that the potential intellect is wholly characterized such potentiality. This high degree of incorporeal potentiality distinguishes the potential intellect from other intellects, which admit varying degrees of actuality. Moreover, the actualization of the potential intellect depends on the process of abstraction in order to receive intelligible forms. Since the process of abstraction relies on sensation and imagination, and both sensation and imagination are bodily operations, the actualization of the potential intellect consequently requires a body. Aquinas is following precisely this line of reasoning again at **15A-D**.

3.4.2.2 Implications for the Specific Difference of Human Nature

Although Aquinas is in agreement with Averroes concerning the reality of incorporeal potentiality and its implications for the order of intellectual substances, the two thinkers diverge when it comes to the issue of whether the human soul is to be classified as an intellectual substance. At **15D**, we see Aquinas maintain that the human soul is in fact an intellectual substance, because the potentiality to receive intelligible

forms is a power of the human soul. By contrast, Averroes maintained that the potential intellect is a substance in its own right, separate from the human soul, but which the soul conjoins to in the act of cogitation. As Aquinas reads Averroes, the cogitative act is the specific difference of the human being. In the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Book 2, Chapters 59 and 60, Aquinas writes:

> Averroes was moved… to hold that the possible intellect, by which the soul understands, has a separate existence from the body, and is not the form of the body.[77]
> Averroes says that man differs specifically from the brutes through the intellect that Aristotle calls passive, which is the same as the cogitative power that is proper to man, in place of which other animals have the natural estimative power. It is the function of this cogitative power to distinguish individual intentions and to compare them to others, just as the intellect that is separate and unmixed compares and distinguishes between universal intentions. Since, by this [cogitative] power, together with the imagination and memory, the phantasms are prepared to receive the action of the agent intellect, by which they are made intelligible in act, just as there are some arts that prepare the matter for a chief artesian.[78]

Aquinas understands Averroes to be saying that the universal forms present in a commonly shared potential intellect serve as the actuality of intelligible content in the thought of individual thinkers. According to Aquinas's Averroes, in order for understanding and reflection to occur, the human soul must possess an ability to conjoin

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77 Motus est Averroes… ad ponendum intellectum possibilem, quo intelligit anima, esse separatum secundum esse a corpore, et non esse formam corporis. (*Summa Contra Gentiles,* Book 2, Chapter 59, 13.415.15-19).

78 Dicit enim praedictus Averroes quod homo differt specie a brutis per intellectum quem Aristoteles vocat passivum, qui est ipsa vis cogitativa, quae est propria homini, loco cuius alia animalia habent quandam aestimativam naturalem. Huius autem cogitativae virtutis est distinguere intentiones individuales, et comparare eas ad invicem: sicut intellectus qui est separatus et immixtus, comparat et distinguit inter intentiones universales. Et quia per hanc virtutem, simul cum imaginativa et memorativa, praeparantur phantasmata ut recipiant actionem intellectus agentis, a quo fiunt intelligibilia actu, sicut sunt aliquae artes praeparantes materiam artifici principali. (*Summa Contra Gentiles,* Book 2, Chapter 60, 13.419.2-420.3)

with the possible intellect through the production of a phantasm, because the possible intellect is itself a separate substance. Possession of this conjunctive capacity is the basis for rational activity in human beings, and, therefore, the distinguishing characteristic of human beings, according to Aquinas's account of Averroes.[79]

My concern in citing Aquinas's understanding of Averroes is not to determine the accuracy of Aquinas's depiction of Averroes's position, so much as to draw attention to why Aquinas is opposed to this position. On the one hand, Averroes grants that since intellectual activity is immaterial, and since immateriality entails existence separate from matter, it would follow that any intellectual subject and agent must have an existence separate from matter. On the other hand, in order to consistently maintain that human beings have a rational nature, Averroes has to find a way to maintain that the activity of understanding and thought takes place in the human soul. This requires explaining how a

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79 For Averroes's own expression of his position, see the following passage: "Just as sight is not moved by colors except when they are in act, which is not realized unless light is present since it is what draws them from potency into act, so too the imagined intentions do not move the material intellect except when the intelligibles are in act, because it is not actualized by these unless something else is present, namely, the intellect in act. It was necessary to ascribe these two activities to the soul in us, namely, to receive the intelligible and to make it, although the agent and the recipient are eternal substances, on account of the fact that these two activities are reduced to our will, namely, to abstract intelligibles and to understand them. For to abstract is nothing other than to make imagined intentions intelligible in act after they were [intelligible] in potency. But to understand is nothing other than to receive these intentions. For when we found the same thing, namely, the imagined intentions, is transferred in its being from one order into another, we said that this must be from an agent cause and a recipient cause. The recipient, however, is the material [intellect] and the agent is [the intellect] which brings [this] about. We found that we act in virtue of these two powers of intellect when we wish; and nothing acts except through its form; [so] for this reason it was necessary to ascribe to us these two powers of the intellect. The intellect which is responsible for abstracting and creating the intelligible necessarily precedes in us the intellect which is to receive it" (Averroes 2009, *De Anima,* p. 351-2).

substance with separate existence can receive intelligible forms that are abstracted from hylomorphic compositions, and how the soul can acquire the intelligible form in the act of thinking. Hence, the separate existence of the potential (and agent) intellect leads Averroes to introduce the cogitative power, which allows him to maintain that the agent and potential intellect connect with the human soul and, therefore, serve as respective actualities of human understanding and reflection. However, Aquinas finds Averroes's introduction of conjunction to be superfluous on account of the fact that Aquinas's Avicennian and Ammonian inspired conception of hylomorphism does not entail that immateriality requires separate existence. That is to say, because Aquinas follows Avicenna in holding that substantial form plays the dual role of causing both existence and essential acts in matter, this has left open the possibility that a subsistent substance can also be considered a substantial form. Moreover, the form-essence distinction allows Aquinas to maintain that such a subsistent substance, considered in itself, would be a composition of essence and existence; however, as a substantial form, the subsistent substance would also be part of an essence that orders it to matter as an actuality of existence and essential properties. This provides Aquinas a perspective on the human intellective operations that was unavailable to Averroes, due to Averroes's commitment to form-essence identity and a single-role/essentialist conception of substantial form:[80] Aquinas can view the reliance of human intellectual operation on the sensory and imaginative powers as evidence that it belongs to an essence that includes matter. Since, however, the human intellectual operation is immaterial and, therefore, cannot itself be

80 See Galluzzo (2013, p. 199-217) for an extensive discussion of Averroes's account of hylomorphism.

the act of a body or a power of a body, the only other option left is to treat it as a power of the human soul, which would have *per se* existence on account of that operation, but which would also communicate that *per se* existence to the body on account of it being a substantial form. The intellectual human soul and the body would therefore have unitary rather than separate existence. Unsurprisingly, Aquinas draws on the potential intellect's reliance on the sensory and imaginative faculties to argue that Averroes is mistaken in treating the potential intellect as having separate existence. In *Summa Contra Gentiles,* Chapter 60, Aquinas writes:

> Whatever things are separate according to being also have separate operations, because things are for the sake of their operations, just as first act is for the sake of second act. Thus, Aristotle says in *De Anima* 1 that if some operation of the soul does not involve the body, then it is possible that the soul is separate. However, the operation of the possible intellect requires the body, for Aristotle says in *De Anima* 3 that the intellect can act through itself, namely, it can understand, when it has been made in act through a species abstracted from phantasms – which [phantasams] do not exist without a body. Therefore, the possible intellect is not altogether separate from the body.
> Again, whatever thing happens to have some operation according to nature has those natural attributes without which that operation cannot be completed. Thus, Aristotle proves in *De caelo* 2 that if the movement of the stars were progressive like that of animals, then nature would have furnished them with organs of progressive movement. But the operation of the possible intellect is completed by bodily organs, in which there must be phantasms. Therefore, nature has united the possible intellect to bodily organs. Consequently, it is not separate from the body according to being.[81]

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81 Quaecumque sunt separata secundum esse, habent etiam separatas operationes: nam res sunt propter suas operationes, sicut actus primus propter secundum; unde Aristoteles dicit, in I de anima, quod, si aliqua operationum animae est sine corpore, quod possibile est animam separari. Operatio autem intellectus possibilis indiget corpore: dicit enim philosophus, in III de anima, quod intellectus potest agere per seipsum, scilicet intelligere, quando est factus in actu per speciem a phantasmatibus abstractam, quae non sunt sine corpore. Igitur intellectus possibilis non est omnino a corpore separatus.

Cuicumque competit aliqua operatio secundum naturam, sunt ei a natura attributa ea sine quibus illa operatio compleri non potest: sicut Aristoteles probat, in II libro de caelo, quod, si stellae moverentur motu progressivo ad modum animalium,

Both objections emphasize that the pure incorporeal potentiality of the potential intellect naturally requires bodily operations of sensation and imagination in order to be actualized, even if the act of understanding is immaterial. Since, however, immateriality entails *per se* existence but not necessarily separate existence, Aquinas can treat the natural relationship between the potential intellect and the sensory faculties as a basis for maintaining that the intellectual powers must be powers in the human soul rather than separate, as Averroes did. Thus, in keeping with the notion that the degree of intellectual potentiality is the specific difference among intellectual beings, Aquinas identifies the potential intellect as the specific difference of humanity: humans are distinct among material substances because they have a substantial form with an intellectual, immaterial act, whereas they are distinguished from other intellectual substances as a consequence of the pure potentiality of their intellectual act.

3.4.2.3 Implications for the Soul Conceived as Form

The unique incorporeal potentiality of the human intellect also provides insight into why Aquinas's conception of the soul as cause of the existence of the body must be distinguished from the Ammonian and Avicennian views that inspired it. We have just seen Aquinas argue that the potential intellect cannot be considered a separate substance, due to its natural dependence on prior acts of sensory and imaginative powers. Instead, in order for the potential intellect to be in cooperation with the bodily operations required to

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quod natura dedisset eis organa motus progressivi. Sed operatio intellectus possibilis completur per organa corporea, in quibus necesse est esse phantasmata. Natura igitur intellectum possibilem corporeis univit organis. Non est igitur secundum esse a corpore separatus (*Summa Contra Gentiles,* Book 2, Chapter 60, 13.421.107-42.14).

fulfill its act, Aquinas maintains that it must be treated as a power of the formal part of a complete nature that includes matter. That is to say, the potential intellect must be a power contained within a soul that has powers which act through a body and is consequently a substantial form. This account rejects the kind of separateness that led the Ammonian tradition to treat the soul as form as a *teleiotēs*, i.e., as a final cause of the body's existence.

Our exposition of the Ammonian tradition in Chapter 2 resulted in the following formulation of their interpretation of the soul as a form of the body:

> **Ammonian Interpretation (AI):** The soul is **a)** the *entelekheia/teleiotēs* of the body, **b)** the final cause of the body, and **c)** has its being separate from the body, **d)** the soul is the *entelekheia/teleiotēs* of the body because it is the final cause of the body; and **e)** the soul has its being separate from the body because it is the final cause of the body.[82]

Moreover, we saw that the Ammonian interpretation implied the following two commitments:

> **Form and Separate Being:** The soul is a form of the body and a separate being.
>
> **Cause and Separate Being:** The soul is the cause of the body's existence and a separate being.[83]

The Ammonian treatment of the human soul as *teleiotēs* was motivated by their Neoplatonic commitment to the intellectual soul having separate existence from the body. However, Aquinas's admittance of the reality of incorporeal potentiality, together with his

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82 See Chapter 2, p. 54.
83 See Chapter 2, p. 54.

subsequent identification of the potential intellect as a power in the human soul, enables Aquinas to treat the soul as a formal cause and, therefore, the cause of the body's existence while also retaining that existence intrinsically on account of its having an intellectual nature. As such, Aquinas's position presents a modification of both the Form and Separate Being and Cause and Separate Being doctrines: the soul is a separate being only in the sense that its intellectual power requires *per se* existence, but it also communicates that same existence to the body as a substantial form. Since "separateness" reduces to "possessing *per se* existence" for Aquinas, his modified form of the Ammonian commitments would be as stated as follows:

> **Form and Separate Being$_1$:** The soul is a form of the body and possesses *per se* existence.
>
> **Cause and Separate Being$_1$:** The soul causes the body to have the soul's *per se* existence.[84]

Aquinas can therefore maintain there is a sense in which the soul has being separate from the body without requiring that the soul is merely a final cause, or a form interpreted as *teleiotēs, contra* the Ammonian tradition.[85]

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84 See Chapter 2, p. 54.

85 In Chapter 2, we saw that Avicenna had adopted the Ammonian conception of the soul in full, and thus conceived of the human soul as a substance with its own nature, separate from the body. Aquinas rejects Avicenna's dualist conception of the soul body relation on account of his conception of intellectual abstraction: since sensation and imagination are essential to the process of sensible form being received into the potential intellect as an intelligible species, and sensation and imagination require a body, the intellectual soul and the body must be related by essence, opening the door for Aquinas's treatment of the intellectual soul as a substantial form, which requires the modification to the Ammonian commitments.

In the above section, we have seen that Aquinas argues, by way of eliminating competing theories, that the soul – an intellectual and, therefore, self-subsistent being – causes both the existence and actions of the body as its form. Although Aquinas rejects Averroes's view that the human intellectual operation belongs to a substance separate from the soul, arguing instead that the human intellectual operation is a power of the soul, Aquinas nevertheless retains the ontological reality of incorporeal potentiality. On the one hand, this enables Aquinas to argue that the soul has an act that is immaterial, and thus belongs to it alone. On the other hand, the potentiality of the human intellect is actualized only by abstraction of intelligible species from a phantasm. Since the phantasm is the result of sensory activities, which are the acts of bodily organs, the human intellect requires a body to be actualized. By categorizing the incorporeal potentiality of human intellectual activity as a property of the soul, Aquinas is able to maintain that the soul is a species of intellectual substance without treating it as having a separate existence from the body. Aquinas's position is in agreement with the Ammonian position that the soul is a cause and a separate being, but with important modifications. The soul is a separate being only in the sense that it is *per se* subsistent as a consequence of its intellectual power. But since it is also part of a complete nature, and its complete nature includes matter, it causes the body to exist as a formal cause rather than as a final cause, or as a form interpreted as *teleiotēs*.

3.5 Concluding Remarks

The next chapter shows that Aquinas's mature works draw on the same Arabic-Islamic and Neoplatonic principles as his early works when presenting and defending his conception of the soul as a subsistent intellectual substance and a substantial form. It should therefore be helpful to summarize how Aquinas used those principles in his early works. Generally, we saw Aquinas presents a conception of the human soul that shares more in common with the account of soul as a form and separate substance presented by the Ammonian tradition than it does with Aristotle's account. Moreover, we saw that Aquinas argue in favor of the form/essence distinction and against form/essence identity. This distinction plays an integral role in Aquinas's defense of the view that the soul is both a subsistent substance and substantial form, against objections inspired by form/essence identity. Finally, in several works, Aquinas employs Averroes's arguments for the ontological reality of incorporeal potentiality when criticizing universal hylomorphism. The pure degree of incorporeal potentiality possessed by the human potential intellect enables Aquinas to establish an essential relationship between human intellectual operations and the body.

In the *De Principiis Naturae,* Aquinas presents an account of substantial form as "giver of *esse*" that allows him to develop an account of soul that accords with elements of the Ammonian tradition such that the soul can have *per se* existence, which it communicates to the body. This preserves a degree of separability for the soul, without the implication that the body has its own distinct existence from the soul.

In the representative passages from the *Commentary on the Sentences,* we saw Aquinas employ Avicenna's form/essence distinction as a way of understanding the Boethian *quod est/quo est* distinction. This is important because Aquinas uses the form/essence distinction as a framework for explaining how the concept of substantial form can pertain to an intellectual substance: the essence humanity encompasses a hylomorphic composition of body and soul such that the soul is ordered to the body as its act, yet the soul has its own act independent of the body and can exist without it while retaining its role as *forma partis* within the essence humanity. However, Aquinas presents the objection that the soul must be exclusively either a substantial form or a separate intellectual substance. That is to say, since the existence of a substantial form consists in it being a principle of a hylomorphic composition, it cannot have existence separate from that composition, and therefore cannot be a substance in its own right. Likewise, the soul cannot be a substantial form if it has *per se* existence. In response to this, Aquinas draws on the Communicability of Being Doctrine: the human soul, which as an intellective act with *per se* existence, can give that existence to the body as a substantial form.

In the *De Ente et Essentia*, we saw Aquinas maintain that the form-essence distinction and, *ipso facto,* Avicennian hylomorphism are philosophically defensible doctrines, against form/essence identity and the hylomorphism it entails. Moreover, we saw Aquinas uses Averroes's argument for the reality of incorporeal potentiality as a central premise in his defense of the immateriality of the human intellect against universal hylomorphism. Aquinas closely follows Averroes when he draws on the degree of incorporeal potentiality in the human intellect to determine its place as the lowest

among intellectual beings. Aquinas consequently holds that the human soul occupies a unique place as both an intellectual substance (thus possessing *per se* existence) and a substantial form (thus having an essential relationship to matter). The human soul therefore has a nature such that the body shares in its existence by way of the soul's role as a substantial form.

Finally, in the *Summa Contra Gentiles,* Aquinas presents his view that the soul is an intellectual subsisting substance that causes the existence and actions of the body, and it does so as a substantial form. This appeared after Aquinas had criticized competing theories concerning the relationship between intellectual substances and the body. In the process of that criticism, Aquinas rejects Averroes's view that the human intellectual operation belongs to a substance separate from the soul, arguing instead that the human intellectual operation is a power of the soul. Nevertheless, Aquinas follows Averroes in holding that incorporeal potentiality is a genuine ontological category. This allows Aquinas to argue that the soul has a *per se* immaterial act. However, the soul's ontological independence is tempered by the potentiality of the human intellect being actualized only by abstraction of intelligible species from a phantasm. That is, the human intellect requires a body to be actualized, because the phantasm is the result of sensory acts, which are acts of the body. Aquinas is able to hold that the soul is a species of intellectual substance without also having to treat it as having existence separate from the body, because Aquinas classifies human intellectual activity as a power intrinsic to the soul. In light of this, we also see that Aquinas's position aligns with the Ammonian position that the soul is a cause and a separate being, but with the caveat that the soul's

separateness consists only in its being *per se* subsistent, due to its intellectual power. However, as a *forma partis* within a complete nature that includes matter, it must also cause the body to have its existence. Therefore, unlike the Ammonian Interpretation, which views form as a *teleiotēs* and maintains that the soul causes the body as a final cause, Aquinas takes the soul to be the form precisely as a formal cause.

3.5.1 A Note on Bazan

It should be noted that the above exposition indicates that every principle Aquinas used in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* to provide an explanation for how the soul could be both a subsistent substance and a substantial form, *viz.* the Communicability of Being Doctrine, a hylomorphism based on the form-essence distinction, and the reality of incorporeal potentiality, had already been introduced in *De Principiis Nature*, *The Commentary on the Sentences,* and *De Ente et Essentia*. Moreover, we saw that in the latter two works, Aquinas utilized those principles to provide explanations of the soul-body relationship that mirrors the one he offered in the *Summa Contra Gentiles,* and to distinguish his position from theories of soul that are wedded to Aristotelian hylomorphism, universal hylomorphism, or some form of substance dualism. The continuity in employment of these principles throughout the early works of Aquinas contrasts sharply with Bazan's judgment that Aquinas largely treated the soul as a complete intellectual substance separate from the body in *The Commentary on the Sentences* and *De Ente et Essentia*, but came to view the soul as a substantial form in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* and in later works. Bazan thinks Aquinas's alleged change of

mind resulted from confronting Averroes's view that intellect is separate and shared for all human beings.[86] It may be the case that Aquinas's analysis of Averroes's position added to Aquinas's extant conception of soul as subsistent substance and substantial form, but it did not fundamentally change it, since, as the above exposition has shown:

- Aquinas had presented a conception of form as early as *De Principiis Naturae* which allowed him to maintain that a form can have *per se* existence, since form gives its existence to matter, and *ipso facto* the resulting composite.
- Aquinas's adoption of Avicennian hylomorphism in the *Commentary on the Sentences* and *De Ente et Essentia* enabled Aquinas to explain that something with *per se* existence can be related to the body as a form even in a separated state, since form is part of the essence, and thus retains its relation to matter even in its absence.
- Aquinas's presentation in the *De Ente et Essentia* concerning the reality of incorporeal potentiality and the peculiar intellectual nature of the human soul as dependent on abstraction of form from sensible substance for it to realize its activity requires that it have an essential relationship to the body.

Aquinas uses the above principles to explain how it is possible for an intellectual substance to be a substantial form; the fact that Aquinas's response to Averroes's conception of intellect requires him to hold that the intellectual act must belong to a substantial form is not itself an explanation. Yet, as we have seen, Aquinas neither introduced any new principles nor combined the previously introduced principles in a new way, in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*. As such, there is no basis to maintain that

86 See Chapter 1, p. 12-14.

Aquinas's theory of soul in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* is different from what he presented in his earliest works, as Bazan has argued. In the next chapter, I shall turn to Aquinas's mature works to show that he continues to draw on Avicennian hylomorphism, the Communicability of Being Doctrine, and the reality of incorporeal potentiality in just the same way as he did in his early works to explain how the soul can be both a subsistent substance and a substantial form. The survey of Aquinas's mature works in Chapter 4 will provide a basis for providing comprehensive assessment of the interpretation of Aquinas's ontology of soul offered by Bazan and others in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4 : HUMAN CONSTITUTION IN AQUINAS'S MATURE WORKS

This chapter provides a showcase of key texts from the mature works of Thomas Aquinas (ca. 1265-1273), which illustrate that Aquinas continued to employ Avicenna's form/essence distinction in articulating his conception of the relationship between the human soul and body, as well as defending his view that the soul is both a subsistent substance and substantial form, against objections inspired by form/essence identity. Moreover, in continuing to use the Communicability of Being Doctrine to defend the unity of the human person, Aquinas shows his commitment to a conception of soul that stems from the Ammonian tradition of interpreting Aristotle's psychology. Finally, Aquinas continues to draw on both the ontological reality of incorporeal potentiality in his criticism of universal hylomorphism, as well as the extreme degree of incorporeal potentiality in the human potential intellect, to reject the notion that the human soul's subsistence requires it to have an existence altogether separate from the body.

The aim of this chapter is therefore to illustrate continuity between Aquinas's early and mature works when reasoning that the soul is both a subsistent substance and substantial form. That is to say, the form-essence distinction, Communicability of Being thesis, incorporeal potentiality, and their ontological and epistemological entailments are a common thread running through Aquinas's works. He draws on each on to argue or to allow for the possibility that the soul must possess *per se* existence on account of its intellectual nature, but also must be a form of a body on account of its type of intellectual nature. This stands in contradiction to Carlos Bazan's claim that Aquinas's earlier works

present a philosophical anthropology closer to Platonism that is at odds with the largely Aristotelian philosophical anthropology presented in his mature works.[87]

4.1 The Arabic-Islamic and Neoplatonic Influence on *Quaestiones Disputatae de Anima*

This section provides a series of representative passages from Aquinas's *Questiones Disputate de Anima,* which show that Aquinas continues to employ the form/essence distinction, Communicability of Being thesis, incorporeal potentiality, and the hierarchy of intelligible substances to account for the ontology of the human soul. Moreover, we shall see that Aquinas continues to interpret the Boethian *quod est/quo est* distinction according to the principles he inherited from Avicenna and Avicenna's Neoplatonic predecessors.

4.1.1 How the Soul is Both a Form and a Determinate Particular

In the first question of the *Questiones Disputate de Anima*, Aquinas sets out to explain how the human soul can be treated as both a form and a *hoc aliquid,* or determinate particular. Since a determinate particular is something that subsists *per se*, but a form is a principle of a composition, and the composition itself is a determinate particular, Aquinas's task is to respond to those who maintain that one determinate particular cannot itself be a principle of another determinate particular. This would require that the human soul cannot be a form if it is a determinate particular, or a determinate particular if it is a form. Likewise, either the human soul would be a principle of a hylomorphic

87 See Chapter 1, p. 12-14 for a summary of Bazan's position.

composition only, which would preclude it from surviving bodily death since it would not have *per se* subsistence, or it would be a determinate particular, and therefore have an accidental rather than an essential relationship to the body. This mirrors the problem Aquinas addresses in *Commentary on the Sentences,* 1 d. 8 q. 5 a. 2. arg 1 (see Chapter 3: p. 97-104), wherein Aquinas is confronted with objections that the human soul cannot be a subsistent substance if it is a substantial form or *vice versa*, and thus can only be one or the other. In that article, Aquinas argues that the intellectual nature of the human soul requires that it have *per se* existence, yet as a part of a hylomorphic essence it plays the role of both perfection of matter and the cause of its existence. Aquinas's response in *Questiones Disputate de Anima* Q1 is in the same vein: "The soul is a determinate particular that can subsist *per se*, not as a thing having a complete species in itself, but as perfecting the human species as the form of the body. So it is simultaneously a form and a determinate particular." (*Quaestiones Disputate de Anima,*Q 1, c.o.).[88] In unpacking his reply, Aquinas draws on Avicennian hylomorphism, the form-essence distinction, and the Communicability of Being doctrine in a manner consistent with his earlier works, which illustrates his commitment to the same conception of the human soul as a both a subsistent substance and substantial form presented in those works.

88 Anima est hoc aliquid, ut per se potens subsistere; non quasi habens in se completam speciem, sed quasi perficiens speciem humanam ut forma corporis; et sic simil est forma et hoc aliquid. (*Questiones Disputate De Anima,* 24.1.9.286-290).

4.1.1.1 Incorporeal Potentiality Guarantees the Soul's Immateriality and Relation to a Body

In the *Respondeo* to Question 1, Aquinas draws on the incorporeal potentiality possessed by the human soul to establish that the soul is an immaterial substance, but, unlike other immaterial substances, it depends on reception of the forms of sensible substances. Since sensation takes place in bodily organs, human intellection thus requires being related to a body in order to be actualized. This entails two things. First, the human soul is not complete in its nature when apart from the body. Second, the human soul occupies the highest place among substantial forms and the lowest place among intellectual substances. Aquinas writes:

> **(16A)** Above these [corporeal forms] ultimately are human souls, which have a similitude to superior substances also within the genus of cognition, because they are able to cognize immaterial things by intellection. **(16B)** Nevertheless, the intellect of the human soul differs from them [i.e. separate substances] in that it has to acquire immaterial cognition from material cognition, which is through sense. **(16C)** Therefore, in this way, from the human soul's operation, its mode of existence can be known. For, insofar as it has an operation transcending material things, its existence is elevated above the body and does not depend on it. Yet, insofar as it is natural for it to acquire immaterial cognition from material things, it is manifest that it cannot be complete in its species apart from union with the body. **(16D)** For something is not complete in species unless it has that which is required for the proper operation of its species. **(16E)** If, therefore, the human soul, insofar as it is united to the body as a form, has existence elevated above the body it does not depend on, then it is manifest that it is constituted at the boundary dividing corporeal from separate substances. (*Quaestiones Disputate De Anima,* Q 1, c.o.)[89]

89 Super has autem ultimo sunt animae humanae, quae similitudinem habent ad superiores substantias etiam in genere cognitionis, quia immaterialia cognoscere possunt intelligendo. In hoc tamen ab eis differunt, quod intellectus animae humanae habent naturam acquirendi cognitionem immaterialem ex cognitione materialium, quae est per sensum. Sic igitur ex operatione animae humanae, modus esse ipsius cognosci potest. In quantum enim habet operationem materialia transcendentem, esse suum est supra corpus elevatum, non dependens ex ipso; in quantum vero immaterialem cognitionem ex materiali est nata acquirere, manifestum est quod

At **16A-B**, Aquinas maintains that the human soul belongs to the species of immaterial substances because it possesses intellectual power. Yet, it is unlike all other intellectual substances, because its intellectual power is not inherently in act; rather, it relies on the senses gathering sensible content, which the agent intellect draws on to abstract intelligible forms that the potential intellect receives. At **16C**, Aquinas draws his first conclusion, that the immateriality of the intellect requires treating the intellectual soul as possessing *per se* existence. As such, it can be considered a *hoc aliquid,* like the separate substances. Nevertheless, its reliance on sensory content for its proper act also requires that it belongs to a nature that includes a body (*via* **16D**). So, Aquinas's second conclusion is that the soul is not complete in its nature unless it is united to the body. The intellectual soul is therefore of a peculiar nature, which includes both a corporeal and incorporeal aspect, setting it as the highest of corporeal forms and the lowest of intellectual substances, as Aquinas mentions at **16E**.

The reasoning in the above passages follow the same pattern as the reasoning Aquinas presented in *De Ente et Essentia* (Chapter 3, p. 116-118, **13A-E**) and the *Summa Contra Gentiles* (Chapter 3, p. 131, **15A-D**). In each of those earlier works, Aquinas maintained that the soul stands at the precipice of corporeal and incorporeal substances as a result of having an intellectual nature with pure intellectual potentiality. Its intellectual nature requires that it be treated as immaterial, incorporeal, and possessing

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complementum suae speciei esse non potest absque corporis unione. Non enim aliquid est completum in specie, nisi habeat ea quae requiruntur ad propriam operationem ipsius speciei. Si igitur anima humana, in quantum unitur corpori ut forma, habet esse elevatum supra corpus non dependens ab eo, manifestum est quod ipsa est in confinio corporalium et separatarum substantiarum constituta (*Questiones Disputate De Anima,* 24.1.10.319-341).

per se existence, like other intellectual substances. Yet its pure incorporeal potentiality requires that it abstracts its cognitive content from the forms of sensible substances. Consequently, the intellectual soul requires an essential relation to a body. Likewise, Aquinas's reason in in **16A-E** for maintaining that the soul is not complete in its nature when not united to the body, and that it occupies a special place in the hierarchy of being, hinges on the notion of the soul possessing pure incorporeal potentiality. We have seen in the previous chapter that Aquinas followed Averroes in his earlier works with regards to both the position that incorporeal potentiality is an ontological principle of intellectual substance and the implications of admitting the reality of incorporeal potentiality. In light of this we can say that Aquinas's Averroes-inspired conception of the specific nature of the human soul is effectively the same in the *Questiones Disputate de Anima* as it is in the *De Ente et Essentia* and the *Summa Contra Gentiles*.

The extreme degree of incorporeal potentiality is evidence for Aquinas *that* the human soul must be both a subsistent substance/*hoc aliquid* and a substantial form, but he must still explain how it is possible for such a substance to be related to matter as a substantial form. In order to provide such an explanation, Aquinas utilizes the Communicability of Being Thesis and the Avicennian hylomorphism that follows from the form-essence distinction, just as he had done in earlier works.

4.1.1.2 The Soul Communicates its Existence to the Body

In the first objection to the view that the soul can be both a determinate particular and a substantial form, Aquinas argues that such a relationship would have to be

accidental. Since the soul would already possess existence, its existence would not consist in being a hylomorphic principle:

> If the human soul is a determinate particular, it is subsisting and has complete existence *per se*. Whatever comes to something after complete existence comes to it accidentally as whiteness and clothing for a human being. Thus, when the body comes into unity with the soul, it is accidental to it. Therefore, if the soul is a determinate particular, it is not the substantial form of the body (*Quaestiones Disputate de Anima*, Q 1, arg. 1).[90]

This objection states in its own way the issue that was raised by the objections Aquinas confronted in the *Commentary on the Sentences* (Chapter 2, p. 97-104), which drew on an Aristotelian conception of hylomorphic and intellectual substance. That is to say, if the soul were a form of the body, it would be the principle of a hylomorphic composite, and thus have its existence through the composition. As such, it could not have *per se* existence separate from the body. On the other hand, if it does have *per se* existence, it would be a separate substance, and its conjunction with the body would involve a combination of two beings with their own distinct existences, and, consequently, their own distinct unities (See Chapter 2, p. 57).

Aquinas draws on the Communicability of Being thesis in order to respond to the above objection:

> Although the soul has a complete existence, it does not follow that the body is accidentally united to it, both because the same existence that belongs to the soul is shared with the body, so that there is one existence for the whole composite, and also because, even if [the soul] can subsist *per se*, it still does not have a

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90 Si enim anima humana est hoc aliquid, est subsistens et habens per se esse completum. Quod autem advenit alicui post esse completum, advenit ei accidentaliter, ut albedo homini et vestimentum. Corpus igitur unitum animae advenit ei accidentaliter. Si ergo anima est hoc aliquid, non est forma substantialis corporis (*Questiones Disputate De Anima,* 24.1.6.1-10).

> complete species, but the body comes to it to complete the species (*Quaestiones Disputate de Anima*, Q 1, ad. 1).[91]

Aquinas's notion of the soul as "giver of *esse,*" first presented in the *De Principiis Naturae,* and reiterated in the *Commentary on the Sentences, De Ente et Essentia,* and *Summa Contra Gentiles*, is at work in the above reply. That is to say, Aquinas maintains that form gives both existence and essential properties to matter, which was expressed in the Existential Priority of Substantial Form thesis:

> **EPSF:** The existence of a sensible substance, the essential properties of that substance, and the accidents that inhere in it depend on substantial form causing matter to exist (Chapter 3, p. 89).

Since this is a characteristic of all forms, nothing about the notion of form as such precludes form from possessing *per se* existence and, thus, giving that existence to matter. This is precisely what Aquinas says above when he mentions that "it is the same existence that is communicated to the body by the soul," which is effectively a restatement of the Communicability of Being thesis:

> **Communicability of Being:** For any substantial form, if that substantial form has *per se* existence, it causes the sensible substance to have that existence (*via* giving existence to matter) (Chapter 3, p. 96).

The Communicability of Being thesis therefore allows Aquinas to maintain that the soul being a determinate particular (which, again, is another way of saying the soul has *per se* existence) does not entail that it has an accidental relationship to the body. As we have

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91 Licet anima habeat esse completum non tamen sequitur quod corpus ei accidentaliter uniatur; tum quia illud idem esse quod est animae communicat corpori, ut sit unum esse totius compositi; tum etiam quia etsi possit per se subsistere, non tamen habet speciem completam, sed corpus advenit ei ad completionem speciei (*Questiones Disputate De Anima,* 24.1.10.342-349).

seen, the Communicability of Being thesis is Aquinas's variation on both the Cause and Separate Being and Form and Separate Being theses, which formed the basis of the approach to the soul in the Ammonian tradition. Thus, the *Questiones Disputate de Anima* provides evidence that Aquinas continued to draw on Neoplatonic principles in the development of his ontology of the human soul. In the next section, we will see Aquinas use the form-essence distinction to explain why the soul is not complete in its nature when in a disembodied state.

4.1.1.3 The Soul as *Forma Partis*

In the tenth objection of Question 1, Aquinas presents an argument that the soul cannot be a form of the body if it continues to exist after the death of the body, since one thing existing in separation from another indicates two substances related to one another accidentally, as opposed to two principles coming together to constitute one substance:

> It was said that when the body corrupts, the soul remains a determinate particular and *per se* subsistent, but then the nature of form perishes in it. But on the contrary, whatever can be taken from something while its substance remains is in that thing accidentally. Therefore, if, when the soul remains after the body, the principle of form perishes in it, it follows that the nature of form comes to it accidentally. But it is not united to the body for the human constitution except insofar as it is a form. Thus, [the soul] is united to the body accidentally, and, consequently, a human will be a being *per accidens*. Yet this is unacceptable (*Quaestiones Disputate de Anima*, Q 1, arg. 10).[92]

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92 Dicebat quod corrupto corpore anima remanet hoc aliquid et per se subsistens, sed tunc perit in ea ratio formae. Sed contra, omne quod potest abscedere ab aliquo, manente substantia eius, inest ei accidentaliter. Si igitur anima remanente post corpus, perit in ea ratio formae, sequitur quod ratio formae conveniat ei accidentaliter. Sed non unitur corpori ad constitutionem hominis nisi prout est forma. Ergo unitur corpori accidentaliter, et per consequens homo erit ens per accidens; quod est inconveniens. (*Questiones Disputate De Anima,* 24.1.12.417-420).

This objection hinges on the notion that the soul as a form is identical to its essence. That is to say, if the soul is the whole essence, then one faces the following dichotomy: either the soul is an essence that has actuality in itself and, consequently, cannot be a form, since the form is an actuality of matter, or the soul is an essence that has actuality through composition with matter, and, consequently cannot be a substance with *per se* existence. Aquinas's response to this dichotomy is that the soul retains its essential relationship to matter even when it does not actualize it: "When the body is corrupted the nature that belongs to the soul as a form does not perish, even though it is not actually perfecting matter as a form" (*Quaestiones Disputate de Anima,* Q 1, ad. 10).[93] This implies that the soul retaining its essential relationship to matter in the absence of actualizing it depends on it belonging to a hylomorphic essence as a part, rather than constituting the whole essence. Another way of putting this is that the soul, as a form of the part, virtually remains a form of matter when separated from the body, since the form of the whole, i.e. the essence that it belongs to, orders it to actualize matter. Yet, in that separated state, it is not complete in its nature, as we have seen Aquinas express above. As such, the notion that the soul can still belong to a hylomorphic essence even when separated from matter is dependent on a distinction between form and essence, such that form and matter are both parts of that essence. We saw in Chapter 3 that Aquinas adopted the form-essence distinction from Avicenna, as well as the hylomorphism that followed from it. Aquinas's continued employment of reasoning about the human soul according to the form-essence distinction thus indicates his continued commitment to Avicennian hylomorphism.

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93 Corrupto corpore non perit ab anima natura secundum quam competit ei ut sit forma; licet non perficiat materiam actu, ut sit forma. (*Questiones Disputate De Anima,* 24.1.10.319-341).

Aquinas again utilizes the form-essence distinction in Objection 13 to distinguish his own position from one motivated by form-essence identity. The objection reads as follows:

> If the soul is the form of the body, it follows that the soul and body are one existence, for [just] one existence results from the union of matter and form. But there cannot be one existence for body and soul, since they are of diverse genera. For the soul is in the genus of incorporeal substance, while the body is in the genus of corporeal substance. Therefore, the soul is not able to be the form of the body (*Quaestiones Disputate de Anima,* Q 1, arg. 13).[94]

Again, as with Objection 10, the assumption in Objection 13 is that form is identical with its essence: the soul is an incorporeal essence, and cannot be the form of a hylomorphic composition, because form is the actuality of matter, and, consequently, a corporeal essence. As such, the soul having an incorporeal essence requires that its existence is wholly separate and unrelated to anything corporeal. Again, like Objection 10, the reasoning following form-essence identity forces a dichotomy that Aquinas wants to avoid: either the soul is a form of the body and is, consequently, is a corporeal essence whose existence depends on it actualizing matter, or it is an incorporeal essence whose existence is not shared with a body. Aquinas's response is that the soul and body will share the same existence if the soul is a form. "It is necessary that if the soul is the form of the body, then the soul and the body have one common existence, which is the existence of the composite (*Quaestiones Disputate de Anima,* Q 1, ad. 13).[95]" This part of

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94 Si anima est forma corporis, oportet quod animae et corporis sit unum esse: nam ex materia et forma fit unum secundum esse. Sed animae et corporis non potest esse unum esse, cum sint diversorum generum; anima enim est in genere substantiae incorporeae, corpus vero in genere substantiae corporeae. Anima igitur non potest esse forma corporis. (*Questiones Disputate DeAnima,* 24.1.6.134-137).

95 Necesse est, si anima est forma corporis, quod animae et corporis sit unum esse commune, quod est esse compositi. *Questiones Disputate De Anima,* 24.1.12.435-438).

Aquinas's response is in agreement with both the Communicability of Being thesis and the view that the existence of a hylomorphic composition just is the actuality of essential properties in matter. However, Aquinas must show that the soul's essential incorporeality does not exclude it from being a form. In order to do this, Aquinas argues that the soul and body constitute parts that are reducible to a whole species: "Nor is this [relation of soul to body as form to matter] prevented by the fact that the soul and the body are of two diverse genera. For neither the soul nor the body are in a species or genus except by reduction, as the parts are reduced to the species or genus of the whole" (*Quaestiones Disputate de Anima,* Q 1, ad. 13).[96] That is to say, form is essentially related to matter because it is part of a hylomorphic essence that orders it to actualize the material part. The soul having an incorporeal act doesn't preclude it from being a form of the part, and so it is possible that it is related to the body as a form.

4.1.2 Against Universal Hylomorphism

In Question 6 of the *Questiones Disputate de Anima*, Aquinas argues that the human soul cannot be a composite of form and matter. Aquinas draws on the reality of incorporeal potentiality possessed by the human soul and other intellectual substances to explain their composition and to distinguish them from God, who is purely actual. Aquinas follows the same line of reasoning in Question 6 as he did in earlier works. Moreover, just as he did in earlier works, Aquinas interprets the *quod est/quo est*

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96 Nec hoc impeditur per hoc quod anima et corpus sint diversorum generum: nam neque anima neque corpus sunt in specie vel genere, nisi per reductionem, sicut partes reducuntur ad speciem vel genus totius (*Questiones Disputate De Anima,* 24.1.12.438-441).

distinction in accord with the principles of his Neoplatonic and Arabic-Islamic predecessors.

4.1.2.1 Material Potentiality vs. Incorporeal Potentiality

In the *Respondeo* to Question 6, Aquinas argues that the difference in receptivity of the human soul and the receptivity of corporeal things requires that they have different potentialities; corporeal receptivity involves alteration in spatial location, whereas the receptivity of the soul separates essences from such alteration and from the substances altered in its cognitive act. Aquinas writes:

> **(17A)** To receive, to be a subject, and the like do not belong to the soul and to prime matter according to the same nature. For prime matter receives something through change and motion. And since every change and motion is reduced to local motion as primary and common, as is proved in the *Physics* 8, it follows that matter is present in only those things in which there is potency to place. However, those things are corporeal alone which are circumscribed by location. **(17B)** Therefore, according to what the philosophers have said about matter, matter is found only in corporeal things, unless someone wishes to take matter equivocally. **(17C)** However, the soul does not receive through motion and change, but, instead [receives] through separation from motion and from movable things. As it is said in *Physics* 3 that the soul comes to be knowledgeable and practically wise when at rest. Thus, the Philosopher also states in *De Anima* 3 that to understand is called being affected in a way different from the affection in corporeal things. **(17D)** Therefore, if anyone wishes to conclude the soul to be composed of matter because it receives or suffers affection, he is obviously deceived by an equivocation (*Quaestiones Disputate de Anima,* Q 6, c.o.).[97]

97 Recipere et subiici et alia huiusmodi non secundum eamdem rationem conveniunt animae et materiae primae. Nam materia prima recipit aliquid cum transmutatione et motu. Et quia omnis transmutatio et motus reducitur ad motum localem, sicut ad primum et communiorem, ut probatur in VIII Physic.; relinquitur quod materia in illis tantum invenitur in quibus est potentia ad ubi. Huiusmodi autem sunt solum corporalia, quae loco circumscribuntur. Unde materia non invenitur nisi in rebus corporalibus, secundum quod philosophi de materia sunt locuti; nisi aliquis materiam sumere velit aequivoce. Anima autem non recipit cum motu et transmutatione, immo per separationem a motu et a rebus mobilibus: secundum quod dicitur in III Physic. quod in quiescendo fit anima sciens et prudens. Unde etiam

At **17A**, Aquinas maintains that prime matter is a kind of potentiality that, when actualized, always involves movement in space, and is therefore limited to spatial beings. Since every being that is disdended in spatial dimensions is corporeal, it follows that prime matter pertains to all and only corporeal beings as their mode of receptivity, as Aquinas remarks at **17B**. This receptivity is unlike the receptivity of the human soul, which, Aquinas notes at **17C,** takes in forms separated from motion and from corporeal things. As such, the soul has an immaterial, incorporeal receptivity, distinct in kind from the receptivity of prime matter. This distinction entails that one can only refer to the soul as having matter in an equivocal manner. Consistent with his earlier works, Aquinas follows Averroes in maintaining that the receptivity of intellect is its own ontological category as a basis for rejecting the notion that hylomorphic categories pertain to the intellect.[98]

4.1.2.2 A Restatement of Boethius's *Quod Est/Quo Est* Distinction

At a later point in the *Respondeo* to Question 6, Aquinas provides an interpretation of the *quod est/quo est* distinction that accords with his earlier interpretation in the *Commentary on the Sentences*:

> **(18A)** It is not excluded that act and potency are in the soul, for potency and act are found not only in mobile things, but are also found in immobile things; and they are more common, as the Philosopher says in *Metaphysics* 8, because matter

philosophus dicit, III de anima, quod intelligere dicitur pati alio modo quam sit in rebus corporalibus passio. Si quis ergo concludere velit animam esse ex materia compositam per hoc quod recipit vel patitur, manifeste ex aequivocatione decipitur (*Questiones Disputate De Anima,* 24.1.49.142-164). For a corollary passage in Averroes's *Long Commentary on De Anima,* see (Averroes 2009, p. 331-332), and see Taylor's remarks on p. xciv.

98 See Chapter 2, p. 78-82.

is not in immobile things. **(18B)** But how act and potency amay be found in the soul in this way must be considered by proceeding from material to immaterial things. **(18C)** For we find three things in substances composed of matter and form: matter, form, and existence itself. **(18D)** The principle of this is form, for matter participates existence from the fact that it receives form. Therefore, existence in this way follows upon form istelf. **(18E)** Nevertheless, a form is not its own existence, since it is a principle of it. And although matter does not attain existence except through form, nevertheless a form, insofar as it is form, does not require matter for its existence, since existence follows upon the form itself. **(18F)** But, it requires that matter, when it is a form, such that it does not subsist *per se*. Therefore, nothing prohibits some form from having existence separate from matter and existence is in a form such as this. For the essence of form compares to existence as potency to proper act.

(18G) And so both potency and act are found in *per se* subsistent forms, insofar as existence itself is the act of the subsistent form, which is not its own existence. **(18H)** However, if there is a thing which is its own existence, which is proper to God, potency and act are not there, but pure act. **(18I)** And here it is that Boethius says in *De Hebdomadibus* that in those things that come after God, existence (*esse*) and that which is (*quod est*), or, as some say, that which is (*quod est*) and that by which it is (*quo est*) differ. For existence itself is that by which a thing is, just as running is that by which someone runs. **(18J)** Since, therefore, the soul is a *per se* subsistent form, there is able to be a composition of act and potency in it, i.e., existence and that which is, but no composition of form and matter (*Quaestiones Disputate de Anima,* Q 6, c.o.).[99]

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99 Non tamen excluditur quin in anima sit actus et potentia; nam potentia et actus non solum in rebus mobilibus, sed etiam in immutabilibus inveniuntur, et sunt communiora, sicut dicit philosophus in VIII Metaph., cum materia non sit in rebus immobilibus. Quomodo autem in anima actus et potentia inveniantur sic considerandum est ex materialibus ad immaterialia procedendo. In substantiis enim ex materia et forma compositis tria invenimus, scilicet materiam et formam et ipsum esse. Cuius quidem principium est forma; nam materia ex hoc quod recipit formam, participat esse. Sic igitur esse consequitur ipsam formam. Nec tamen forma est suum esse, cum sit eius principium. Et licet materia non pertingat ad esse nisi per formam, forma tamen in quantum est forma, non indiget materia ad suum esse, cum ipsam formam consequatur esse; sed indiget materia, cum sit talis forma, quae per se non subsistit. Nihil ergo prohibet esse aliquam formam a materia separatam, quae habeat esse, et esse sit in huiusmodi forma. Ipsa enim essentia formae comparatur ad esse sicut potentia ad proprium actum.

Et ita in formis per se subsistentibus invenitur et potentia et actus, in quantum ipsum esse est actus formae subsistentis, quae non est suum esse. Si autem aliqua res sit quae sit suum esse, quod proprium Dei est, non est ibi potentia et actus, sed actus purus. Et hinc est quod Boetius dicit in Lib. de hebdomadibus quod in aliis quae sunt post Deum, differt esse et quod est; vel, sicut quidam dicunt, quod est et quo est. Nam

At **18A**, Aquinas restates the conclusion that we saw him draw earlier, *viz*. that the human soul does not possess potency and act in the way that corporeal substances possess it, but instead has an immaterial composition of potency and act. Aquinas's illustration of the kind of composition possessed by the human soul runs from **18C** to **18H**, and begins with his conception of form as found in hylomorphic composites, as stated in **18B**. Just as Aquinas had presented in the *De Principiis Naturae* and the *Commentary on the Sentences*, at **18C-D** he again presents hylomorphic compositions as compositions of matter, form, and existence, such that form gives its existence to matter. Moreover, Aquinas states at **18E** that since existence is a principle distinguishable from form, there is nothing about the notion of form as such that requires it to have existence only through actualization of matter. Thus, at **18F** Aquinas remarks that forms without *per se* existence requires actualization of matter, whereas a form with *per se* existence is not a hylomorphic composition itself, but is a composition of form and existence, such that form is in potency to receive existence. This is all consonant with EPSF and the Communicability of Being thesis (see p. 6-7, above). Moreover, Aquinas uses the form-existence distinction to interpret Boethius's *quod est-quo est* distinction, and to distinguish the soul (and other intellectual substances) from God. Again, this accords with Aquinas's analysis of the simplicity and composition of the soul in the *Commentary on the Sentences* (Chapter 2, p. 97-104).

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ipsum esse est quo aliquid est, sicut cursus est quo aliquis currit. Cum igitur anima sit quaedam forma per se subsistens, potest esse in ea compositio actus et potentiae, id est esse et quod est, non autem compositio materiae et formae (*Questiones Disputate De Anima,* 24.1.50-51.221-257).

4.1.3 The Relationship between the Human Soul and Angels

In Question 7, Aquinas distinguishes intelligible substances based on the degree of their actuality and potentiality. The greater their actuality, the greater their likeness to God, who is a pure actuality. The human soul has pure intellectual potentiality, and so has a greater likeness to God than corporeal substances, but is distinguishable from other intellectual substances insofar as it depends on sensory activity to abstract intelligible species, and therefore must be essentially united to a body. Aquinas's analysis mirrors the account he presents in the *Commentary on the Sentences*, as well as the *De Ente et Essentia*. Aquinas writes:

> **(19A)** In immaterial substances, the order of diverse grades of species is noted, not by a comparison to matter, which they do not have, but according to a comparison to the Prime Agent, which must be most perfect. Thus, the first species is more perfect than the second, to the extent that it is more similar to the Prime Agent. And the second is less than the perfection of the first species, and so on until the last of them. **(19B)** However, the highest perfection of the Prime Agent consists in that He has every kind of goodness and perfection in one simple thing. Thus the nearer an immaterial substance will have been to the Prime Agent, the more it has more perfect goodness in its own simple nature, and the less it requires inherint forms for its perfection. **(19C)** This is produced gradually down to the human soul, which occupies the lowest grade [in theses intellectual substances], just as prime matter in the genus of sensible things. **(19D)** Hence, [the soul] does not have intelligible perfections in its own nature, but is in potency to intelligibles, just as prime matter is to sensible forms. **(19E)** Hence, to perform its proper operation, it needs to be made in act from intelligible forms, by acquiring them through its sensory powers from external things. **(19F)** And since the sense operation is through a bodily organ, from the condition of its own nature it belongs to it that a body is united to it and that it is part of the human species, not having a complete species in itself (*Quaestiones Disputate de Anima*, Q 7, c.o.).[100]

100 In substantiis vero immaterialibus ordo graduum diversarum specierum attenditur, non quidem secundum comparationem ad materiam, quam non habent, sed secundum comparationem ad primum agens, quod oportet esse perfectissimum. Et ideo prima species in eis est perfectior secunda, utpote similior primo agenti; et secunda diminuitur a perfectione primae et sic deinceps usque ad ultimam earum.

In the *Commentary on the Sentences,* Aquinas had argued that the order of created substances depends on their proximity and likeness to God, who is a pure actuality (see Chapter 3, p. 100). Aquinas uses this similar reasoning in the *De Ente et Essentia* (Chapter 3, p. 115-125). Likewise, at **19A-B***,* Aquinas maintains that intelligible substances occupy a closer proximity to God based on the actualization of their intellectual nature. Since the human soul is in complete potential to understand, it occupies the lowest place within the genus of intelligible substances, as Aquinas states at **19C.** But a pure potential for intellectual act requires receiving something from outside of it in order to be in act, and consequently, Aquinas thinks that the human soul depends on receiving intelligible species through abstraction from sensible forms, as he argues at **19D-E.** Since the soul needs sensation and, *ipso facto*, a body, it is therefore unique among intellectual substances since it must be united to a body to fulfill its intellectual nature, which Aquinas concludes at **19F.**

We have seen that Aquinas's position concerning the hierarchy of intelligible substances and the place of the human soul in that hierarchy is founded on Averroes's reasoning in the *Long Commentary on De Anima*. Since Aquinas is effectively restating

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Summa autem perfectio primi agentis in hoc consistit, quod in uno simplici habet omnimodam bonitatem et perfectionem. Unde quanto aliqua substantia immaterialis fuerit primo agenti propinquior, tanto in sua natura simplici perfectiorem habet bonitatem suam et minus indiget inhaerentibus formis ad sui completionem. Et hoc quidem gradatim producitur usque ad animam humanam, quae in eis tenet ultimum gradum, sicut materia prima in genere rerum sensibilium; unde in sui natura non habet perfectiones intelligibiles, sed est in potentia ad intelligibilia, sicut materia prima ad formas sensibiles. Unde ad propriam operationem indiget ut fiat in actu formarum intelligibilium, acquirendo eas per sensitivas potentias a rebus exterioribus; et cum operatio sensus sit per organum corporale, ex ipsa conditione suae naturae competit ei quod corpori uniatur, et quod sit pars speciei humanae, non habens in se speciem completam. (*Questiones Disputate De Anima,* 24.1.60.293-321).

the same reasoning in Question 7 as that he had presented in previous works, we can conclude that his view in the *Questiones Disputate de Anima* continues this commitment to certain Averroeian principles.

4.2 The Arabic-Islamic and Neoplatonic Influence on *Quaestiones Disputatae de Spiritualibus Creaturis*

Although the *Questiones Disputate de Spiritualibus Creaturis* is concerned principally with angelic substances, Aquinas nevertheless draws on incorporeal potentiality to argue against the universal hylomorphist thesis that all created substances are compositions of form and matter. Moreover, Aquinas uses the Communicability of Being thesis to argue that the human soul can be a spiritual substance (i.e., an intellectual being, possessing existence *per se*) and a form of the body.

4.2.1 Incorporeal Potentiality Precludes Intellectual Substances from Being Compositions

In the following passage, Aquinas argues that created spiritual substances possess a potentiality distinct in kind from the material potentiality of corporeal substances:

> **(20A)** All spiritual substances are intellectual. However, the potency of each individual thing is such as its perfection is found to be, for a proper act requires its own proper potency. **(20B)** However, the perfection of any intellectual substance, insofar as it is of this sort, is intelligible insofar as it is in the intellect. **(20C)** Therefore, it is necessary that such a potency in spiritual substances is proportionate to the reception of an intelligible form. **(20D)** However, the potency of prime matter is not of this type, for prime matter receives form by contracting it to individual existence. **(20E)** But an intelligible form is in the intellect without a contraction; for in this way the intellect understands any given intelligible insofar as its form is in it. **(20F)** However, the intellect understands the intelligible chiefly according to a common and universal nature, and thus the intelligible form is in the intellect according to nature of its own commonality. **(20G)** Therefore, an

> intellectual substance is not made receptive of form by reason of prime matter, but rather through some opposite nature. **(20H)** Thus, it comes to be manifest that in spiritual substances prime matter, which of itself is free of all species, cannot be a part of it (*Quaestiones Disputate de Spiritualibus Creaturis*, A 1, c.o.).[101]

At **20A**, Aquinas draws on the notion that all spiritual substances have an intellectual perfection, followed by a statement that a potency is perfected by its proper act. At **20B**, Aquinas states the already familiar notion that intellectual substances are perfected by receptivity of intelligible perfection, and thus the potentiality of intellectual substances must be appropriate to its proper act. Aquinas's reasoning at **20D-G** parallels his argument against universal hylomorphism in the *De Ente et Essentia* (Chapter 3, p. 110-115), but more strongly follows Averroes's position that intellectual potentiality is its own category of incorporeal passivity because intellectual potency receives universal form, it cannot be in the same category as prime matter, which receives form under particularizing conditions. It should be helpful to compare the passages, side-by-side:

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101 Omnes enim spirituales substantiae intellectuales sunt. Talis autem est uniuscuiusque rei potentia, qualis reperitur perfectio eius; nam proprius actus propriam potentiam requirit: perfectio autem cuiuslibet intellectualis substantiae, in quantum huiusmodi, est intelligibile prout est in intellectu. Talem igitur potentiam oportet in substantiis spiritualibus requirere, quae sit proportionata ad susceptionem formae intelligibilis. Huiusmodi autem non est potentia materiae primae: nam materia prima recipit formam contrahendo ipsam ad esse individuale; forma vero intelligibilis est in intellectu absque huiusmodi contractione. Sic enim intelligit intellectus unumquodque intelligibile, secundum quod forma eius est in eo. Intelligit autem intellectus intelligibile praecipue secundum naturam communem et universalem; et sic forma intelligibilis in intellectu est secundum rationem suae communitatis. Non est ergo substantia intellectualis receptiva formae ex ratione materiae primae, sed magis per oppositam quamdam rationem. Unde manifestum fit quod in substantiis spiritualibus illa prima materia quae de se omni specie caret, eius pars esse non potest (*Questiones Disputate de Spiritualibus Creaturis,* 24.2.13.333-356).

Aquinas, ***De Spiritualibus Creaturis***	**Averroes,** ***Long Commentary on De Anima 3***
20D) Now the potency of prime matter is not of this [intellectual] type, for prime matter receives form by contracting it to be individual. **(20E)** But an intelligible form is in the intellect without any type of contraction; for thus the intellect understands each intelligible as its form is in it. **(20F)** Now the intellect understands the intelligible according to a common and universal nature, and thus the intelligible form is in the intellect according to reason of its own commonality. **(20G)** Therefore, an intellectual substance is not made receptive of form by reason of prime matter, but moreso through a character which is the opposite.	**(3C)** The reason why that nature {of material intellect} is something which discerns and knows while prime matter neither knows nor discerns, is because prime matter receives diverse forms, namely, individual and particular forms, while this [nature] receives universal forms. **(3D)** From this it is apparent that this nature is not a determinate particular nor a body nor a power in a body. For if it were so, then it would receive forms inasmuch as they are diverse and particular… **(3E)** For this reason, if that nature which is called intellect receives forms, it must receive forms by a mode of reception other than that by which those matters receive the forms whose contraction by matter is the determination of prime matter in them. **(3F)** For this reason it is not necessary that it be of the genus of those matters in which the form is included, nor that it be prime matter itself.

At **20D**, Aquinas denies that the intellectual potency is in the same category as prime matter, because the latter involves contraction of the form in the individual. Averroes uses precisely this language of contraction of form as well, at **3E**. Moreover, at **20F** Aquinas maintains that the mark of intellectual receptivity that distinguishes it from the receptivity in prime matter is due to the form being understood as "common and universal," which is precisely the basis that Averroes presents at **3C**. Finally, Aquinas (at **20G)** and Averroes (at **3F)** both draw the conclusion that prime matter and the receptivity of intellectual

substances are opposing categories of receptivity. In light of the above parallels between Aquinas's and Averroes's reasoning, it should be clear that Aquinas's rejection of the universal hylormorphist view that prime matter extends to spiritual substances at **20H** is based on Averroes's conception of incorporeal potentiality as the determinate characteristic of intellectual substances.[102]

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102 Aquinas presents nearly the same reasoning in a long passage in the *De Substantiis Separatis,* which is worth citing in full:

> Since it is an inherent property of matter to receive insofar as it is of this sort, if the matter of spiritual and corporeal substances were the same, then it is necessary that the mode of reception is the same for both. Yet the matter of corporeal things receives the form in a particular way, that is, not according to the common nature of form. Nor does corporeal matter have this insofar as it is subject to dimensions or corporeal form, because corporeal matter also receives the corporeal form itself individually. Thus it is manifest that this belongs to such matter from the very nature of matter, which receives form in the weakest way, because it is the lowest [reality]. For reception is produced according to the mode of the recipient. In virtue of this, it especially falls short of complete reception of form according to the totality itself by receiving it in a particular way. Now it is manifest that every intellectual substance receives the intelligible form according to its totality, or otherwise it would not be able to know it in its totality. For it is thus that the intellect understands a thing insofar as the form of that thing exists in it. It remains therefore that if there be some matter in spiritual substances, it is not the same as the matter of corporeal things, but much more exalted and sublime, so that it receives form according to its totality.
>
> In virtue of the preceding considerations above, it comes to be manifest that to the extent that something is higher among beings to the extent that it has a greater share in the nature of existence. However, it is manifest that since being is divided by potency and act, act is more perfect than potency and has more of the nature of existence. For we do not say simply that which is in potency is existing, but only that which is an act. Therefore, it is necessary that what is higher among beings is more close to act, however that which is lowest among beings, is nearer potency. Therefore, since the matter of spiritual substances is not able to be the same as corporeal matter, but is much higher as has been shown, it is necessary that it is far distant from corporeal matter according to the difference of potency and act.
>
> According to the opinion of Aristotle and Plato, corporeal matter is pure potency. Therefore, it remains that the matter of spiritual substances is not pure potency but is something being in act, existing in potency. I do not say, however, "being in act" as if it were a composition of act and potency, because either it would proceed to infinity or it would be necessary to arrive at something that

4.2.2 The Existential Unity of Soul and Body

In addition to using the reality of incorporeal potentiality to reject universal hylomorphism, Aquinas also draws on the incorporeal potentiality possessed by the human soul to maintain that it is unique among spiritual substances insofar as it must

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would be a being only in potency. Since it is the last among beings, and consequently, is not able to receive except weakly and particularly, it is not able to be the prime matter of a spiritual and intellectual substance. It remains therefore that the matter of a spiritual substance is a being in act, such that it is act or subsisting form, just as the matter of corporeal things is called a being in potency because it is the very potency which is subject to forms (*De Separatis Substantiis Separatis,* Ch 7).

Cum recipere sit proprium materiae inquantum huiusmodi, si sit eadem materia spiritualium et corporalium substantiarum, oportet quod in utrisque sit idem receptionis modus. Materia autem corporalium rerum suscipit formam particulariter, idest non secundum communem rationem formae. Nec hoc habet materia corporalis inquantum dimensionibus subiicitur aut formae corporali, quia etiam ipsam formam corporalem individualiter materia corporalis recipit. Unde manifestum fit quod hoc convenit tali materiae, ex ipsa natura materiae, quae quia est infima, debilissimo modo recipit formam: fit enim receptio secundum modum recipientis. Et per hoc maxime deficit a completa receptione formae, quae est secundum totalitatem ipsius particulariter ipsam recipiens. Manifestum est autem quod omnis substantia intellectualis recipit formam intellectam secundum suam totalitatem; alioquin eam in sua totalitate intelligere non valeret. Sic enim intellectus intelligit rem secundum quod forma eius in ipso existit. Relinquitur igitur quod materia, si qua sit in spiritualibus substantiis, non est eadem cum materia corporalium rerum, sed multo altior et sublimior, utpote recipiens formam secundum eius totalitatem.

Adhuc ultra procedentibus manifestum fit quod tanto aliquid in entibus est altius, quanto magis habet de ratione essendi. Manifestum est autem quod cum ens per potentiam et actum dividatur, quod actus est potentia perfectior, et magis habet de ratione essendi: non enim simpliciter esse dicimus quod est in potentia, sed solum quod est actu. Oportet igitur id quod est superius in entibus, magis accedere ad actum; quod autem est in entibus infimum, propinquius esse potentiae. Quia igitur materia spiritualium substantiarum non potest esse eadem cum corporalium materia, sed longe altior, ut ostensum est; necesse est ut longe distet a corporalium materia, secundum differentiam potentiae et actus.

Corporalium autem materia est potentia pura, secundum sententiam Aristotelis et Platonis. Relinquitur igitur quod materia substantiarum spiritualium non sit potentia pura, sed sit aliquid ens actu, in potentia existens. Non autem sic

"touch" a body for fulfillment of its potentiality. The human soul has *per se* existence, like other spiritual substance. However, unlike spiritual substances, its touching the body consists in its being related to the body as a form. Aquinas again draws on the Communicability of Being thesis to explain how the soul can be both a subsistent substance and a substantial form:

> **(21A)** The most perfect of forms, namely, the human soul, which is the end of all natural forms, has an operation exceeding all matter, which does not take place through a corporeal organ; namely, to understand. **(21B)** And because the existence of a thing is proportioned to its operation, as has been said, since something operates according as it is a being, it is necessary that the existence of the human soul exceeds corporeal matter, and is not totally comprehended by it, but nevertheless in some way is touched by it. **(21C)** Thus, insofar as it surpasses the existence of corporeal matter, having the power to subsist and to operate *per se*, the human soul is a spiritual substance; but inasmuch as it is touched by matter and shares its own existence to it, it is the form of the body. **(21D)** It is touched by corporeal matter for the reason that the highest point of the lowest order always touches the lowest point of the highest, as Dionysius makes clear in *De Divinis Nominibus* 7. **(21E)** For this reason, the human soul, which is the lowest in the order of spiritual substances, can share its own existence with the human body, which is the most dignified, such that from the soul and the body, as from form and matter, one thing results. **(21F)** But if a spiritual substance were a composed of matter and form, it would be impossible for it to be a bodily form because it is the nature of matter that it is not in another, but that it is itself the first subject (*Questiones Disputate de Spiritualibus Creaturis*).[103]

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dico ens actu, quasi ex potentia et actu compositum; quia vel esset procedere in infinitum, vel oporteret venire ad aliquid quod esset ens in potentia tantum: quod cum sit ultimum in entibus, et per consequens non potens recipere nisi debiliter et particulariter, non potest esse prima materia spiritualis et intellectualis substantiae. Relinquitur ergo quod spiritualis substantiae materia ita sit ens actu, quod sit actus vel forma subsistens; sicut et materia corporalium rerum ita dicitur ens in potentia, quia est ipsa potentia formis subiecta (*De Substantiis Separatis,* 40D.52.19-90).

103 Perfectissima autem formarum, id est anima humana, quae est finis omnium formarum naturalium, habet operationem omnino excedentem materiam, quae non fit per organum corporale, scilicet intelligere. Et quia esse rei proportionatur eius operationi, ut dictum est, cum unumquodque operetur secundum quod est ens; oportet quod esse animae humanae superexcedat materiam corporalem, et non sit totaliter comprehensum ab ipsa, sed tamen aliquo modo attingatur ab ea. In quantum igitur supergreditur esse materiae corporalis, potens per se subsistere et operari, anima

At **21A**, Aquinas states that the human soul is classified as a spiritual substance, since it has an intellectual operation. Consequently, the soul has *per se* existence, since the existence of a thing accords with its proper activity, as Aquinas remarks at **21B**. However, since the soul occupies the lowest place among intellectual species (see **21D**), and is consequently in pure potentiality for reception of intelligible species (though Aquinas doesn't say it explicitly in the passage), the actualization of its intellectual potential takes place through prior bodily operations, i.e. sensation. The human soul therefore must have an essential relationship to a body; that is, it must be related to the body as a form, as Aquinas states at **21C**. However, since the soul has *per se* existence as a consequence of its intellectual nature, the Communicability of Being thesis applies, i.e. the human soul causes the human being to exist by giving existence to the body. Aquinas is therefore drawing on the Communicability of Being thesis and the incorporeal potentiality possessed by by the human soul to explain its unique ontological role, and his explanation is consistent with his employment of these principles in earlier works.

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humana est substantia spiritualis; in quantum vero attingitur a materia, et esse suum communicat illi, est corporis forma. Attingitur autem a materia corporali ea ratione quod semper supremum infimi ordinis attingit infimum supremi, ut patet per Dionysium VII cap. de Divin. Nomin.; et ideo anima humana quae est infima in ordine substantiarum spiritualium, esse suum communicare potest corpori humano, quod est dignissimum, ut fiat ex anima et corpore unum sicut ex forma et materia. Si vero substantia spiritualis esset composita ex materia et forma, impossibile esset quod esset forma corporalis: quia de ratione materiae est quod non sit in alio, sed quod ipsa sit primum subiectum. (*Questiones Disputate de Spiritualibus Creaturis,* 24.2.29-30.296-322).

4.3 The Arabic-Islamic and Neoplatonic Influence on the *Commentary on De Anima*

In several places in the *Commentary on De Anima,* Aquinas's uses the Communicability of Being thesis, the form-essence distinction, and incorporeal potentiality of intellectual substances respectively to interpret aspects of Aristotle's theory of the soul. This provides evidence that Aquinas's perspective on Aristotle's hylormorphism and the ontological status of the soul was influenced by Arabic-Islamic and Neoplatonic thought.

4.3.1 The Communicability of Being Doctrine & The Form-Essence Distinction

Aquinas's comments on *De Anima* Book 2, Chapter 1 distinguish between hylomorphic substances, separate intellectual substances, and the human soul by drawing on the sense in which each are determinate particulars. In doing so, Aquinas repeats his commitment to the view that the human soul is a subsistent substance despite belonging to a nature that orders it to matter as a substantial form:

> **(23A)** Matter is that which is not as such a determinate particular, but is only in potency to be a determinate particular. However, form is that according to which a determinate particular is in act. But the composite substance is that which is a determinate particular. For that is said to be a determinate particular, which is complete in existence and in species. This only pertains to the composite in material things. **(23B)** For although separate substances are not compounds of matter and form, nevertheless they are a determinate particular, since they are subsisting in act and complete in their own nature. **(23C)** However, the rational soul, can be called a determinate particular to the extent that it can be subsisting *per se*. Yet because it does not have a complete species, but is more a part of a species, "determinate particular" does not altogether belong to it. (*Commentary on De Anima,* Book 2, Chapter 1, Lecture 1).[104]

104 Materia quidem est, quae secundum se non est hoc aliquid, sed in potentia tantum ut sit hoc aliquid. Forma autem est, secundum quam iam est hoc aliquid in actu. Substantia vero composita est, quae est hoc aliquid. Dicitur enim esse hoc

At **23A**, we see Aquinas again present the conception of hylomorphic substance that he first presented in the *De Principiis Naturae*: whereas matter is nothing more than the potentiality to become a determinate particular, form causes matter to have actual existence,[105] which is the existence of the composite substance. By contrast separate intellectual substances are determinate particulars without having a composition of form and matter. Rather, they have are subsistent substances and are complete in their nature, as Aquinas remarks at **23B**. Finally, at **23C**, Aquinas contrasts the human soul with both hylomorphic and separate intellectual substances by maintaining that it's shares characteristics in common with both hylomorphic and intellectual substances. On the one hand, the soul has *per se* existence, like the separate intellectual substances, and so can be called a determinate particular. Nevertheless, attributing determinate particularity to the

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aliquid, id est aliquid demonstratum quod est completum in esse et specie; et hoc convenit soli substantiae compositae in rebus materialibus. Nam substantiae separatae, quamvis non sint compositae ex materia et forma, sunt tamen hoc aliquid, cum sint subsistens in actu et completae in natura sua. Anima autem rationalis, quantum ad aliquid potest dici hoc aliquid, secundum hoc quod potest esse per se subsistens. Sed quia non habet speciem completam, sed magis est pars speciei, non omnino convenit ei quod sit hoc aliquid (*Commentary on De Anima*, 45.69.98-113).

105 Also see Aquinas's comments later on in *Commentary on De Anima,* Book 2, Chapter 1, Lecture 1:

> It should be known that the difference between accidental form and substantial form is that accidental form does not make a being act simply speaking, but only makes a being act in such and such way (for example, as large or white or something else of this sort). However, the substantial form gives it existence, simply speaking. Thus, the accidental form comes to occur in a subject preexisting in act. However, the substantial form does not require a subject preexisting in act, but something existing in potency already, namely prime matter. // Sciendum autem est quod haec est differentia formae substantialis ad formam accidentalem, quod forma accidentalis non facit ens actu simpliciter, sed ens actu tale vel tantum, ut puta magnum vel album vel aliquid aliud huiusmodi. Forma autem substantialis facit esse actu simpliciter. Unde forma accidentalis advenit subiecto iam praeexistenti actu. Forma autem substantialis non advenit subiecto iam praeexistenti in actu, sed existenti in potentia tantum, scilicet materiae primae. (*Commentary on De Anima*, 45.71.242-251)

soul must be qualified due to its being only part of a complete nature. In light of previous passages, one an infer here that Aquinas means that the soul belongs to a hylomorphic essence, and is consequently a *forma partis* (in accord with the form-essence distinction and Avicennian hylomorphism), which communicates its existence to the body (in accord with the Communicability of Being thesis).

4.3.2 Incorporeal Potentiality

Aquinas's comments on *De Anima* Book 2, Chapters 3 and 5 categorize receptivity of form into three distinct kinds of potencies - material, sensible, and intellectual – drawing on distinctions and reasoning that correspond with Averroes's argument for the reality of incorporeal potentiality. In Aquinas's comments on Chapter 3, he writes:

> **(24A)** Every potency is so called in relation to a proper act, and an operative potency is so called in relation to an act that is its operation. The potencies of the soul are operative, for [the soul] is such that it is potency for form. Thus it is necessary that the diversity of potencies correspond to the diverse operations of the soul. The operation of the soul is an operation of a living thing. **(24B)** Since, therefore, the proper operation of anything befits it according as it has existence, because everything is operating insofar as it is a being, it is necessary to consider the operations of the soul according as it is found in living beings. The inferior living things of this sort whose act is the soul, which is now under discussion, have existence in two ways: one, material, in which they accord with other material things, and the other, immaterial, in which they somehow share in common with the superior substances. **(24C)** However, there is this difference between these two divisions of existence, because, insofar as it is material existence, which is contracted to matter, any given thing is only this which it is, just as this stone is nothing more than this stone. But according to immaterial existence, which is amplified and in some way infinite insofar as it is not restricted to matter, a thing is not only that which it is, but is in some way other things. Thus all things in some way are in the higher immaterial substances, as in universal causes. **(24D)** But such immaterial existence has two grades in these inferior beings. There is the complete immateriality, namely intelligible existence.

> For in the intellect things both exist without matter, and without individuating material conditions, and apart from a bodily organ. **(24E)** However, sensible being is half way between the two. For in sensation the thing has existence without matter, but not without individuating material conditions, nor absent a bodily organ. **(24F)** For sensation is of particulars, but intellection is of universals. In reference to these two modes of existence, the philosopher says in Book 3 that the soul is somehow all things. (*Commentary on De Anima,* Book 2, Chapter 3, Lecture 5).[106]

At **24A**, Aquinas argues that the operative potencies of the soul are distinguishable by examination of the soul's activities, because potencies are determined by their proper acts. However, at **24B**, Aquinas remarks that a consideration of activities consists in consideration of their mode of existence, of which there are two: either as en-mattered or as free from matter. At **24C**, Aquinas highlights the difference between the two modes of existence: en-mattered acts are restricted and particularized, whereas immaterial acts are

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106 Omnis potentia dicatur ad actum proprium, potentia operativa dicitur ad actum qui est operatio. Potentiae autem animae sunt operativae, talis enim est potentia formae; unde necesse est secundum diversas operationes animae, accipi diversitatem potentiarum. Operatio autem animae, est operatio rei viventis. Cum igitur unicuique rei competat propria operatio, secundum quod habet esse, eo quod unumquodque operatur inquantum est ens: oportet operationes animae considerare, secundum quod invenitur in viventibus. Huiusmodi autem viventia inferiora, quorum actus est anima, de qua nunc agitur, habent duplex esse. Unum quidem materiale, in quo conveniunt cum aliis rebus materialibus. Aliud autem immateriale, in quo communicant cum substantiis superioribus aliqualiter. Est autem differentia inter utrumque esse: quia secundum esse materiale, quod est per materiam contractum, unaquaeque res est hoc solum quod est, sicut hic lapis, non est aliud quam hic lapis: secundum vero esse immateriale, quod est amplum, et quodammodo infinitum, inquantum non est per materiam terminatum, res non solum est id quod est, sed etiam est quodammodo alia. Unde in substantiis superioribus immaterialibus sunt quodammodo omnia, sicut in universalibus causis. Huiusmodi autem immateriale esse, habet duos gradus in istis inferioribus. Nam quoddam est penitus immateriale, scilicet esse intelligibile. In intellectu enim res habent esse, et sine materia, et sine conditionibus materialibus individuantibus, et etiam absque organo corporali. Esse autem sensibile est medium inter utrumque. Nam in sensu res habet esse sine materia, non tamen absque conditionibus materialibus individuantibus, neque absque organo corporali. Est enim sensus particularium, intellectus vero universalium. Et quantum ad hoc duplex esse, dicit philosophus in tertio huius, quod anima est quodammodo omnia (*Commentary on De Anima*, 45.88.44-83).

universal in character. Aquinas's correlation of materiality-particularity and immateriality-universality corresponds directly with Averroes's characterization of the difference between form received in prime matter vs form received in the potential intellect in the *Long Commentary on De Anima*. It will be helpful once again to cite the pertinent passage in the *Long Commentary*: "**(3C)** The reason why that nature {of material intellect} is something which discerns and knows while prime matter neither knows nor discerns, is because prime matter receives diverse forms, namely, individual and particular forms, while this [nature] receives universal forms. (Chapter 2, p. 61-62)." Aquinas's remark at **24C** has therefore effectively reduced Aristotle's distinction of the potencies of soul to Averroes's distinction between form as particularized and form as universal. Since form received in prime matter is particularized and form received in intellect is universal, Aquinas follows Averroes in drawing the conclusion that material and immaterial receptivity belong to distinct categories, as his remarks at **24F** illustrate.

Aquinas's concern in Chapter 3 is with explicating Aristotle's account of sensation, so he distinguishes intellection and sensation based on their degree of immateriality. Since intellectual acts exist without matter and, consequently, do not operate through a bodily organ, any intellectual potency must receive form in a universal manner, as Aquinas states at **24D**. By contrast, at **24E**, Aquinas argues that sensation is immaterial in the sense that its sensory events involve receptivity of form without that form determining prime matter so as to constitute a determinate particular. Yet its immateriality is qualified insofar as sensory events involve bodily organs and insofar as the form received still carries with it particularizing conditions. Aquinas's distinction

between material, sensory, and intellectual receptivity therefore depends on Averroes's distinction of the particularity or universality involved in the receptivity of form.[107]

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107 Aquinas's reasoning in his commentary on *De Anima,* Book 2, Chapter 5 draws the same distinction between sensory and intellectual receptivity as Chapter 3, though he provides different reasoning:

> The sense is a power in a bodily organ. The intellect is an immaterial power, which is not the act of some bodily organ. Now, whatever is received in something is through the mode of [the recipient]. But cognition is produced by the fact that the cognized is in some way in the cognizer, namely, according to similitude. Now what cognizes in act is itself the cognized in act. Therefore, it is necessary that the sense power receives a similitude of that thing sensed in a corporeal and material way. However, the intellect receives a similitude of that which is understood in an incorporeal and immaterial way. Now the individuation of common nature in corporeal and material things is from corporeal matter, contained under determinate dimensions. Yet the universal is through abstraction from such matter and individuating material conditions. Therefore, it is manifest that the similitude of a received thing in sense represents the thing insofar as it is singular; however, the received thing in intellect, represents the thing according to a universal nature. That is why sense cognizes singulars, and intellect cognizes universals, and the sciences are about these [universals]. (*Commentary on De Anima,* Book 2, Chapter 5, Lecture 12). // Sensus est virtus in organo corporali; intellectus vero est virtus immaterialis, quae non est actus alicuius organi corporalis. Unumquodque autem recipitur in aliquo per modum sui. Cognitio autem omnis fit per hoc, quod cognitum est aliquo modo in cognoscente, scilicet secundum similitudinem. Nam cognoscens in actu, est ipsum cognitum in actu. Oportet igitur quod sensus corporaliter et materialiter recipiat similitudinem rei quae sentitur. Intellectus autem recipit similitudinem eius quod intelligitur, incorporaliter et immaterialiter. Individuatio autem naturae communis in rebus corporalibus et materialibus, est ex materia corporali, sub determinatis dimensionibus contenta: universale autem est per abstractionem ab huiusmodi materia, et materialibus conditionibus individuantibus. Manifestum est igitur, quod similitudo rei recepta in sensu repraesentat rem secundum quod est singularis; recepta autem in intellectu, repraesentat rem secundum rationem universalis naturae: et inde est, quod sensus cognoscit singularia, intellectus vero universalia, et horum sunt scientiae. (*Commentary on De Anima*, 45.115.72-94).

The operative principle in the above passage is "whatever is received in something is through the mode of the recipient," which Aquinas appears to have developed from

4.4 The Form/Essence Distinction in Aquinas's Commentary on the *Metaphysics*[108]

As with Aquinas's consideration of the form-essence distinction in Chapter 2 of *De Ente et Essentia*, Book 7, Lecture 9 in his commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* provides strong evidence that Aquinas understood both the Aristotelian and Avicennian

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his study of the *Liber De Causis* (See: Aquinas 1996, p. xxvi; p. 74, n. 1): Since form received in the senses is particularized in some way and particularization implies materiality and corporeality, sensory receptivity must involve matter and the body. By contrast, the form received in the intellect is universal and, consequently immaterial. Therefore, since the recipient determines the mode of existence of the form received, the intellect must be free of all matter and corporeality.

The conclusion that Aquinas draws in the above passage – i.e. the sense capacity is a bodily act and the intellectual capacity is an immaterial act - is the same as Averroes's conclusion in text **3A-H** (see Chapter 2, p. 61-62). Though it is beyond the scope of the presentation, it is worth noting that the basis for Aquinas's conclusion is that the particularity or universality of form is explained in terms of the potentiality that it is received into, whereas Averroes's conclusion hinges on the Diversity Thesis (see Chapter 2, p. 64-65), which requires that a potentiality receives its nature from the form it receives, and therefore is either particular-corporeal or universal-incorporeal on account of form. Deborah Black has noted that in Averroes's mature works, he explicitly rejects the notion that the particularity or universality of form could be explained by appeal to its recipient, since such an appeal would violate the Aristotelian commitment to the priority of form/act over matter/potency. Black writes:

> Averroes explicitly rejects his earlier assumption that we can explain intentional being simply by appealing to the special nature of the patient receiving the intention. That account of intentionality was based on the principle that a mere difference in the nature of the recipient is sufficient to account for a difference in the nature of the reception itself. Averroes, then, is effectively rejecting the maxim that ―whatever is received is received according to the mode of the receiver. To attribute the uniqueness of intentional change to the peculiar nature of the recipient—whether the recipient is viewed as soul-in-general (as in the *Epitome*), spiritual matter, or some particular type of soul (sense versus intellect)—is to reverse the order of priority between form and matter. Matter is for the sake of form, and form has explanatory and causal priority within an Aristotelian framework (Black 2011, p. 173).

It may be possible that Aquinas had read Averroes's Diversity Thesis in text **3A-H** as an expression that "whatever is received in something is through the mode of the recipient," but this possibility and the difference between the two principles is the subject of another study.

positions concerning the form-essence distinction, and that he continued to opt for the Avicennian position in his late works. Aquinas begins his discussion on the form-essence relation with a consideration of form-essence identity:

> **(26A)** There are two opinions concerning the definition of things and their essences. Some say that the total essence of a species is form itself; for instance the total essence of a human is his soul. **(26B)** And because of this they claim that according to reality (*secundum rem*) the form of the whole (*forma totius*), which is signified by the word humanity, is the same as the form of the part (*forma partis*), which is signified by the word soul, but that they differ only according to reason *(secundum rationem*). **(26C)** For the form of the part is called such insofar as it perfects matter and makes it to be in act; however; the form of the whole is called such insofar as it gathers in virtue of itself the whole composite [which is included] in its species. **(26D)** And from this they hold that no material parts are given in the definition which indicates species, but only the formal principles of the species (*Commentary on the Metaphysics*, Book 7, Lecture 9).[109]

Aquinas's depiction of this "first opinion" aligns well with the elements of Aristotelian Hylomorphism$_1$ presented in Chapter 2 (p. 37). Specifically, **26A** and **26B** express the form/essence identity thesis in the technical terminology of *forma partis* and *forma totius,* the meanings of which are explained in **26C**. And **26D** indicates, as mentioned in the previous section, that a consequence of adopting the form/essence identity thesis is that essential definitions of sensible substances are taken to signify form without reference to matter.

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108 The Latin text for all *Commentary on the Metaphysics* citations are from the Marietti edition, Aquinas 1935.

109 Quod circa definitiones rerum, et earum essentias duplex est opinio. Quidam enim dicunt, quod tota essentia speciei est ipsa forma, sicut quod tota essentia hominis est anima. Et propter hoc dicunt, quod eadem secundum rem est forma totius quae significatur nomine humanitatis, et forma partis, quae significatur nomine animae, sed differunt solum secundum rationem: nam forma partis dicitur secundum quod perficit materiam, et facit eam esse in actu: forma autem totius, secundum quod totum compositum per eam in specie collocatur. Et ex hoc volunt, quod nullae partes materiae ponantur in definitione indicante speciem, sed solum principia formalia speciei (Aquinas 1935, 1467, p. 358).

Despite the first option having a strong match with Aristotle's own remarks regarding the relationship between form and essence, Aquinas argues against it, claiming that Aristotle could not have maintained a form/essence identity thesis, since natural substances would then be indistinguishable from mathematical objects. Aquinas writes,

> But this [first option] seems to be contrary to the intention of Aristotle. For he says in Book 6 that natural things have sensible matter in their own definition, and in this they differ from mathematical [objects]. Now it cannot be said that natural substances are defined through that which does not pertain to their essence. For substances do not have definition from addition; only accidents have this. Thus, it follows that sensible matter is part of the essence of natural substances, not only insofar as it pertains to individuals, but also insofar as it pertains to species. For definitions are given to species, not individuals. (*Commentary on the Metaphysics*, Book 7, Lecture 9)[110]

As we have seen, this is opposed to remarks by Aristotle that clearly propose that form and essence are identical in sensible substances. A full account of the minor puzzle that Aquinas raises here is beyond the scope of the present project.[111] For our current purposes, it should suffice to note that Aquinas rejects the form-essence identity thesis and its corollary framework for hylomorphism because he thinks it doesn't square away with other aspects of Aristotle's thought. Instead, Aquinas endorses (both for himself and for Aristotle) the Avicennian interpretation of the form/essence relation and the hylomorphic framework it implies.

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110 Sed videtur esse contra intentionem Aristotelis. Dicit enim superius in sexto, quod res naturales habent in sui definitione materiam sensibilem, et in hoc differunt a mathematicis. Non autem potest dici, quod substantiae naturales definiantur per id quod non sit de essentia earum. Substantiae enim non habent definitionem ex additione, sed sola accidentia, ut supra est habitum. Unde relinquitur quod materia sensibilis sit pars essentiae substantiarum naturalium, non solum quantum ad individua, sed etiam quantum ad species ipsas. Definitiones enim non dantur de individuis, sed de speciebus (Aquinas 1935, 1468, p. 358).

111 For discussion of Aquinas's argument that the form/essence distinction is Aristotle's position, see Galluzzo 2007, p. 456-61. For discussion on the difference between Aquinas's gloss on Aristotle and Aristotle's position, see Maurer 1951.

> Hence there is the other opinion, which Avicenna follows. According to this position the form of the whole, which is the quiddity of the species, differs from the form of the part just as the whole differs from its part; for the quiddity of a species is composed from matter and form, but not from this individual matter and this individual form. It is an individual, such as Socrates or Callias, that is composed of these. This is the position of Aristotle in this chapter (*Commentary on the Metaphysics*, Book 7, Lecture 9).[112]

Again, as with the selection from the *De Ente*, Aquinas has faithfully presented Avicenna's hylomorphic model and claimed it as his own.

4.5 The Arabic-Islamic and Neoplatonic Influence on the *Summa Theologiae*

In the *Summa Theolgiae,* Aquinas continues to utilize the form/essence distinction, Communicability of Being thesis, incorporeal potentiality, and the hierarchy of intelligible substances to account for the ontology of the human soul. Just as in his earlier works and in the *Questiones Disputate De Anima*, Aquinas often does so in the context of replies to objections that express a traditional Aristotelian position. This provides Aquinas the opportunity to contrast his position with an Aristotelian position that would preclude that the soul can be both a substantial form and a subsistent intellectual substance. Moreover, it illustrates Aquinas's commitment to principles from Arabic-Islamic and Neoplatonic sources, which allow him to develop his contrasting thesis.

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112 Unde est alia opinio, quam sequitur Avicenna; et secundum hanc forma totius, quae est ipsa quidditas speciei, differt a forma partis, sicut totum a parte: nam quidditas speciei, est composita ex materia et forma, non tamen ex hac forma et ex hac materia individua. Ex his enim componitur individuum, ut Socrates et Callias. Et haec est sententia Aristotelis in hoc capitulo (Aquinas 1935,1469,,p.358-359).

4.5.1 The Form-Essence Distinction

The following section highlights two passages in the *Summa Theologiae* in which Aquinas indirectly implies the form-essence distinction in his response to objections that the soul cannot be both a subsistent substance and also be related to a body by its essence.

4.5.1.1 The Hand-Soul Analogy

Aquinas entertains a plethora of objections to his depiction of human nature in the *Summa Theologiae*. One of the most common draws on the Aristotelian hylomorphic framework to claim that being a substantial form and being a simple substance are mutually exclusive: since the existence of a substantial form is derivative upon its being a constituent part of a determinate particular hylomorphic composition, substantial form will simply cease to be once the composition dissolves.[113] Recall that Aristotelian hylomorphism$_1$ states that for any sensible substance it is a composition of matter and form, it is what it is by way of its essence, and its essence is its form. There is no principle separate from form which determines the *hoc aliquid* to be, so when the *hoc aliquid* ceases to be, the ultimate principle of its being will have ceased to be. In contrast, if the *hoc aliquid* is a simple form, it will be self-constituted and so can exist indefinitely. But already being complete itself, it cannot enter into substantial union with another. Any sort of union it enjoys will have to be accidental. This is the sort of reasoning that appears at *Summa Theolgiae* 1a, q. 75, a. 2, obj. 1:

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113 These objections are essentially the same as those that Aquinas presented in his *Commentary on the Sentences*. See Chapter 2, p. 97-104.

> It seems that the human soul is not something subsistent. For that which is subsistent is called a *hoc aliquid*. However, the soul is not a *hoc aliquid,* but [*hoc aliquid*] is composed from a soul and a body. Therefore, the soul is not subsistent (*ST* 1a, q. 75, a. 2, obj. 1).[114]

By being limited to the framework of Aristotelian hylomorphism, the objection can only treat the soul as a substantial form of a subsistent composite being, which precludes at the outset the position Aquinas wants to maintain. Yet Aquinas has the option of reasoning about the ontological status of the human soul within an Avicennian framework, and he makes use of this when he replies to the previously quoted objection. Aquinas states,

> *Hoc aliquid* can be taken in two ways: **(27A)** one way, as anything which is subsistent; and the other way, as being complete in the nature of some species. **(27B)** The first way excludes the inherence of accidents or material forms; **(27C)** the second way excludes imperfection of a part as well. **(27D)** Thus, a hand can be called a *hoc aliquid* according to the first way, but not according to the second way. **(27E)** Therefore, since the human soul is a part of the human species, it can be called *hoc aliquid* according to the first way as subsisting, but not the second way, for in this way the composition of soul and body is called a *hoc aliquid* (*ST* 1a, q. 75, a. 2, ad. 1). [115]

In **27A**, Aquinas lays out two types of subsistence, one of which is supposed to apply generally to anything that can be called subsistent, while the other is limited to beings whose essential parts are in act. Let us call the former "general subsistence" and the latter

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114 Videtur quod anima humana non sit aliquid subsistens. Quod enim est subsistens, dicitur hoc aliquid. Anima autem non est hoc aliquid, sed compositum ex anima et corpore. Ergo anima non est aliquid subsistens (*Summa Theologiae*, 5.196).

115 Hoc aliquid potest accipi dupliciter, uno modo, pro quocumque subsistente, alio modo, pro subsistente completo in natura alicuius speciei. Primo modo, excludit inhaerentiam accidentis et formae materialis, secundo modo, excludit etiam imperfectionem partis. Unde manus posset dici hoc aliquid primo modo, sed non secundo modo. Sic igitur, cum anima humana sit pars speciei humanae, potest dici hoc aliquid primo modo, quasi subsistens, sed non secundo modo, sic enim compositum ex anima et corpore dicitur hoc aliquid (*Summa Theologiae*, 5.196).

"essential subsistence." **27B** lays out the conditions under which a thing could *not* be said to have general subsistence:

> **General Subsistence:** For any being, it has general subsistence if and only if it is not a material form or it is not an accident.

Under the general sense of subsistent, *parts* which have *esse*, even if they are temporarily separated from the whole to which they belong, can be said to be *hec aliqua*. If such parts belong to a whole that has the potential to be whole once again, they remain parts of some greater essence. To the extent that the parts are separated from that whole, they can be said to subsist (i.e. they are existing on their own), but their existence will nevertheless be incomplete so long as they remain separated. General subsistence includes essential subsistence as well, the conditions of which Aquinas lays out in **27C**:

> **Essential Subsistence:** For any being, it has essential subsistence if and only if it has general subsistence and it has every perfection which completes its nature.

Thus, all beings with essential subsistence will have general subsistence and will be able to be called *hec aliqua* in the more general sense. But more properly, since they are beings which possess every part required to actualize their essence, they are *hec aliqua* in the stronger sense of being a primary substance. The example at **27D** attempts to make this clear: a hand might continue to exist for some time separated from a body while retaining the potentiality to be incorporated once again into the whole. It can be called a *hoc aliquid* because it is a part ordered to a greater whole, but it is not a being complete in its own nature and so is not called a *hoc aliquid* in the strict sense.[116]

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116 For an alternative interpretation of Aquinas's hand example, see (Pasnau 2002a, p. 229): "Aquinas is thinking of a hand as a bodily part *plus* the relevant portion of the soul - the part of the soul that lets the hand function. The mere bodily

Until this point, the proponent of Aristotelian hylomorphism$_1$ might not find anything to complain about in distinguishing between the general and essential senses of subsistence. The crux of Aquinas's argument, and, indeed, the point at which it becomes apparent that Aquinas is rejecting the framework that gave force to the objection, comes at **27E**, where he states that the human soul is a part of (and not identical with) the human nature or essence, such that when separated from the body the human soul is capable of being called a *hoc aliquid* in the first sense (because it subsists) but not in the second sense (because it is separated from those other parts that realize the essence to which it belongs). Calling the human soul a part in this way can only make sense within the framework of Avicennian hylomorphism.

4.5.1.2 Bodily Resurrection

We have seen in the previous two chapters and in earlier sections of this chapter that Aristotelian Hylomorphism$_1$ requires a substantial form be united to matter, and, further, that subsistent intellectual substances be treated as separate forms. This entails that the human soul could not be treated as both a substantial form and separate intellectual substance from the perspective of Aristotelian hylomorphism$_1$, thereby

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part, severed from the soul, is not a hand at all, except in an equivocal sense. The hand can be called a particular thing, then, because it is neither an accident nor a material form. It is neither of these things, because it is not a form at all, but a subsistent part of a larger complete substance." However, taken this way, the example fails as an analogy for understanding the human soul's subsistence. First, the human soul is a *form which is part* of the human being, whereas the hand is not; second, the human soul, unlike a hand, does not depend on another for its persistent subsistence. The analogy seems to work only if one considers the hand as a part which can exist on its own (albeit, only temporarily), be incomplete in its nature when separated, and have the potentiality to be reincorporated into its complete nature.

putting in jeopardy both the possibility for the continued existence of the soul after corruption of the body and the possibility of bodily resurrection. Aquinas therefore has an incentive to oppose Aristotelian hylomorphism$_1$, since he is theologically committed to both the immortality of the human soul and the doctrine of bodily resurrection.[117] It should be unsurprising, then, to see Aquinas present an objection to the view that the human soul cannot be a substantial form, and *ipso facto* cannot have an essential relationship to matter, if it is a principle of intellectual activity. This would preclude the soul being united to a body as a form (i.e. if it is united to the body at all, it would be accidental), and therefore denies that there would be any reason to expect that the soul plays an essential role in resurrection of the body. Aquinas writes:

> That which is in some thing according to itself is always in it. But to be united to matter belongs to form according to itself. For form is not united through something accidental, but through its own essence is the act of matter. Otherwise, composition from matter and form would not make a thing substantially one, but accidentally. Therefore, a form is not able to be without proper matter. But the intellectual principle, since it is incorruptible, as was shown above, does not remain united to the body when the body corrupts. Therefore, the intellectual principle is not united to the body as its form. (*ST* 1a, Q76, A1, arg. 6)[118]

Aquinas replies to this with an argument from analogy; just as, for instance, air has a natural inclination to rise above water or earth when air is trapped below the

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117 It should be noted that the doctrine of bodily resurrection is a reasonable expectation in light of his conception of the ontology of the human soul and the teleological notion that things seek fulfill their nature. Aquinas's philosophical commitments therefore do not simply provide a context for arguing that this article of faith is not contrary to reason, but also assigns precise conceptual content to it.

118 Id quod inest alicui rei secundum se, semper inest ei. Sed formae secundum se inest uniri materiae, non enim per accidens aliquod, sed per essentiam suam est actus materiae; alioquin ex materia et forma non fieret unum substantialiter, sed accidentaliter. Forma ergo non potest esse sine propria materia. Sed intellectivum principium, cum sit incorruptibile, ut supra ostensum est, remanet corpori non unitum, corpore corrupto. Ergo intellectivum principium non unitur corpori ut forma. (*Summa Theologiae*, 5.208).

surface, so also the human soul has a natural inclination to be united to the body when in a disembodied state:

> To be united to the body belongs to the soul according to itself, just as it belongs to a light body by reason of itself to be raised up. And as a light body remains light, when removed from its proper place, nevertheless retaining an aptitude and an inclination to its proper place; so the human soul maintains existence in itself when made separate from the body, having an aptitude and a natural inclination to be united to the body (*ST* 1a, Q76, A1, ad. 6).[119]

What is noteworthy for our purposes is what Aquinas must presuppose in order for the analogy to work, *viz.*, that the soul must be a part of a hylomorphic nature, even if it is a subsistent substance on account of being the principle of intellectual activity. As we have seen in the previous subsection and throughout the last two chapters, the notion that the soul is a part of a hylomorphic nature comes from Avicennian hylomorphism. Aquinas's response thus signals a rejection of Aristotelian hylomorphism$_1$ in a way that leaves open a reasonable expectation for bodily resurrection (i.e., the soul's re-information of the matter to which it is essentially related).

4.5.2 Incorporeal Potentiality in Intellectual Substances

Just as Aquinas had argued for the reality of incorporeal potentiality and utilized incorporeal potentiality to critique universal hylomorphism, Aquinas continues to follow the same strategy in the *Summa Theologiae*. Aquinas follows essentially the same

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119 Secundum se convenit animae corpori uniri, sicut secundum se convenit corpori levi esse sursum. Et sicut corpus leve manet quidem leve cum a loco proprio fuerit separatum, cum aptitudine tamen et inclinatione ad proprium locum; ita anima humana manet in suo esse cum fuerit a corpore separata, habens aptitudinem et inclinationem naturalem ad corporis unionem. (*Summa Theologiae*, 5.210).

Averroean strategy in the *Summa Theologiae* to establish incorporeal potentiality as its own category of being, distinct from material potentiality, material actuality, and immaterial actuality. Moreover, Aquinas continues to follow Averroes in distinguishing between intellectual substances based on the degree to which their incorporeal potentiality is actualized. Since the incorporeal potentiality of human intellect is in pure potential to receive intelligible species from sensible form, the human intellect is essentially related to the body, which allows Aquinas to reject a Platonic dualist account of the human soul despite maintaining that its intellectual nature requires it be a subsistent substance.

4.5.2.1 The Reality of Incorporeal Potentiality

There are several instances in the *Summa Theolgiae* in which Aquinas draws on the reality of incorporeal potentiality to establish the nature of intellectual creatures as non-hylomorphic, against universal hylomorphism. For instance, in the *Treatise on Angels*, Aquinas writes:

> The operation of each thing is according to the mode of its substance. However, to understand is a completely immaterial operation. This is apparent from its object, by which any act receives its species and nature, since something is understood insofar as it is abstracted from matter, because forms in matter are individual forms, which the intellect does not apprehend in this way. Thus it is required that every intellectual substance is altogether immaterial. (*ST* 1a, Q50, A2, c.o.).[120]

120 Operatio enim cuiuslibet rei est secundum modum substantiae eius. Intelligere autem est operatio penitus immaterialis. Quod ex eius obiecto apparet, a quo actus quilibet recipit speciem et rationem, sic enim unumquodque intelligitur, inquantum a materia abstrahitur; quia formae in materia sunt individuales formae, quas intellectus non apprehendit secundum quod huiusmodi. Unde relinquitur quod omnis substantia intellectualis est omnino immaterialis (*Summa Theolgiae* 5.6).

Aquinas's reasoning in the above passage is consistent with the argument that we had seen Aquinas previously present in his *Commentary on De Anima*, and which closely follows the logic of Averroes's Diversity Thesis in passage **3A-H**: materiality implies particularity/individuation, and *vice versa;* intellectual understanding is an abstraction of form from its particularizing, individuated conditions (i.e., understanding requires universality of form); but universality, being the opposite of particularity, also implies the opposite of materiality. Intellectual acts therefore must be immaterial, and belong to a category of beings distinct from hylomorphic compositions.

The previous passage highlights how intellectual creatures in general have an immaterial nature on account of their intellectual act. Aquinas addresses that this specifically applies to the human soul in his *Treatise on Human Nature.* For instance, in response to the question of whether the soul could be treated as a hylomorphic substance, Aquinas writes that it cannot, precisely on account of its having an intellectual nature:

> **(28A)** It is manifest that anything that is received into something is received according to the mode of the recipient. **(28B)** Now something is cognized to the extent that its form is in the cognizer. But the intellectual soul cognizes something in its nature absolutely. For instance, it cognizes a stone absolutely insofar as it is a stone. Therefore, the form of a stone absolutely is in the intellectual soul according to the proper formal nature. **(28C)** Therefore, the intellectual soul is an absolute form, not something composed of matter and form. **(28E)** For if the intellectual soul were composed of matter and form, the forms of things would be received into it as individuals, and so it would not cognize except as singularly, just as it occurs in the sensitive powers, which receive forms in a corporeal organ, since matter is the principle of individuation of forms. **(28F)** It follows, therefore, that the intellectual soul, and every intellectual substance cognizing forms absolutely, is exempt from composition of matter and form (*ST* 1a, Q75, A5, c.o.).[121]

121 Manifestum est enim quod omne quod recipitur in aliquo, recipitur in eo per modum recipientis. Sic autem cognoscitur unumquodque, sicut forma eius est in cognoscente. Anima autem intellectiva cognoscit rem aliquam in sua natura absolute, puta lapidem inquantum est lapis absolute. Est igitur forma lapidis absolute,

At **28A**, Aquinas lays out the operative principle that enables him to determine the nature of the potential intellect: since objects received are received in accord with the mode of the receiver, whatever one says about about the nature of the object received must pertain to the nature of the receiver. Aquinas's comments at **28B** amount to the claim that intellectual cognition involves reception of form *absolutely*. Thus, at **28C**, Aquinas concludes that the intellectual soul is an absolute form.[122] Aquinas initially describes an absolute form as being form not composed with matter, but at **28E**, he explains why this is so: the recipient would receive the forms under particularizing/individuating conditions were the recipient to have material potentiality. Again, as with the previous passages from the *Treatise on Angels* and in the *Commentary on De Anima* (see passage **24A-F**, above), Aquinas has associated materiality with particularity/individuation, which stands in contrast to immateriality/universality, such that the absence of particularity implies universality and, consequently, immateriality. Thus intellectual receptivity involves a potentiality distinct from matter. Since every receptivity of particularized form involves a body, the intellectual potentiality is also incorporeal. Of course, as we have seen, this is also Averroes's strategy for establishing the reality of incorporeal potentiality, the only difference being that Aquinas has used the "mode of the recipient" principle in place of

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secundum propriam rationem formalem, in anima intellectiva. Anima igitur intellectiva est forma absoluta, non autem aliquid compositum ex materia et forma. Si enim anima intellectiva esset composita ex materia et forma, formae rerum reciperentur in ea ut individuales, et sic non cognosceret nisi singulare, sicut accidit in potentiis sensitivis, quae recipiunt formas rerum in organo corporali: materia enim est principium individuationis formarum. Relinquitur ergo quod anima intellectiva, et omnis intellectualis substantia cognoscens formas absolute, caret compositione formae et materiae. (*Summa Theologiae* 5.202)

122 It is worth noting that Aquinas's describes the human soul as an absolute form in *In Sent.* 1 d. 8 q. 5 a. 2., as well. See Appendix I.

Averroes's Diversity Thesis.[123] Aquinas thus makes explicit that the reality of incorporeal potentiality entails the rejecting the view that the soul (or any other intellectual creature) is a hylomorphic composition.

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123 See n. 19, above for brief discussion of the "mode of the receiver" principle in relation to Averroes's Diversity Thesis. Also, consider Aquinas's reply to the following objection in the same article as passage **28A-F**:

> It would seem that the soul is composed of matter and form. For potentiality is opposed to actuality. But all such things that are in actuality participate in the Prime Act, which is God. Through this participation all things are good, being, and living, as is clear from the teaching of Dionysius in *The Book of Divine Names*. Therefore, whatever things are in potentiality participate of the first potentiality. But the first potentiality is primary matter. Since, therefore, the human soul is in some sense in potentiality, which is apparent from the fact that man sometimes has understanding in potentiality, it seems that the human soul participates in primary matter as part of itself (*ST* 1a, Q75, A5 arg. 1). // Videtur quod anima sit composita ex materia et forma. Potentia enim contra actum dividitur. Sed omnia quaecumque sunt in actu, participant primum actum, qui Deus est; per cuius participationem omnia sunt et bona et entia et viventia, ut patet per doctrinam Dionysii in libro de Div. Nom. Ergo quaecumque sunt in potentia, participant primam potentiam. Sed prima potentia est materia prima. Cum ergo anima humana sit quodammodo in potentia, quod apparet ex hoc quod homo quandoque est intelligens in potentia; videtur quod anima humana participet materiam primam tanquam partem sui (*Summa Theologiae* 5.201-202).
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> The Prime Act is the universal principle of all acts, because It is infinite, virtually precontaining all things in itself, as Dionysius says. Thus it is participated to things not as a part of themselves, but according to diffusion of processions. Since potentiality is receptive of act, it is necessary that it is proportionate to act. The acts received, which proceed from the Prime Infinite Act and are participations of it, are diverse. Thus there cannot be one potentiality which receives all acts, just as there is one act, just as there is one act influencing all participated acts, otherwise the receptive potentiality would equal the active potentiality of the Prime Act. Now the receptive potentiality in the intellectual soul is other than the receptive potentiality of prime matter, as is apparent from the diversity of recipients. For prime matter receives individual forms, yet intellect receives absolute forms. Thus potentiality existing in the intellectual soul does not show that the soul is composed of matter and form (*ST* 1a, Q75, A5, ad. 1). // Primus actus est universale principium omnium actuum, quia est infinitum, virtualiter in se omnia praehabens, ut dicit Dionysius. Unde participatur a rebus, non sicut pars,

4.5.2.2 The Hierarchy of Intellectual Substances

Just as Aquinas had argued in previous works that the human soul is the lowest of intellectual substances on account of the fact that it is in pure potentiality to receive intelligible species of sensible substances, Aquinas presents the same position in the *Summa Theologiae*. For instance, concerning the distinction between the manner in which the soul and the angels understand, Aquinas writes in his *Treatise on Angels*:

> **(29A)** Lower intellectual substances, namely, human souls - have an intellective potency not naturally complete, but is successively completed in them through the fact that they receive intelligible species from things. In the higher spiritual substances, namely, the angels, the intellectual potency is naturally complete through intelligible species, in so far as they have intelligible species belonging naturally to them, so as to understand all things which they can cognize naturally. **(29B)** This is apparent from the mode of existence of such substances. The lower spiritual substances, that is, souls, have a existence affiliated with body, in so far as they are the forms of bodies. Consequently, from their very mode of existence it belongs to them to seek their intelligible perfection from bodies and through bodies, otherwise they would be united with bodies in vain. **(29C)** The higher substances, namely, the angels, are completely free from bodies, immaterially subsistent, and in intelligible existence. Consequently, their intelligible perfection

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> sed secundum diffusionem processionis ipsius. Potentia autem, cum sit receptiva actus, oportet quod actui proportionetur. Actus vero recepti, qui procedunt a primo actu infinito et sunt quaedam participationes eius, sunt diversi. Unde non potest esse potentia una quae recipiat omnes actus, sicut est unus actus influens omnes actus participatos, alioquin potentia receptiva adaequaret potentiam activam primi actus. Est autem alia potentia receptiva in anima intellectiva, a potentia receptiva materiae primae, ut patet ex diversitate receptorum, nam materia prima recipit formas individuales, intellectus autem recipit formas absolutas. Unde talis potentia in anima intellectiva existens, non ostendit quod anima sit composita ex materia et forma (*Summa Theologiae* 5.202).

The objection presents the standard universal hylomorphist view that any receptive nature participates to some degree or another in prime matter. However, Aquinas's reply to this appears to coincide with Averroes's comment at **3G** that diverse forms cause the diversity of their recipient. First, Aquinas mentions that potentiality is proportionate to act, and thus the diversity of acts requires there to be a diversity of potentialities. But this appears to contrast with the "mode of the recipient" principle, which prioritizes the recipient as an explanans for the form being material/particular or immaterial/universal/absolute.

> follows from an intelligible outflowing, from which they received from God the species of cognizable things together with their intellectual nature (*ST* 1a, Q55, A2, c.o.).[124]

At **29A**, Aquinas maintains that the human soul is such that it requires reception of form from something outside of its nature in order to fulfill its act of understanding. By contrast, the angelic intellects already contain their intellectual objects by nature. At **29B**, Aquinas cites the human soul as having to rely on sensible bodies and sensory activities, which rely on the body, in order for its intellectual act to come to fruition. That is, since there is no intelligible object inherent in the human soul, its intelligibility is naturally in pure potential, and therefore must receive its formal content from without. As such, the completion of human understanding relies on abstracting intelligible species from sensible content, which in turn requires that the soul be essentially related to a body. This contrasts with Aquinas's description of the angels, who possess intelligible species inherently. Just as with previous passages, Aquinas appears to be repeating Averroes's position in the *Long Commentary on De Anima* when i) distinguishing the human intellect from other separate intellects on the basis that its peculiar incorporeal

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124 Inferiores substantiae intellectivae, scilicet animae humanae, habent potentiam intellectivam non completam naturaliter; sed completur in eis successive, per hoc quod accipiunt species intelligibiles a rebus. Potentia vero intellectiva in substantiis spiritualibus superioribus, idest in Angelis, naturaliter completa est per species intelligibiles, inquantum habent species intelligibiles connaturales ad omnia intelligenda quae naturaliter cognoscere possunt. Et hoc etiam ex ipso modo essendi huiusmodi substantiarum apparet. Substantiae enim spirituales inferiores, scilicet animae, habent esse affine corpori, inquantum sunt corporum formae, et ideo ex ipso modo essendi competit eis ut a corporibus, et per corpora suam perfectionem intelligibilem consequantur, alioquin frustra corporibus unirentur. Substantiae vero superiores, idest Angeli, sunt a corporibus totaliter absolutae, immaterialiter et in esse intelligibili subsistentes, et ideo suam perfectionem intelligibilem consequuntur per intelligibilem effluxum, quo a Deo species rerum cognitarum acceperunt simul cum intellectuali natura. (*Summa Theolgiae* 5.56)

potentiality requires abstraction of form from sensible content, therefore requiring an essential relationship to the body, and ii) ranking the human intellect as the lowest among intellectual substances on account of its possessing a pure potentiality to receive intelligible species.[125]

Aquinas returns to a comparison between human and angelic intellectual understanding in his *Treatise on Human Nature*, where he explicitly states what the receptivity of intellectual form in the human intellect *via* abstraction from material particulars requires. As such, the human intellect must be essentially related to the body, *contra* the Platonic view that the human intellect cognizes separate forms, and is therefore a substance altogether separate from the body. Aquinas writes,

> **(30A)** The power of cognition is proportionate to the cognized. Therefore, the proper object of the angelic intellect, which is completely separate from a body, is an intelligible substance separate from a body, and through this it cognizes intelligible material. **(30B)** However, the proper object of the human intellect, which is conjoined to the body, is a quiddity or nature existing in corporeal matter; and through this it ascends from the natures of visible things to some cognition of invisible things. **(30C)** Now this kind of nature is such that it exists in some individual, which is not separate from corporeal matter, just as the nature of a stone is that which is in this particular stone, and concerning the nature of a horse that it is in this particular horse, and so on concerning others. Thus, the nature of a stone or other material thing cannot be cognized completely and truly, except insofar as that is cognized as existing in a particular. **(30D)** Now we apprehend the individual through sense and imagination. Therefore it is necessary that the intellectual act understands its proper object, that it turns to phantasms to examine the universal nature existing in the particular. **(30E)** But if the proper object of our intellect were a separate form, or if the natures of sensible things were not subsistent in particulars, according to the Platonists, it would not be necessary that our intellect turns to phantasms whenever it understands. (*ST* 1a, Q 84, A 7, c.o.).[126]

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125 See: *ST* 1a, Q 76, A5, c.o. (*Summa Theolgiae* 5.228); 1a, Q 79, A2, c.o. (*Summa Theolgiae* 5.259-260); 1a, Q 89, A1, c.o. (*Summa Theolgiae* 5.370-371).

126 Potentia cognoscitiva proportionatur cognoscibili. Unde intellectus angelici, qui est totaliter a corpore separatus, obiectum proprium est substantia intelligibilis a corpore separata; et per huiusmodi intelligibilia materialia cognoscit. Intellectus

At **30A**, Aquinas restates his position on angelic intellects, which he first presented in the *Treatise on Angels*: the angelic intellects are acts of separate substances, and therefore have separate intellectual forms as their proper object. At **30B**, Aquinas contrasts this with the proper object of human intellectual cognition, which is an act of a soul that is the substantial form of a body, and therefore cognizes essences of bodily beings. At **30C**, Aquinas presents the reason why this entails that human intellectual cognition is unlike the angelic intellects insofar as it must be part of an essence that includes a body: since the proper objects of human intellect are material forms, they are individuated. Aquinas takes this to mean that cognition of such forms cannot occur in completeness without there also being some awareness of their existing as individuals. Since, however, the intellect receives forms absent all matter and particularizing conditions, complete cognition will require prior and/or concurrent awareness of the essences of material forms *via* the sensory and/or imaginative faculties. Thus, at **30D**, Aquinas remarks that the intellect "turns to phantasms to examine the universal nature existing in the particular." As such, the completion of human intellect depends on bodily cognition of the forms of

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autem humani, qui est coniunctus corpori, proprium obiectum est quidditas sive natura in materia corporali existens; et per huiusmodi naturas visibilium rerum etiam in invisibilium rerum aliqualem cognitionem ascendit. De ratione autem huius naturae est, quod in aliquo individuo existat, quod non est absque materia corporali, sicut de ratione naturae lapidis est quod sit in hoc lapide, et de ratione naturae equi quod sit in hoc equo, et sic de aliis. Unde natura lapidis, vel cuiuscumque materialis rei, cognosci non potest complete et vere, nisi secundum quod cognoscitur ut in particulari existens. Particulare autem apprehendimus per sensum et imaginationem. Et ideo necesse est ad hoc quod intellectus actu intelligat suum obiectum proprium, quod convertat se ad phantasmata, ut speculetur naturam universalem in particulari existentem. Si autem proprium obiectum intellectus nostri esset forma separata; vel si naturae rerum sensibilium subsisterent non in particularibus, secundum Platonicos; non oporteret quod intellectus noster semper intelligendo converteret se ad phantasmata (*Summa Theologiae* 5.325).

hylomorphic substances, and *ispo facto*, must be essentially related to a body. Aquinas thus concludes at **30E** that the nature of human intellection requires a rejection of Platonism. Since Aquinas's account in the above passage concerning the human intellect's dependence on the body for abstraction of intelligible form is the same as that which we saw Averroes present (see Chapter 2, p. 79-82), one can conclude that Aquinas has again adopted a position of Averroes to reject a Platonic dualist conception of the relationship between the soul and the body.

4.5.3 The Communicability of Being Doctrine

Just as in Aquinas's previous works, in the *Summa Theologiae* he draws on the Communicability of Being doctrine as a way to explain how the human being can have unified being despite the soul's subsistence, and he does so in response to objections that insist on treating substantial formality and substantial subsistence as mutually exclusive. For instance, in the *Treatise on Human Nature*, Aquinas presents the following objection: "That which has existence *per se* is not united to the body as its form, because a form is that by something exists, and so the existence itself of a form is not the form according to itself. But the intellectual principle has existence according to itself and is subsistent. Therefore it is not united to the body as its form" (*ST* 1a, Q 76, A 1, arg. 5).[127] This is consistent with objections presented in previous works, which treat the soul as either having *per se* existence (i.e. subsistence) or as having existence only through its being the

127 Id quod per se habet esse, non unitur corpori ut forma, quia forma est quo aliquid est; et sic ipsum esse formae non est ipsius formae secundum se. Sed intellectivum principium habet secundum se esse, et est subsistens, ut supra dictum est. Non ergo unitur corpori ut forma (*Summa Theologiae* 5.208).

principle of a substance, but not both. However, Aquinas's thesis rejects the notion that a substantial form cannot be subsistent substance on the basis that the soul communicates its *per se* existence to the body, and thus the body shares in the same being as the soul:

> The soul shares that existence in which it subsists with corporeal matter, and from this and the intellectual soul there results a unity, such that the existence of the whole composite is also the existence of the soul. This does not happen with other forms that are not subsistent. Because of this, the human soul retains existence in itself after destruction of the body; however, this is not so for other forms (*ST* 1a, Q 76, A 1, arg. 5).[128]

Aquinas's reply to this objection to his ontology of soul is therefore the same as in previous works. Since we have seen that the Communicability of Being doctrine is effectively Aquinas's variation on the Ammonian conception of soul, one can claim with confidence that Aquinas's mature works reflect the same degree of Neoplatonic influence found in his earlier works.

4.6 Concluding Remarks

The next and final chapter explores the consequences of treating Aquinas's thesis that the soul is both a subsistent substance and a substantial form from the perspective of his Arabic-Islamic and Neoplatonic sources. I will return to the issues raised in Chapter 1, concerning interpretations of Aquinas's philosophical anthropology offered by recent historians of philosophy and analytic philosophers. The aim will be to draw on the work done in this chapter and the previous two chapters on the Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic

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128 Anima illud esse in quo ipsa subsistit, communicat materiae corporali, ex qua et anima intellectiva fit unum, ita quod illud esse quod est totius compositi, est etiam ipsius animae. Quod non accidit in aliis formis, quae non sunt subsistentes. Et propter hoc anima humana remanet in suo esse, destructo corpore, non autem aliae formae (*Summa Theologiae* 5.210).

roots of Aquinas's ontology of soul, in order to augment the interpretations of other scholars when possible and correct them when necessary. Before doing so, however, it should be helpful to remind the reader how Aquinas employed in his mature works those principles he found in the Arabic-Islamic and Neoplatonic sources. First, we saw that Aquinas continued to employ Avicenna's form/essence distinction in articulating his conception of the relationship between the human soul and body while also responding to objections inspired by form/essence identity. Second, Aquinas continued to use the Communicability of Being Doctrine to defend the unity of the human person, showing allegiance to the conception of soul that stems from the Ammonian tradition of interpreting Aristotle's psychology. Lastly, Aquinas continued to draw on the ontological reality of incorporeal potentiality in his criticism of universal hylomorphism, as well as the absolute degree of incorporeal potentiality in the human potential intellect in rejecting the notion that the human soul's subsistence requires a Platonic conception of human nature.

In the *Questiones Disputate de Anima,* Aquinas employed the form/essence distinction, Communicability of Being thesis, incorporeal potentiality, and the hierarchy of intelligible substances to account for the ontology of the human soul. Moreover, he continued to interpret the Boethian *quod est/quo est* distinction according to the principles he inherited from Avicenna and Avicenna's Neoplatonic predecessors.

In the *Questiones Disputate de Spiritualibus Creaturis,* Aquinas draws on incorporeal potentiality to argue against the universal hylomorphist thesis that all created substances are compositions of form and matter. Moreover, Aquinas uses the

Communicability of Being thesis to categorize the human soul as both a spiritual substance and a form of the body. Insofar as it is an has an intellectual act and is *per se* subsistent, it is a spiritual substance. However, its intellectual activity requires that it have an essential relationship with a body, and so also must be a form.

In Aquinas's *Commentary on De Anima*, Aquinas draws on the Communicability of Being thesis, the form-essence distinction, and incorporeal potentiality of intellectual substances respectively in offering an interpretation of Aristotle's account of the intellectual soul. As such, this supports the thesis that Arabic-Islamic and Neoplatonic principles influenced Aquinas's reading of Aristotle's hylormorphism and the ontological status of the soul.

In Aquinas's *Commentary on Metaphysics*, we saw Aquinas address issues concerning form-essence distinction *versus* form-essence identity, and that he presented arguments explicitly in favor of the latter. This provides evidence that Aquinas had a clear understanding of the differences between the Aristotelian and Avicennian positions concerning the form-essence distinction, and that he continued to opt for the Avicennian position in his late works. Just as we saw in Chapter 3 that Aquinas had argued for the form-essence distinction on its own philosophical merits in the *De Ente et Essentia*, Aquinas again faithfully presented Avicenna's hylomorphic model in the *Commentary on Metaphysics* and adopted it as his favored position.

Finally, we saw that Aquinas employed the form/essence distinction, Communicability of Being thesis, incorporeal potentiality, and the hierarchy of intelligible substances in the *Summa Theologiae* in presenting his account of the soul as a

subsistent substance and substantial form. We saw that Aquinas's presentation of these principles is consistent with his earlier works and other mature works, which supports the claim that Aquinas was committed to the principles from Arabic-Islamic and Neoplatonic sources late in his career. Moreover, since Aquinas's use of these Arabic-Islamic and Neoplatonic principles to justify his thesis that the soul is both a subsistent substance and substantial form is consistent throughout his career, it is safe to conclude that there is no substantial change to Aquinas's ontology of soul between his early and mature works.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION – AQUINAS'S PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY: WHAT IT IS & WHAT IT IS NOT

At the end of the first chapter, I briefly discussed that Aquinas had inherited from the Aristotelian conception of psychology three statements that were seemingly at odds with one another:

1. The soul is a first act of an organic body, which entails that the soul is related to the body as form to matter.
2. The actuality of intellect is not the actuality of a body or a bodily organ.
3. The intellect is a power of the human soul.

Because (1) treats the soul as the principle of a hylomorphic composition and (2) denies that intellect could be such a principle, a combination of (1) and (2) would require that **a)** the intellect is separate from the human soul. However, taking (2) and (3) together would place the intellect in the human soul and therefore seem to require that **b)** the soul be treated as a substance separate from the body. This leaves one the task of explaining the soul-body relation: is the relation accidental or still somehow essential; how do the two substances interact; etc.? A combination of (1) and (3) would require that **c)** intellect be treated as the power of some act, which is the act of an organic body. However, one must account for intellect having *per se* actuality, which, presumably unlike the soul, implies that the intellect's existence does not depend on the body. Aquinas held all three statements, which committed him to the view that the soul as a form is the act of an organic body, and thus a principle of a hylomorphic substance, yet has an intellectual power that is not the act of an organic body. In other words, Aquinas was in some sense

committed to **(a-c)**. As the objections in his articles attest, he was acutely aware of the conceptual difficulty involved in showing that **(a-c)** are compatible. To add to the difficulty, Aquinas also inherited from the prior Scholastic tradition, the Christian tradition of scriptural interpretation in the Latin West, and the doctrines of Catholic teaching, the view that the human soul is an individual substance that has *per se* existence, yet has an essential relationship to the body. The soul conceived as an individual substance was important for its ties to belief in the soul's immortality, and the soul's essential relationship to the body was important for the belief in bodily resurrection. Since Aquinas was committed to showing that the Catholic position was not in conflict with Aristotelian psychology, he expressed the Catholic position in Aristotelian nomenclenture, i.e., that the soul is a subsistent substance (and, therefore, a *hoc aliquid* in a certain sense), as well as a substantial form (and, therefore, is essentially related to a body). To this extent, the Aristotelian texts and the Latin Christian tradition that preceded Aquinas were the source for the issues concerning the ontology of the human soul and its relationship to the body, which we had seen Aquinas address in the previous two chapters. However, the previous three chapters have shown that Aquinas's attempt to *resolve* the *aporia* laid out above drew heavily on Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic sources.

5.1 The Importance of the Form-Essence Distinction and Avicennian Hylomorphism

First, we saw that Aquinas followed Avicenna in distinguishing form from essence in hylomorphic substances, such that the soul serves as part of the essence *humanity* in the capacity of form, i.e. as the actuality of an organic body. Adopting the form-essence distinction and the subsequent conception of hylomorphism that follows from it, allowed Aquinas to treat the human soul as a substantial form, despite the soul also being a subsistent substance on account of its having an intellectual act. That is to say, the human soul, like all other substantial forms of hylomorphic substances, are part of an essence that order them to matter. In general, the acts of substantial forms are material acts, and require a body. Thus, the acts of substantial forms incidentally corrupt along with the corruption of the body, and so the substantial forms cease to exist when the the bodies they actualize cease to exist. Yet, the human soul is unlike other substantial forms insofar as it is also the source of intellectual activity, which is immaterial and, therefore, a *per se* activity. The human soul's possession of intellect thus demonstrates that it is to be included among intellectual substances, and should be treated as more than merely a substantial form. Like the other intellectual substances, the human soul is also subsistent. Yet again, since form and essence in hylomorphic substances are distinct on Aquinas's account, he can maintain that the human soul is still a part of a hylomorphic essence in its disembodied state, and thus it retains its potentiality to actualize the body as a substantial form. The form-essence distinction and the Avicennian hylomorphism that follows from it consequently removes the conflict between i) the human soul being a subsistent

substance on account of it being a source of intellectual activity and ii) it being a substantial form of the body. That is to say, Avicennian hylomorphism allows Aquinas to combine (2) and (3), above, without denying (1).

The above account of the human soul as a *per se* subsistent part of a hylomorphic substance provided Aquinas a new perspective on the traditional conception of human soul as a *hoc aliquid:* it is called such to the extent that its intellectual nature guarantees it has *per se* existence and thus natural immortality. However, unlike other intellectual substances who are complete in their natures simply through engagement in intellectual activity, and thus *hec aliqua* in the strictest sense, the human soul is complete in its nature only when it engages in its other essential acts (i.e. sensory and nutritive acts), which require a body. The disembodied human soul is therefore a *hoc aliquid* only in the weaker sense of having subsistence. As a substantial form, the human soul is part of a hylomorphic essence that orders it to a body, and the unity of these two constitutes a *hoc aliquid* complete in its nature. The incomplete nature of the soul in its disembodied state indicates that it retains its essential relation to the body, which Aquinas uses to argue that bodily resurrection (i.e., the soul once again actively resuming its role as a substantial form the body) is a reasonable expectation.[129]

5.2 The Importance of the Communicability of Being Doctrine and the Ammonian Interpretation

Second, we saw that Aquinas was influenced by Neoplatonic commentators on Aristotle through the works of Avicenna in maintaining that the soul can have its own

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129 See Chapter 4, p. 185-186.

existence distinct from the body and yet also be the formal cause of the body. The Neoplatonic commentators of the Ammonian tradition ultimately viewed the soul and body as distinct substances, and re-conceived the soul as a formal cause of the body in terms of *teleiotēs*/final causality. These are positions that Aquinas would have rejected. Nevertheless, we saw in our discussion of the work of Robert Wisnovsky in Chapter 2 that the Ammonian tradition affected the translation and interpretation of Aristotle's psychological works such that it became natural for Avicenna and other Islamic/Arabic thinkers to treat the soul as both a form of the body and a separate substance. Since Aquinas's own reading of Aristotle's works were aided by the commentary of Avicenna, it is my contention that the Ammonian interpretation had its influence on Aquinas, and this can be seen in what I have called the Communicability of Being Doctrine. Briefly, the Communicability of Being Doctrine maintains that a substantial form having *per se* existence will cause matter to share that same existence. This enables Aquinas to avoid attempts to maintain that the hylomorphic nature of the soul requires denial that the soul can have *per se* existence or that the soul having *per se* existence precludes the possibility of it being a substantial form. Since the human soul shares its *per se* existence with matter, the hylomorphic composition constitutes a substantial unity. Even if the body corrupts on account of the dissolution of its elemental mixture, the soul nevertheless retains the existence shared by both principles of the composition. As with the form-essence distinction, the Communicability of Being doctrine is intended to provide a perspective of the soul-body relation that enables Aquinas to maintain (1-3) together without the pain of contradiction.

5.3 The Importance of Incorporeal Potentiality

At the end of Chapter 2, I listed a series of positions from Averroes's *Long Commentary on De Anima* that Aquinas adopted in for his own account of the nature of human intellection. First, Aquinas followed Averroes in thinking that Aristotle's discussion of intellectual receptivity in *De Anima* 3.4 as an introduction of a new category of being, *viz.* incorporeal potentiality, as distinct from the material actuality of substantial form, the material potentiality of prime matter, and the incorporeal actuality of active thought. Second, Aquinas adopted the position that reception of form in the human intellect involves something that is wholly characterized by incorporeal potentiality, *viz.* the potential intellect. As we saw, Aquinas drew directly on Averroes's reasoning for the reality of incorporeal potentiality to argue against the doctrine of universal hylomorphism and in favor of the immateriality of intellect. Aquinas's insistence on human intellect possessing an immaterial potentiality is an indispensable aspect of Aquinas's conception of the soul as a subsistent substance.

Third, Aquinas followed Averroes that the potential intellect has the highest degree of incorporeal potentiality/weakest degree of incorporeal actuality among intellectual substances. Since it doesn't possess any actual thought intrinsically, its actualization depends on abstraction of the forms of objects external to it, *viz.* the forms of hylomorphic substances. Accordingly, Aquinas sees a gradation of intellectual substances based on their degree of having actualized incorporeal potentiality. Since the human intellect is in pure potential for thought and depends on abstraction of the forms of hylomorphic substance for it to think, it occupies the lowest place among intellectual

substances. The place of the intellectual substance in this hierarchical gradation is indicative of the kind of being it is, as it sits at the precipice of both the bodily and intellectual realms in a nature that unites them. This unified nature is evidenced by Aquinas's position that the abstractive process begins with the receptivity of the form in the senses and is further refined until it terminates in the illumination of the form in the imagination, and which results in reception of the form in the potential intellect. Since both the presence of images and their formation require a body, Aquinas has a basis for rejecting the view that the human soul must be a substance altogether separate from the body on account of its being the source of the intellectual power. Aquinas's adoption of Averroes's account of abstraction requires that human intellection depends on the body for its cognitive content. As such, the human intellect is the kind of intellect that requires an essential relationship to a body, precluding the Platonism that would seem to follow from the soul's intellectual nature and *per se* existence. To put another way, the abstractive nature of human intellect requires that (2-3) above must go with (1).

5.4 The Indispensability of Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic Principles to Aquinas's Ontology of Soul

Over the course of the past two chapters, we have seen that Aquinas was consistent throughout his career in maintaining the form-essence distinction, the Communicability of Being Doctrine, the reality of incorporeal potentiality, and the place of human intellect as the lowest of intellectual substances, which required an abstractive account of intellection that leaves the soul essentially related to the body. He used these principles to answer objections to his ontology of soul, critique rival theories, and

elaborate on his explanation of how the soul can be both a subsistent substance and a substantial form. Several things follow from Aquinas's commitment to the above principles. First, since Aquinas adopted these principles from Arabic/Islamic sources, one must conclude that the Arabic/Islamic and (indirectly) Neoplatonic thinkers contributed to Aquinas's interpretation of Aristotelian hylomorphism and psychology. Second, since these principles provide a fundamental framework for Aquinas's account of the ontology of soul, one can conclude that his account remained the same throughout his career. Finally, since these principles are an indispensable part of Aquinas's account, they provide a vantage-point from which one might assess contemporary presentations of Aquinas's philosophical anthropology. It is with the above conclusions in mind that I return to evaluate the positions offered by "Latin Christian Interpretation" (LCI) and the "Aquinas as Aristotelian" (AAA) thinkers introduced in Chapter 1.

5.5 An Assessment of the Latin Christian Interpretation

The common feature of LCI accounts of Aquinas's conception of human nature is that they treat it from the perspective of the Scholastic task of explaining how the soul can be both a *hoc aliquid* and a substantial form. For instance, Anton Pegis maintains that Aquinas had re-stated the Augustinian conception of the soul in the technical language of Aristotelian science. Richard Dales treats Aquinas as being the first thinker in the Scholastic tradition to develop a properly Aristotelian explanation of the soul as *hoc aliquid* and substantial form, as a result of Aquinas having greater access to the works of Aristotle than those who preceded him. Finally, Bazan has argued that Aquinas loosely

used Aristotelian terminology to express a quasi-Platonic view of the human soul that resembled the positions of his Scholastic predecessors and peers. However, Bazan thinks that the Averroist controversy forced Aquinas to sharpen his understanding of the implications of treating the human soul as a substantial form, such that afterwards, Aquinas's position became closer to Aristotle's and thereby deviated from the Scholastic tenancy to combine Platonist conception of the soul with Aristotelian terminology in an eclectic mix. This section provides a summary of the above views and a provides a brief assessment in light of the the work done in the previous three chapters.

5.5.1 Anton Pegis

We saw in Chapter 1 that Anton Pegis found the works of Aristotle and Augustine to be the primary sources for Aquinas's philosophical anthropology. According to Pegis, Augustine's spiritual conception of human personhood provided the content of Aquinas's conception of human nature, whereas Aristotle's hylomorphic account of substance provided Aquinas with a framework for expressing his Augustinianism in a way that avoided the pitfalls of Platonic dualist accounts. Pegis thus concluded that Aquinas's Augustinian conception of human nature expressed in Aristotelian language provided a truly novel perspective on philosophical anthropology that would have been alien to the Aristotelian commentators. That is to say, the issue of how the human soul could be seen as both a *hoc aliquid* and a subsistent substance simply would not have been taken up by any Aristotelian commentator prior to Aquinas because it was a unique question for those who were interested in wedding Augustinian anthropology with Aristotelian

hylomorphism. Since the Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic commentators were almost certainly unaware of Augustinianism and concerned with different problems, Pegis treated them as unimportant sources for Aquinas's solution, except perhaps as presenting rival positions. For instance, in Chapter 1, we saw Pegis's paint Avicenna as being an occasionalist and Platonic about the the relationship between the soul and body, and thus incapable of offering any perspective on how the unity of the human person might be expressed in Aristotelian terms (Pegis 1963, p. 28-29; Pegis 1976, p. 188). Similarly, we saw that Pegis interpret Aquinas's treatment Averroes's philosophical anthropology to be "essentially Platonic, but which is defended by appeal to the authority of Aristotle." (Pegis 1976, p. 162). Because Pegis treats Avicenna and Averroes to be Platonists about human nature, and because Pegis sees Aquinas's project as attempting to express the unity of the human person within an Augustinian anthropology, Pegis dismissed the Arabic/Islamic philosophers as major sources for Aquinas's philosophical anthropology.

Pegis is correct that Aquinas was concerned with providing an account of how the human soul could be seen to have *per se* existence and yet also have an essential relationship to a body, that he inherited this concern from Augustine and his Augustinian predecessors, and that his proposed solution employed the framework of Aristotelian hylomorphism. However, Pegis is simply incorrect to treat the Arabic/Islamic philosophers as providing positions that Aquinas could critique and use as a point of contrast to his own position. Though Aquinas does ultimately reject Avicenna's dualistic view of the soul and Averroes's treatment of the human intellect as a substance separate from the human soul, the previous three chapters have shown that Avicenna, Averroes,

and Neoplatonic commentators (through the medium of Avicenna) offered perspectives that Aquinas selectively incorporated into his ontology of soul. Moreover, we saw that these principles offered decisive interpretations of the Aristotelian framework that precluded other possible interpretations (e.g. the form-essence distinction as opposed to form-essence identity) or were re-interpretations of that framework which were at odds with Aristotle's own positions (e.g. Aquinas's Ammonian-inspired Communicability of Being Doctrine). These principles therefore influenced the content of Aquinas's explanation of how the human soul could be treated as a substantial form and also a subsistent substance. As such, it is inaccurate to maintain that Augustinianism and Aristotle's hylomorphism determined the content of Aquinas's ontology of soul. The Arabic/Islamic was at least as important an influence. The Augustinian influence determined what Aquinas's philosophical anthropology must maintain, whereas Aquinas employed the Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic principles discussed in previous chapters to explain what those precepts meant. These principles were therefore indispensable to the development of Aquinas's ontology of soul and its relationship to the body.

5.5.2 Richard Dales

The summary of Richard Dales's account of Aquinas's philosophical anthropology in Chapter 1 revealed that Dales sees it as the consequence of Aquinas having carefully worked through the unsuccessful attempts of his predecessors in resolving textual conflicts in Aristotle's works and in reconciling Aristotle's hylomorphism with the Scholastic conviction that the soul is both *hoc aliquid* and substantial form. In effect,

Dales's interpretation of Aquinas's philosophical anthropology treats Aristotle and the Scholastic tradition as Aquinas's formative sources. For instance, Avicenna receives no mention in Dale's exposition of Aquinas's philosophical anthropology, and Averroes is only treated as a figure of opposition for Aquinas on the issue of the unity of intellect for all humans and its separation from the human soul. Although Dales does not deny that Aquinas drew on the Arabic/Islamic sources, his lack of consideration of their role in Aquinas's solution is a significant drawback in providing a complete account of Aquinas's ontology of soul, since the present work has shown how the Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic sources provided Aquinas with principles indispensable to his position.

5.5.3 Carlos Bazan

Finally, we saw in Chapter 1 that B. Carlos Bazan thinks that the young Aquinas interprets the soul as *hoc aliquid* and substantial form in a dualistic manner, such that the soul is a separate intellectual substance and its relation to the body as a form is downplayed. Bazan thus maintains that the philosophical anthropology contained in Aquinas's early writings is generally the same as his "ecletic Aristotelian" peers, who conceived of the human soul as *hoc aliquid* to imply that it must be a substance in its own right, and its role of form was seen as causing the body to possess certain perfections. It is worth citing again Bazan's conception of Aquinas's ontology of soul in his early works:

> At the beginning of his career, Thomas also held [with the eclectic Aristotelians] that the human soul was form and substance: "*anima rationalis praeter alias formas dicitur esse substantia, et hoc aliquid, secundum quod habet esse absolutum, et quod distinguitur; quia anima potest dupliciter considerari, scilicet secundum quod est substantia, et secundum quod est forma*" (*In Sent.* II, d. 19, q. 1, a. 1 ad 4m) The notion of *hoc aliquid* in this text is still imprecise and when

> Thomas discusses its meaning he points out other theoretical implications of the notion (universal hylomorphism and individuation). At this stage of development of his philosophical anthropology, Thomas has not yet reached the level of precision that will be found later in his *Questions on the Soul* (Bazan 1997, p. 12).

However, Bazan thinks that Aquinas made a decisive shift away from the dualistic account of human nature in his early works after encountering Averroes's doctrine that all human beings share in a singular separate intellect. Bazan argues that Aquinas began to pay closer attention to the implications of treating the human soul as a substantial form, which he then used to combat the Averroean account of intellect, Again, it is worth revisiting Bazan's account of Aquinas's purported change of view that occurred in the middle of his career:

> It is in the course of his refutation of Averroes's doctrine that Thomas fully realizes that in order to justify how a particular human being, who is a composite of body and soul, is the subject of an intellectual operation, he has to consider him or her the subject of an intellectual being, for second acts (operations) depend upon first act (being). But the principle of being in composite substances is their substantial form; consequently, if human beings think, it is because their substantial form is intellectual in nature. The essence of the human soul is then to be a substantial form. It is in his confrontation with Averroes that Thomas realizes that the conception of the soul as a complete intellectual substance is fundamentally flawed and leads to an inconsistent view of human nature. It is in this confrontation that he also realizes that being essentially "intellectual" is not necessarily synonymous with being a complete intellectual substance, because a co-principle of a substance, like the human soul, or even an accident of a substance, like the intellectual power (*potentia intellectiva*), can also be intellectual by nature. Thomas's critique of Averroes in the *Summa contra Gentiles* is the catalyst of his new conception of the soul and sets the framework for the important series of psychological works that he later writes in Italy before returning to Paris in 1269 (Bazan 2012, p. 163-164).

Over the course of this dissertation, I have shown that Aquinas adopts a handful of principles from Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic sources, which are indispensable to Aquinas's framework for explaining how the human soul can be both a substantial form

and a subsistent substance. Moreover, Aquinas consistently employs these principles throughout his career. On Bazan's account, Aquinas began his career thinking of the soul as one thing (i.e., as a pure intellectual substance) and ended it thinking differently of the soul (i.e., as a substantial form with an intellectual power). To be sure, Aquinas sometimes describes the soul as a separate substance like the angels in his early works, whereas no such descriptions appear in his later works. However, this and similar descriptions are by themselves no indication that Aquinas had substantively revised his position mid-career. For instance, in the opening lines of *De Ente et Essentia*, Chapter 4, Aquinas remarks that he intends to embark on the study of "essence in separate substances, namely in the soul, the intelligences, and the first cause" (43.375.1-3). This seems to imply that the soul is a naturally separate substance, like the angels. However, such an interpretation is precluded by Aquinas's remarks at the end of *De Ente et Essentia,* Chapter 4:

> Because it [i.e. the human soul] has more potency among other intelligible substances, it follows that the human soul is in such proximity to material things that a material thing is drawn to it to participate in its existence, such that from soul and body results one existence in one composition, yet, so far as this existence is the soul's existence, it is not dependent on the body.[130]

As we have seen, Aquinas is drawing on the place of the human soul within the hierarchy of intelligible substances to distinguish its nature from the nature of the angelic beings. Since the human intellect is such that it is in pure potential to receive its intelligible object, it relies on receptivity of form from the sensible world for actualization of its

130 Et propter hoc quod inter alias substantias intellectuales plus habet de potentia, ideo efficitur in tantum propinqua rebus materialibus, ut res materialis trahatur ad participandum esse suum, ita scilicet quod ex anima et corpore resultat unum esse in uno composito, quamvis illud esse, prout est animae, non sit dependens a corpore (*De Ente,* Chapter 4, 43.377.186-192).

cognition. Moreover, since sensation is a bodily process, a body must belong to the human soul by its essence. In other words, the human soul is an intellectual substance that relies on the process of abstraction of intelligible form from sensible substances. But the notion that the human soul is the lowest of intellectual substances such that its intellectual act requires abstracting form from sensible substances comes directly from Averroes's *Long Commentary on De Anima*.[131] The principles of Aquinas's ontology of soul therefore provide conceptual content to Aquinas's description of the soul as a separate substance. As we have seen, Aquinas's commitment to Averroean principles, as well as the form-essence distinction/Avicennian hylomorphism, and the Ammonian-inspired Communicability of Being Doctrine remained the same throughout his career. *Contra* Bazan, then, one can justifiably infer that Aquinas's ontology of the soul is, at its core, the same in his early works as in his later works.

5.5.4 A Summary Assessment of the Latin Christian Interpretation

On each of the above views, the Latin Scholastic tradition is seen as the predominant influence on Aquinas's philosophical anthropology. I do not intend to deny the importance that this tradition had in framing the issues that Aquinas had faced: certainly, his aim was to provide an account of how the soul could be both a *hoc aliquid* and a substantial form, and his theological commitments oriented his argumentation to conclusions that were, at minimum, open to the possibility of the soul's immortality and of bodily resurrection. Nevertheless, we saw that Aquinas's solution to these issues, and his arguments both for the immortality of the soul and the possibility of bodily

131 See Chapter 2, p. 75-78, and Chapter 3, p. 115-125.

resurrection rely heavily on principles derived from Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic sources. Moreover, Aquinas often reinterpreted traditional Scholastic principles as expressions of Arabic/Islamic principles. For instance, we had seen him gloss the *quod est/quo est* distinction in terms of the form-essence distinction in the *Commentary on the Sentences* and in other works. Addressing the influence that the Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic sources had on Aquinas's solution to the issues he faced, which I have called a "Source Based Contextualist" approach (SBC), therefore helps fill gaps left by LCI and corrects errors in interpretation left by those gaps.

5.6 An Assessment of the Aquinas as Aristotelian Approach

The common feature of Thomistic scholarship that takes the AAA approach is that they treat Aquinas's conception of human nature by analyzing his arguments with contemporary philosophical devices. However, such interpretations are generally part of a larger project of assessing Aquinas's theory of human nature for its utility in addressing issues in philosophy of mind, and other fields. This generally results in an interpretation of Aquinas's philosophical anthropology that is ahistorical; since argument analysis and assessment is what matters, Aquinas's sources are given little or no consideration, with the exception of Aristotle. Such interpretations leave the impression that Aquinas's philosophical anthropology is the result of his directly reading the texts of Aristotle and following those texts through to their logical implications.

5.6.1 Robert Pasnau

In the first chapter, we saw that although Pasnau acknowledges other intellectual traditions had influenced Aquinas's thought, he nevertheless sees Aristotle's works as an indispensable source for Aquinas's conception of human nature. Consequently, Pasnau interprets Aquinas's arguments concerning the soul's subsistence as the logical outcome of thinking through Aristotle's remarks about hylomorphism and the human soul.[132] Aquinas's hylomorphism is characterized by what Pasnau calls 'reductive actualism;' hylomorphic substances are "bundles of actuality unified by organization around a substantial form" (Pasnau 2002, p. 131). On Pasnau's reading of Aquinas's works, 'matter' is taken "to be shorthand for a certain kind of actuality, actuality in motion," (Pasnau 2002, 136), rather than an addition to actuality in constituting a hylomorphic substance. Pasnau thinks this enables one to interpret aspects of Aquinas's thought that

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132 For instance, in the opening discussion of the human being as a hylomorphic substance in *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, Pasnau remarks:

> As Aquinas understands Aristotle, the question W*hat 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 accepts) is that it is form, in the ultimate analysis, that makes the matter be what it is (p. 34-35).

Even concerning Aquinas's position that the soul is naturally immortal, Pasnau maintains that Aquinas was following Aristotle's view on human psychology to its logical conclusion:

> Aquinas believes that the relationship between the human soul and the human body is fundamentally the same as all form-matter relationships. Soul actualizes body, with respect to both existence and the various operations of life. The only distinctive feature of this relationship in the human case is that the rational soul has an operation that surpasses matter, an operation that need not (and indeed cannot) be performed by the human body... Far from being an embarrassment to this hylomorphic analysis, his conclusions about the rational soul's status are an immediate consequence of the analysis (p. 72).

are difficult to understand regarding human nature and to solve issues in contemporary philosophy of mind.[133] Pasnau's position therefore either implies or explicitly maintains three positions that are problematic and/or incomplete in light of the consideration of the Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic influence on Aquinas's ontology of soul in Chapters 2-4:

1. It is possible to provide a sufficient account of Aquinas's conception of hylomorphism and the subsistence of the human soul by treating Aristotle's works as his sole source.
2. The form-matter relation is a relation of an ordering actuality to a cluster of subordinate actualities.

The remainder of this section will evaluate (1-2), in light of the conclusions drawn from Chapters 2-4.

Concerning (1), it should be apparent that Aquinas's conception of hylomorphism was heavily influenced by Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic principles. First, we saw that Aquinas makes a real distinction between form and essence, such that essence is understood to cause the composition of form and matter in hylomorphic substances. Rather, form and matter are understood to be parts of hylomorphic essences. Aquinas followed Avicenna in interpreting Aristotle's remarks on hylomorphism in accord with the form-essence distinction. This Avicennian perspective on Aristotelian hylomorphism afforded Aquinas an explanation of how the human soul is able to remain of the human essence in a disembodied state: it is a part of a complete essence that lacks its other part.

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133 See Pasnau 2002: "Much of what goes by the name 'nonreductive' in contemporary philosophy of mind is compatible with how I understand Aquinas's account" (p. 133).

Moreover, he relies on the form-essence distinction in his reasoning that that bodily resurrection is a reasonable expectation.

Second, we saw that Aquinas conceives of form as the "giver of *esse*" to matter. I argued in Chapter 2 that Aquinas follows Avicenna in maintaining that God causes form to exist, and uses form as an instrument to cause matter to exist, thereby bringing about the existence of a sensible substance.[134] This is distinct from Aristotle's conception of form, which holds that there is nothing more to the existence of a sensible substance than substantial form determining matter to bear essential properties. Thus, on the Aristotelian view, substantial form and matter are said to have existence only insofar as they are principles of sensible substances. This difference lends Aquinas the possibility of adopting the Communicability of Being Doctrine, *viz.* if a substantial form has *per se* existence, it causes the sensible substance to have that existence (*via* giving existence to matter). Since, on Aquinas's account, the human soul's intellectual nature implies that it has *per se* existence despite also being a substantial form, the Communicability of Being Doctrine applies to it. Thus the human soul can reasonably be treated as both a subsistent substance (on account of its having *per se* existence) and a substantial form (on account of its causing matter to exist and bear essential properties).

Third, Aquinas follows Averroes in taking the potential intellect to be characterized by incorporeal potentiality, which is a category of substance distinct from corporeal actuality (i.e., substantial form), incorporeal actuality (i.e. actualized intellect/separate form), and corporeal potentiality (prime matter). Averroes uses the introduction of incorporeal potentiality to rank separate intellectual substances in a

134 See Chapter 2, p. 31-38.

hierarchy based on the the degree to which their potential for understanding has been actualized. We saw in Chapters 3 and 4 that Aquinas followed Averroes in this regard. Moreover, despite their disagreement about whether human intellect was to be treated as a power of the soul or a substance separate from the soul, Aquinas and Averroes both treated the human intellect as the lowest of intellectual substances as a consequence of having pure incorporeal potentiality. Accordingly, Aquinas follows Averroes in maintaining that the human intellect requires that its proper object, form, be received *via* abstraction from sensible substance. Since the process of abstraction requires sensation, and sensation requires a body, the nature of the human intellect is such that it is essentially related to body. Aquinas's Averroean perspective on the reality of incorporeal potentiality, the place of the human intellect in the hierarchy of intellectual substances, and the process of intellectual reception thus enable Aquinas to allow for the human soul to be treated as a substance while also requiring a body.

Each of the above-mentioned principles that have come from Arabic/Islamic or Neoplatonic sources are indispensable to Aquinas's ontology of soul. That is to say, an understanding of each of these principles are necessary to provide a complete account of Aquinas's conception of the relationship between the soul and body and the soul's subsistence. To the extent that one neglects consideration of these principles, one runs the risk of misrepresenting Aquinas's positions, or, of misrepresenting the reasoning behind Aquinas's position even if one properly represents it. Pasnau's 'reductive actualist' account of Aquinas's conception of hylomorphism and of the soul as a subsistent form runs such a risk, precisely because it treats consideration of Aristotle's works alone as

sufficient the philosophical source for interpreting Aquinas's theory of human nature. This will be apparent after analyzing Pasnau's interpretations of Aquinas's positions from the vantage-point of reductive actualism in light of what has been concluded in Chapters 2-4 of the present work.

Pasnau believes that reductive actualism – i.e., the view that matter is related to form as a cluster of subordinate actualities to a superordinate actuality – captures Aquinas's conception of hylomorphism and can explain difficult to interpret passages covering Aquinas's claims about form and about human nature. For instance, we have seen Aquinas argue in various works that matter requires form to exist, but form can exist without matter; thus there is no impediment to maintaining that a substantial form might be subsistent. Pasnau cites the following passage as an example:

> The relationship of matter and form is discovered to be such that form gives existence to matter. Therefore, it is impossible that matter exists without some form. However, it is not impossible that some form exists without matter. For form does not have a dependence on matter in its essence. But if some forms are found that can exist only in matter, this is so insofar as they are distant from the first principle, which is the First act and pure.[135]

Regarding the above passage and passages like this, Pasnau writes:

> Matter is not something that a form is literally joined to, or that it somehow dwells within. In other words, to say that a form "exists only in matter" is not to ascribe a relational property to that form, but to characterize that form's intrinsic character. So understood, it is neither incoherent nor obscure to claim that a form can exist independently of matter. A subsistent form has a less deficient mode of being; it is not a material form, but this is not to say that it can magically free itself from some material substratum. (Pasnau 2002, p. 138).

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135 Talis autem invenitur habitudo materiae et formae, quia forma dat esse materiae. Et ideo impossibile est esse materiam sine aliqua forma. Tamen non est impossibile esse aliquam formam sine materia. Forma enim non habet in eo quod est forma dependentiam ad materiam. Sed si inueniantur alique forme que non possunt esse nisi in materia, hoc accidit eis secundum quod sunt distantes a primo principio quod est actus Primus et purus.(*De Ente et Essentia*, Chapter 4, 43.376.45-50).

According to Pasnau, this perspective has the advantage of placing Aquinas's hylomorphic account of human nature in the category of many contemporary non-reductive approaches to the mind-body problem. Since matter is conceived as a cluster of actualities organized by form rather than an altogether different sort of thing than form, and the soul is a substantial form, this avoids the problem of mind-body interaction without denying the reality of either the mental or corporeal. In other words, Pasnau is concerned with showing that a reductive actualist reading succeeds in denying that Aquinas conceives of matter as a type of stuff that is altogether different from the stuff of form, yet exists alongside form and somehow interacts with it, despite phrasing in the *De Ente* that, when read literally, present matter as a substance capable of containing form.

Pasnau is setting a task for Aquinas's claim that form gives existence to matter that it is not designed to address. First, I do not mean to deny that Aquinas's remarks in the *De Ente* passage above and related passages preclude treating matter as a substance in its own right. We have seen that the SBC approach has offered an account of Aquinas's conception of matter that precludes treating matter as a substance.[136] Additionally, it makes clear that substantial form has existential and essential priority, which Pasnau is at pains to emphasize.[137] Yet, the SBC approach does not involve treating matter as a bundle of actualities. Rather, we have seen that Aquinas views matter as a potentiality for substantial existence. This position appears as part of the 'existential essentialist' framework he derives from the work of Avicenna, in which God causes matter to exist by

136 See Chapter 3, p. 85-96.

137 It is unclear how reductive actualism makes sense of this priority, seeing as Aquinas's conception of the role of form is not directly derivable from Aristotle's conception of form. See Chapter 3, p. 90-92.

giving existence to form.[138] The conclusion to draw from this is that matter is an irreducible category that belongs to corporeal being, not that matter is a bundle of actualities organized by form. Such an account is extraneous and unsupported by the broader context that Aquinas's Arabic/Islamic sources provide.

The above conclusion also hints at how Aquinas can maintain that a substantial form can both be a form for a body and continue to exist after corruption of the body. Since matter is a potential for substantial existence, existence properly belongs to form. Consequently, if the existence of a substantial form is *per se*, it will cause matter to have existence, as all forms do, despite its capability of existing after bodily corruption. Throughout the previous chapters, we have seen Aquinas repeatedly offer the above reasoning, which he always grounded in principles derived from Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic sources, *viz.* by drawing on the form-essence distinction, the Communicability of Being Doctrine, and the degree of incorporeal potentiality of human intellect. These arguments were to establish logical harmony between the notions that the human soul A) is a substantial form and B) possesses *per se* existence as a consequence of its intellectual nature, a harmony that is impossible on a straightforward reading of the hylomorphism and account of separate substances presented in Aristotle's works. On the contrary, Pasnau frames Aquinas's solution as a way around having to treat the soul-body as identical or as two substances interacting with one another; since the soul is a superordinate actuality that gives actuality to the actualities subordinate to it, it is possible that the superordinate can exist without the subordinate. But this is to confuse Aristotle's notion that form, considered as such, need not be a substantial form, with the stronger

138 See Chapter 3, p, 88, n. 39

notion that a substantial form can have *per se* existence. The former follows from Aristotle's hylomorphism; the latter does not. In order to argue for the latter, then, Aquinas needed to present argumentation that goes beyond Pasnau's synopsis, and the principles from Aquinas's Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic sources provided the key premises in that argumentation.

Pasnau's reductive actualist reading also provides an incomplete account of Aquinas's solution to the so-called "mind-soul problem."[139] Pasnau summarizes the mind-soul problem as follows: "[Aquinas] needed the rational soul to give shape to the body, to give rise to the body's nutritive operations, to be the inner principle behind sensation, and at the same time to be immaterial. How can the soul do all of those things and yet be immaterial?" (Pasnau 2003, p. 212). Pasnau finds Aquinas's solution rest in a distinction between substantial form and its powers. Pasnau writes,

> In its own right, the soul is a substantial form, whose essence is unknown or at least hidden. What we can know of the soul is what we can observe of its operations, which leads us to infer that the soul has certain powers. These powers "flow" from the soul's essence, but they are not that essence. Hence the human soul gives rise to our ability to digest food, which is as physical a process as anything in nature. But the human soul also gives rise to our capacity for thought, which all agreed is not a physical process. Since Aquinas distinguished the soul and its powers, he saw no difficulty in reconciling these roles (Pasnau 2003, p. 212).[140]

Pasnau is correct to highlight that the distinction between the soul and its powers are crucial for Aquinas's position that there is no logical contradiction involved in holding that the soul has an incorporeal act and yet is also a substantial form of the body. Since the powers are different from the soul and also from one another, the problem of

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139 See (1-3) on page 1 of the current chapter (p. 204).

140 Also see Pasnau 2008, p. 12-15.

identifying the material with the immaterial and *vice versa* simply doesn't arise. However, this does not solve the problem by itself. In order to complete the account, Aquinas must explain how it would be possible for a substantial form to possess both corporeal and incorporeal powers. Since substantial forms are generally material forms – i.e., their existence is limited to the existence of their hylomorphic composition – and incorporeal powers have *per se* existence, how could a substantial form be *per se* existent? In previous chapters, we saw that this question required Aquinas to adopt a conception of hylomorphism that allowed him to treat form as part of a hylomorphic essence such that it could retain is role as form even absent its actualization of matter (*via* the form-essence distinction and Avicennian hylomorphism), and also envision substantial form as capable of having a *per se* activity and existence (*via* the Communicability of Being Doctrine and related considerations). However, Aquinas is faced with the first issue of why the human intellect would belong to the soul as its power. The Averroean conception of human intellect as characterized by pure incorporeal potentiality, provided such an answer: Since pure intellectual potentiality requires reception of its intelligible object from without, it is dependent on abstraction of intelligible form from sensible substance, and since sensation is a bodily act, the human intellect had to be a power of a being essentially ordered to a body as a substantial form. Thus, again, we see that Aquinas's Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic sources are necessary to provide a complete account of Aquinas's position.

In light of the above considerations, we can conclude that Aquinas's arguments cannot be treated as the result of Aquinas directly engaging Aristotle's works. To the

contrary, the Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic commentary heavily impacted Aquinas's reading of the Aristotelian corpus, his framing of the problems, and the principles he employed to solve those problems. The lack of consideration of theses sources in Pasnau's studies of Aquinas significantly limit their interpretive power.

5.6.2 Eleonore Stump

Like Pasnau, Eleonore Stump sees Aquinas's theory of the soul-body relationship as an outgrowth of working out the logical conclusions of Aristotle's remarks about hylomorphism and the soul, and as a valuable resource for addressing issues in contemporary philosophy of mind. Moreover, Stump acknowledges that Aquinas's account of the human person must reconcile the Christian notion that the human person is at once a material object subject to bodily corruption and continues to exist after bodily death on account of the soul's immortality (Stump 2003, p 192). So, as Stump sees it, Aquinas's fundamental task is to explain how an immortal soul fits in to the framework of Aristotelian hylomorphism. According to Stump, Aquinas's investigation:

> consists in arguing that the human soul is the *highest* in the rank ordering of all the forms configuring material objects, because, unlike material forms, it has an operation (namely, intellective cognition) which surpasses the capacities of matter altogether, and the *lowest* in the rank ordering of subsistent forms able to exist independently of matter. Consequently, in the ranking of forms, the human soul is located right at the boundary between the material and the spiritual. For this reason, the soul partakes of some of the features of the spiritual world, but it is also able to be in contact with matter, so that the body informed by the soul is the highest in the order of material objects (Stump 2003, p. 205).

We have seen that the place of the soul within the hierarchy of intellectual substances and subsistent forms plays a role in Aquinas's explanation of how the human soul can be both a substantial form and a subsistent substance. However, we have seen that Aquinas's

treatment of the soul as sitting at the precipice of the material and immaterial was the result of following the Averroean conception of incorporeal potentiality to its logical conclusion, and using this category to distinguish species of intellectual substances. Since the human soul is the weakest of intellectual substances, it requires reception of intelligible form from an external, sensible object, and, consequently, must be essentially related to a body as a form. Yet this required Aquinas to adopt a view of form that deviated from Aristotle's in important ways. First, Aquinas opted for an Avicennian reading of Aristotelian hylomorphism that follows from the form-essence distinction. Second, Aquinas had to present form as a "giver of *esse*" such that it would align with the Communicability of Being thesis, which is Aquinas's remix of the Ammonian approach to the soul. Therefore, *contra* Stump, Aquinas's solution to the issue of how an incorporeal, subsistent substance can also be a substantial form for the body includes more principles than the place of the soul in the ontological hierarchy, and those principles themselves involved important modifications and deviations from Aristotle's hylomorphism.

Stump's own estimation of Aquinas's explanation of how the soul can be treated as a subsistent intellectual substance and a substantial is that it is outdated and thus "not likely to be persuasive to contemporary readers" (Stump 2003, p. 205). So, in order to extract value from Aquinas's account for addressing issues in contemporary philosophy of mind, Stump turns to contemporary philosophical devices to offer an updated interpretation of Aquinas's position. As we saw in Chapter 1, Stump orients her reading of Aquinas's ontology of soul around two of Aquinas's central claims:

a) Human beings are composites of form and matter.

b) The subject of mental activity belongs to the whole human being.

According to Stump, both (a) and (b) require commitment to two other claims:

c) The subject of mental activity is a material substance,

d) Mental activity can be an object of study for the natural sciences.

Since Aquinas's account of human nature is implicitly committed to (c) and (d), this precludes substance dualism, which Stump characterizes as holding that "the mind is not composed of matter and that scientific investigation of the brain cannot teach us anything about the mind" (Stump 2003, p. 212). Rather, Stump thinks that Aquinas's endorsement of (b) implies that "mental states will be implemented in the matter of the body" (Stump 2003, p. 213), and thus Aquinas's perspective shares something in common with physicalist accounts of mind. However, Stump also claims that Aquinas's position aligns with dualism insofar as he treats the soul as capable of existing after bodily death on account of its capacity of thought being incorporeal. As such, Aquinas's position resists easy placement into the categories of contemporary philosophy of mind.

Stump finds Aquinas's position to be in company with contemporary theories that defy the supposed physicalism/dualism dichotomy. For instance, Stump finds a close comparison between Aquinas's conception of the soul as a subsistent substance and substantial form, and the functionalist perspective offered by Richard Boyd, who maintains that mental states are configurational states realized in some substrate, whether that substrate is material or non-material. Stump writes:

> Boyd's mental phenomena, like Aquinas's soul, are configurational; like the soul in Aquinas's account, mental phenomena on Boyd's view have no essential

> compositional properties. Furthermore, both Boyd and Aquinas agree in supposing that it is possible for what is purely configurational to exist on its own apart from any material composition and to function in that condition. For both of them, then, it is possible that there be functioning, disembodied mental states (Stump 2003, p. 214).

Stump's position that Aquinas's philosophical anthropology can be restated within the framework of contemporary philosophy of mind is misguided. Aquinas's ontology of the human soul resists being classified as a dualism or physicalism not because it purportedly shares something in common with each in a logically consistent way. Rather, it resists such categorization because it was never constructed to address the issues that dualists and physicalists consider. In particular, treating Aquinas's solution as a viable contemporary alternative to the dualist/physicalist dichotomy requires ignoring Aquinas's remarks about intellect as an actuality without being an actuality of a body or a bodily organ, thus having its own existence (*per se esse*) unconditioned by the body. This is precisely what Stump does: "Although Aquinas mistakenly supposes that the intellect is tied to no particular bodily organ, he nonetheless holds that the intellectual soul is the form constituting the human body as a whole. On his view, therefore, mental states will be implemented in the matter of the body" (Stump 2003, p. 213). If one takes "mental states" in the above-cited passage to be co-extensive with what Aquinas refers to as "intellectual operations," Stump's reasoning seems to presuppose that the intellectual operation is identical with the soul in order to draw the conclusion that intellectual operations are operations involving actualization of matter:

1. The soul and its operations are identical.
2. The soul is the form of the body.

3. Therefore, the soul's operation's are operation's of the body (*via* 1 and 2).

4. Human intellectual operations are operations of the soul.

5. Therefore, human intellectual operations are operations of the body (*via* 4 and 5).

However, we have seen in the previous sub-section that Aquinas distinguishes between the soul and its operations. In fact, Pasnau found this to be the basis for Aquinas to maintain coherently that the soul can at once be a substantial form and a subsistent substance; since the soul causes its operations, but is distinct from them, there is no conflict in maintaining that the soul has both immaterial and material operations. As such, Aquinas would deny (1). Therefore, neither (3) nor (5) can be soundly inferred.

On the other hand, one might work backwards from rejecting Aquinas's claim that human intellectual operations are not acts of any bodily organ to the conclusion that they must inform matter like the other operations of the soul. Such an approach has the advantage that one need not deny the distinction between the soul and its operations. Nevertheless, we have seen that the supra-organic operation of the intellectual power is a key premise, without which one cannot make sense of Aquinas's reasoning that the human soul is subsistent. That is to say, Aquinas concludes that the human soul has *per se esse* precisely because an incorporeal intellectual power belongs to the human soul. Aquinas's commitment to the Averroean notion that the human intellect possesses pure incorporeal reality requires that it be non-bodily in nature. Thus the feature of Aquinas's account that Stump thinks he shares with contemporary dualist accounts of mind depends on his commitment to the essential incorporeality of the human intellectual operation. The Thomistic conception of mental states therefore cannot be compared to a

functionalist perspective that would treat intellectual operations as implementable in either neural stuff or immaterial stuff. Thus, Aquinas must offer an explanation of the unity of the human person that looks different from the one Stump has presented.

On Stump's account of Aquinas's view, the person is a unity because its form guarantees that its configuration is the same, regardless of whether it configures matter or is an immaterial configuration. However, we have seen in previous chapters that the human soul gives its *esse* to matter since it is a substantial form. The soul's having existence *per se* follows from it having an intellectual operation, but it is the same existence that the soul communicates to the body that it also has *per se*. The body is therefore not a being separate from the soul, even if the soul can exist separate from the body. But in order for Aquinas to explain adequately the above conception of the unity of the human person, he must draw on principles from Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic commentary tradition, which all extend beyond and elaborate on Aristotle's hylomorphism in their own respective ways.

5.6.3 Anthony Kenny

The final representative of the AAA approach I would like to consider, Anthony Kenny, argues against Aquinas's theory of human nature because it ultimately conflicts with the Aristotelian framework that Aquinas uses to his account. In Chapter 1, we saw Kenny argue that the soul cannot itself be treated as a supposit or primary substance/subject if it is also supposed to be a form of the body. It is worth re-citing Kenny's statement of the issue in full:

> There are serious philosophical difficulties in the identification of soul with form; or, to put the point in another way, it is not clear that the Aristotelian notion of 'form', even if coherent in itself, can be used to render intelligible the notion of 'soul' as used by Aquinas . . . Aquinas believed that the human soul was immortal and could survive the death of the body, to be reunited with it at final resurrection. Hence, by identifying the soul with the human substantial form he was committed that the form of a material object could continue to exist when that object had ceased to be. (Kenny 1993, p. 28).

Kenny thinks that Aquinas is mistaken to draw such conclusions from Aristotelian hylomorphism because Aquinas maintains at the same time that the soul is a concrete, subsistent substance, and a form of the body, which is an abstract principle of concrete entities. Thus Kenny argues that Aquinas's account of the human soul is contradictory, since something cannot both be concrete and abstract (Kenny 1993, p. 145). In light of the investigation of Aquinas's theory of human nature in Chapters 3-4 and their grounding in Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic sources in Chapter 2, it should be apparent that the framework for Aquinas's theory of human nature is not drawn fundamentally from Aristotle. Aquinas's conception of form is not simply that it is an actuality of the body. Rather, a substantial form is a "giver of *esse*." That is to say, substantial form causes prime matter to exist and to bear essential properties. Moreover, form is seen to be a part of the essence of a sensible substance. This enables Aquinas to treat of substantial form as more than an abstract principle necessary to account for motion. Indeed, Aquinas's framework allows for legitimate exploration of whether a subsistent, concrete entity might cause the body to exist and also be essentially related to the body. Thus, *contra* Kenny, to dismiss Aquinas's query as a mistaken one because it is not a legitimate query within the framework of Aristotle's hylomorphism is to confuse Aristotle's

hylomorphism with Aquinas's Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic influenced conception of hylomorphism.

5.6.4 Summary Remarks on the "Aquinas as Aristotelian" Approach

We have seen that the above proponents of the AAA approach share the view that Aquinas's theory of human nature can be adequately interpreted by assessing his arguments in light of the conception of hylomorphism that emerges from Aristotle's works. The AAA approach considered Aquinas's conception of the soul and its relationship to the body in isolation from any influence of Aquinas's Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic sources. As a consequence, each of the AAA approaches above led to anachronistic, incomplete, and/or misleading depictions of Aquinas's philosophical anthropology. We have seen in this section that an SBC approach to interpreting Aquinas's theory of human nature corrects and completes the interpretations offered by the AAA proponents. Thus, a proper analysis and assessment of Aquinas's philosophical anthropology, as well as evaluations of its value for contemporary philosophical issues, requires consideration of how the principles Aquinas derived and developed from Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic sources shaped Aquinas's arguments.

5.7 The Value of the Source Based Contextualist Approach

Throughout the course of this dissertation, my focus has been to provide an account of Aquinas's conception of the relationship between the soul and body from the perspective of the sources that he employed to develop his position. We have seen in this

chapter that this "SBC" approach contrasts in important ways from the LCI and AAA approaches taken by other recent scholarship on Aquinas's philosophical anthropology. While the LCI interpreted Aquinas's account from the vantage-point of the issues he inherited from his Scholastic predecessors, and the AAA approach was concerned with assessing Aquinas's arguments in relation to Aristotle's hylomorphism, I have argued that one cannot provide a complete account of Aquinas's solution without considering it within the context of his Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic sources. As important as an understanding of the issues Aquinas faced may be, I believe that this study supports the stronger claim that consideration of the sources that inform Aquinas's solution should take priority in the interpretative process, since these sources provide the principles that ultimately determine the philosophical import of Aquinas's position. Moreover, initial emphasis on considering Aquinas's solution within the context of his sources provides a historical perspective that helps guard against the tendency to provide anachronistic interpretations and assessments. These advantages provide good reason for future expositions, analyses, and assessments of Aquinas's philosophical anthropology to incorporate an SBC approach or draw on SBC oriented scholarship.

The present work has focused on Aquinas's employment of Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic sources in determining the arguments and meaning of Aquinas's position that the soul is both a subsistent substance and substantial form. As such, it is concerned with a sub-set of the sources that influenced Aquinas. Therefore, the current work should not be taken as arguing that the SBC approach is limited only to consideration of Arabic/Islamic and Neoplatonic sources on Aquinas. As indispensable as those sources

were for Aquinas, he was undoubtedly influenced by sources from the Byzantine Greek world, for instance, and from his Scholastic peers, even if to a lesser extent. Nevertheless, study into these other sources should serve to compliment the current study by further contexualizing Aquinas's position within its appropriate historical context and to deepen our understanding of the meaning of Aquinas's conclusions.

The SBC approach has value for Thomistic scholarship beyond issues of philosophical anthropology. That is to say, there is nothing unique about Aquinas's consideration of the relationship between the soul and body that limited Aquinas from drawing on sources outside the Scholastic tradition and the Aristotelian corpus in developing his position. Aquinas's well-recognized distinction between existence and essence has its foundations in the works of Avicenna, for instance. Given that this distinction is important both for Aquinas's arguments for the existence of God and for his account of God's nature, an SBC approach would be invaluable in providing an accurate exposition of Aquinas's rational theology and for assessment of his philosophy of religion. This would contrast with approaches that treat Aquinas's conception of existence from the vantage-point of post-Fregean logic, which run a high risk of presenting an anachronistic account or critique of Aquinas's positions. Since an SBC approach provides the advantage of increases accuracy of interpretation by placing Aquinas's views within the context of the sources he draws on for his arguments, future studies of Aquinas would benefit from employing it.

APPENDIX: Thomas Aquinas on the Simplicity of the Soul

From *In Sent. 1 d. 8, q. 5, a. 2*[141]

Utrum anima sit simplex	**Whether the Soul is Simple?**
Ad secundum sic proceditur:	We proceed to the second article:
	OBJECTIONS:
1. Videtur quod anima sit simplex. Sicut enim dicit philosophus, anima est forma corporis. Sed ibidem dicit, quod forma neque est materia neque compositum. Ergo anima non est composita.	**1.** It seems that the soul is simple. For just as the Philosopher says in *De Anima* II, the soul is the form of the body. He also says there that the form is neither matter nor a composite. Therefore, the soul is not a composite.
2. Praeterea, omne quod est compositum, habet esse ex suis componentibus. Si igitur anima sit composita, tunc ipsa in se habet aliquod esse, et illud esse nunquam removetur ab ea. Sed ex conjunctione animae ad corpus relinquitur esse hominis. Ergo esse hominis est esse duplex, scilicet esse animae, et esse conjuncti: quod non potest esse, cum unius rei sit unicum esse.	**2.** Further, everything that is composite has existence from its components. If, therefore, the soul were a composite, then it would have a certain existence in itself, and that existence would never be removed from it. But from the conjunction of the soul to the body, that existence that is the existence of the human being remains. Therefore, in a human being existence is two, namely an existence of the soul and an existence of the conjunct. But this cannot be, since there is one existence of one thing.
3. Praeterea, omnis compositio quae advenit rei post suum esse completum, est sibi accidentalis. Si igitur anima est composita ex suis principiis, habens in se esse perfectum, compositio ipsius ad corpus erit sibi accidentalis. Sed compositio accidentalis terminatur ad unum per accidens. Ergo ex anima et corpore non efficitur nisi unum per accidens; et ita homo non est ens per se, sed per accidens.	**3.** Further, every composition that comes to a thing after it as a complete existence is accidental to it. If, therefore, the soul is a composition from its principles, having perfect existence in itself, its composition with the body will be accidental to it. But an accidental composition is terminated to unity accidentally (*per accidens*). Therefore, only an accidental unity (*unum per accidens*) is brought about from soul

141 See: Aquinas (1929, pp. 227-232).

and body. So a human being is not a being through itself (*ens per se*), but accidentally (*per accidens*).

4. Contra, Boetius: nulla forma simplex potest esse subjectum. Sed anima est subjectum et potentiarum et habituum et specierum intelligibilium. Ergo non est forma simplex.

4. On the contrary, Boethius says in *De Trinitate* that no simple form can be a subject. But the soul is a subject of powers, habits, and intelligible species. Therefore, the soul is not a simple form.

5. Praeterea, forma simplex non habet esse per se, ut dictum est, art. praec., in corp. Sed illud quod non habet esse nisi per hoc quod est in altero, non potest remanere post illud, nec etiam potest esse motor, quamvis possit esse principium motus, quia movens est ens perfectum in se; unde forma ignis non est motor ut dicitur 8 Physic. Anima autem manet post corpus, et est motor corporis. Ergo non est forma simplex.

5. Further, a simple form does not have existence through itself, as was said. But that which does not have existence except through the fact that is in another cannot remain after that [other thing ceases to exist], nor can it be a mover, although it can be the principle of motion, because a mover is a perfect being in itself. Thus the form of fire is not a mover, as said in *Physics* VIII. However, the soul remains after the body and is a mover of the body. Therefore, it is not a simple form.

6. Praeterea, nulla forma simplex habet in se unde individuetur, cum omnis forma sit de se communis. Si igitur anima est forma simplex, non habebit in se unde individuetur; sed tantum individuabitur per corpus. Remoto autem eo quod est causa individuationis, tollitur individuatio. Ergo remoto corpore, non remanebunt animae diversae secundum individua; et ita non remanebit nisi una anima quae erit ipsa natura animae.

6. Further, no simple form has in itself what is needed to be individuated, since every form is of itself common. If, therefore, the soul is a simple form, it will not have what is needed to be individuated. But it will be individuated through the body alone. However, when that which is the cause of individuation is removed, individuation is destroyed. Therefore, the body being removed, diverse souls will accordingly not remain individual. So only one soul will remain, which will be the nature of soul.

SOLUTION:

(I): Respondeo dicendum, quod hic est duplex opinio. Quidam enim dicunt, quod anima est composita ex materia et forma; quorum etiam sunt quidam dicentes, eamdem esse materiam animae et aliorum corporalium et spiritualium. Sed hoc non videtur esse verum, quia nulla forma

(I): I respond, one should say that there are two opinions in this regard. For some say that the soul is a composition from matter and form, of which some are accustomed to say that the matter of the soul and of other

efficitur intelligibilis, nisi per hoc quod separatur a materia et ab appendentiis materiae. Hoc autem non est inquantum est materia corporalis perfecta corporeitate, cum ipsa forma corporeitatis sit intelligibilis per separationem a materia. Unde illae substantiae quae sunt intelligibiles per naturam, non videntur esse materiales: alias species rerum in ipsis non essent secundum esse intelligibile. Unde Avicenna dicit, quod aliquid dicitur esse intellectivum, quia est immune a materia. Et propterea materia prima, prout consideratur nuda ab omni forma, non habet aliquam diversitatem, nec efficitur diversa per aliqua accidentia ante adventum formae substantialis, cum esse accidentale non praecedat substantiale. Uni autem perfectibili debetur una perfectio. Ergo oportet quod prima forma substantialis perficiat totam materiam. Sed prima forma quae recipitur in materia, est corporeitas, a qua nunquam denudatur, ut dicit Comment. Ergo forma corporeitatis est in tota materia, et ita materia non erit nisi in corporibus. Si enim diceres, quod quidditas substantiae esset prima forma recepta in materia, adhuc redibit in idem; quia ex quidditate substantiae materia non habet divisionem, sed ex corporeitate, quam consequuntur dimensiones quantitatis in actu; et postea per divisionem materiae, secundum quod disponitur diversis sitibus, acquiruntur in ipsa diversae formae. Ordo enim nobilitatis in corporibus videtur esse secundum ordinem situs ipsorum, sicut ignis est super aerem; et ideo non videtur quod anima habeat materiam, nisi materia aequivoce sumatur.

(II): Alii dicunt, quod anima est composita ex quo est et quod est. Differt autem quod

corporeal and spiritual things are the same. But this does not seem to be true, because no form is made intelligible except through the fact that it is separated from matter and the additional aspects of matter. This is not inasmuch as corporeal matter is perfected by corporeality, since the form corporeality is itself intelligible through separation from matter. Thus those substances that are intelligible by nature do not seem to be material; otherwise the species of things in them would not be intelligible according to esse. Thus Avicenna says in *Metaphysics* III, Chapter 8, that something is said to be intellective because it is immune from matter. Therefore, when prime matter is considered stripped of all form, it doesn't have any diversity, but is made diverse through certain accidents prior to the advent of substantial form, even though accidental *esse* does not precede substantial *esse*. Yet, one perfection is owed to one perfectible. Therefore it is necessary that the first substantial form perfects all matter, that is corporeality, from which it is never stripped, as the Commentator says in *Physics* I. Therefore, the form of corporeality is in all matter, and so there will not be matter except in bodies. For if you were to say that the quiddity of substance were the first form received into matter, even then the same thing will arise, because matter doesn't have division from the quiddity of substance, but from corporeality, from which follows the dimensions of quantity in act. And afterwards, through the division of matter, according to which it is disposed to diverse situations, diverse forms are acquired in it. For the order of nobility in bodies is seen to be according to the order of their situation, just as fire is above air. So it does not seem that the soul has matter, unless matter is understood equivocally.

est a materia; quia quod est, dicit ipsum suppositum habens esse; materia autem non habet esse, sed compositum ex materia et forma; unde materia non est quod est, sed compositum. Unde in omnibus illis in quibus est compositio ex materia et forma, est etiam compositio ex quo est et quod est. In compositis autem ex materia et forma quo est potest dici tripliciter. Potest enim dici quo est ipsa forma partis, quae dat esse materiae. Potest etiam dici quo est ipse actus essendi, scilicet esse, sicut quo curritur, est actus currendi. Potest etiam dici quo est ipsa natura quae relinquitur ex conjunctione formae cum materia, ut humanitas; praecipue secundum ponentes quod forma, quae est totum, quae dicitur quidditas, non est forma partis, de quibus est Avicenna. Cum autem de ratione quidditatis, vel essentiae, non sit quod sit composita vel compositum; consequens poterit inveniri et intelligi aliqua quidditas simplex, non consequens compositionem formae et materiae. Si autem inveniamus aliquam quidditatem quae non sit composita ex materia et forma, illa quidditas aut est esse suum, aut non. Si illa quidditas sit esse suum, sic erit essentia ipsius Dei, quae est suum esse, et erit omnino simplex. Si vero non sit ipsum esse, oportet quod habeat esse acquisitum ab alio, sicut est omnis quidditas creata. Et quia haec quidditas posita est non subsistere in materia, non acquireretur sibi esse in altero, sicut quidditatibus compositis, immo acquiretur sibi esse in se; et ita ipsa quidditas erit hoc quod est, et ipsum esse suum erit quo est. Et quia omne quod non habet aliquid a se, est possibile respectu illius; hujusmodi quidditas cum habeat esse ab alio, erit possibilis respectu illius esse, et respectu ejus a quo esse habet, in quo nulla cadit potentia; et ita in tali quidditate invenietur potentia et actus,

(II): Others say that the soul is composed from *quo est* and *quod est*. However, *quod est* differs from matter, because *quod est* names the *supposit* itself having existence; however, matter does not have existence, but the composition from matter and form [does]. Thus, matter is not *quod est*, but the composite [is]. Therefore, in all those in which there is a composition of matter and form, there is a composition from *quo est* and *quod est*. However, in compositions from matter and form, *quo est* can be said in three ways. For *quo est* can name the form of the part (*forma partis*), which gives being to matter. *Quo est* can also name the act of being (*actus essendi*), namely existence, just as that by which one is running (*quo curritur*) is the act of running (*actus currendi*). Finally, *quo est* can name the very nature that remains from the conjunction of form with matter, for instance, humanity. The latter is so, especially according to those who hold that the form of the whole (*forma, quae est totum*), which is the quiddity, is not the form of the part (*forma partis*), among whom is Avicenna. Since, it is not of the ratio of quiddity that it is composite or composed, consequently a simple quiddity can be found and understood, but not consequent upon form and matter. However, if we find another quiddity that is not a composite of form and matter, that quiddity is either its own existence or not. If that quiddity is its own existence, so it will be the essence of God Himself, Who is His own existence, and it will be altogether simple. If it is not its own existence, it is necessary that it have existence acquired from another, just as it is with all created quiddities. And because these quiddities are taken not to subsist in matter, existence in another wouldn't be acquired by it, like

secundum quod ipsa quidditas est possibilis, et esse suum est actus ejus. Et hoc modo intelligo in Angelis compositionem potentiae et actus, et de quo est et quod est, et similiter in anima. Unde Angelus vel anima potest dici quidditas vel natura vel forma simplex, inquantum eorum quidditas non componitur ex diversis; tamen advenit sibi compositio horum duorum, scilicet quidditatis et esse.	composite quididites, but existence in itself would be acquired by it. So the quiddity itself will be this *quod est* and its very existence itself will be *quo est*. Because everything that does not have something from itself is possible with respect to it. In this way, the quiddity, since it has existence from another, will be possible with respect to that existence, and with respect to that by which (*a quo*) it has existence, in which no potency occurs. Therefore, in this sort of quiddity there will be found potency and act, namely, according to which the quiddity is possible and its existence is its act. In this way, I understand the composition of potency and act and of *quo est* and *quod est* in the angels, and similarly for the soul. Thus the angel or the soul can be called quiddity or nature or simple form, insofar as their quiddities are not composed from diverse things. Nevertheless, there occurs there a composition of these two, namely quiddity and existence.
1. Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod anima non est composita ex aliquibus quae sint partes quidditatis ipsius, sicut nec quaelibet alia forma; sed quia anima est forma absoluta, non dependens a materia, quod convenit sibi propter assimilationem et propinquitatem ad Deum, ipsa habet esse per se, quod non habent aliae formae corporales. Unde in anima invenitur compositio esse et quod est, et non in aliis formis: quia ipsum esse non est formarum corporalium absolute, sicut eorum quae sunt, sed compositi.	**REPLIES:** 1. To the first objection it must be said that the soul is not a composition from certain things that are parts of its quiddity, just as is any other form. But because the soul is an absolute form (*forma absoluta*), it does not depend on matter, which belongs to it on account of its likeness and proximity to God, and it has existence through itself (*esse per se*), which other corporeal forms do not. Therefore, there is found a composition of existence and *quod est* in the soul, and not in other forms, because existence itself isn't of corporeal forms absolutely, like with things that exist, but to the composite.
2. Ad secundum dicendum, quod anima sine dubio habet in se esse perfectum, quamvis hoc esse non resultet ex partibus componentibus quidditatem ipsius, nec per conjunctionem corporis efficitur ibi aliquod	**2.** To the second objection, it must be said that without doubt the soul has perfect

aliud esse; immo hoc ipsum esse quod est animae per se, fit esse conjuncti: esse enim conjuncti non est nisi esse ipsius formae. Sed verum est quod aliae formae materiales, propter earum imperfectionem, non sunt per illud esse, sed sunt tantum principia essendi.

existence in itself (*in se esse perfectum*), although this existence does not result from the component parts of its quiddity, nor is some other existence made through the conjunction with the body; rather this existence that is of the soul though itself (*animae per se*) becomes the existence of the conjunct. For the existence of the conjunct is nothing more than the existence of the form itself. But it is true that other material forms, because of their imperfection, do not subsist through that existence, but are only principles of existence (*principia essendi*).

3. Et per hoc etiam patet solutio ad tertium: quia compositio quae advenit animae post esse completum, secundum modum intelligendi, non facit aliud esse, quia sine dubio illud esse esset accidentale, et ideo non sequitur quod homo sit ens per accidens.

3. From this [reason given in the reply to the second objection] the solution to the third objection is clear: because the composition that comes to the soul after the complete existence, according to the mode of understanding, does not make another existence, since that existence would without doubt be accidental, and so it does not follow that a human being is a being accidentially.

4. Ad quartum dicendum, quod si Boetius loquitur de subjecto respectu quorumcumque accidentium, dictum est verum de forma quae est ita simplex quod etiam est suum esse, sicut est Deus: et talis simplicitas nec in anima nec in Angelo est. Si autem loquitur de subjecto respectu accidentium quae habent esse firmum in natura, et quae sunt accidentia individui; tunc est verum dictum suum etiam de forma simplici, cujus quidditas non componitur ex partibus. Sunt enim quaedam accidentia quae non habent esse vere, sed tantum sunt intentiones rerum naturalium; et hujusmodi sunt species rerum, quae sunt in anima, item accidentium habentium esse naturae quoniam consequuntur naturam individui, scilicet materiam, per quam natura individuatur, sicut album et nigrum in homine; unde etiam non consequuntur

4. To the fourth objection it must be said that if Boethius is speaking about the subject with respect to any given accident, his saying is true of the form that is so simple that it is even its own existence, as is God: and such simplicity is neither in the soul nor in the angel. If, however, he is speaking about the subject with respect to accidents that have firm existence in nature, and which are accidents of the individual, then his saying is true of the simple form, of whose quiddity is not composed from parts. For there are certain accidents that do not have true existence, but only the intentions of natural things (the species of things, which are in the soul, are of this mode). Of accidents having *esse* of nature, some follow along the

totam speciem: et talibus accidentibus non potest subjici anima. Quaedam autem habent esse naturae, sed consequuntur ex principiis speciei, sicut sunt proprietates consequentes speciem; et talibus accidentibus potest forma simplex subjici, quae tamen non est suum esse ratione possibilitatis quae est in quidditate ejus, ut dictum est, in corp. art., et talia accidentia sunt potentiae animae; sic enim et punctus et unitas habent suas proprietates.

5. Ad quintum dicendum, quod omnis forma est aliqua similitudo primi principii, qui est actus purus: unde quanto forma magis accedit ad similitudinem ipsius, plures participat de perfectionibus ejus. Inter formas autem corporum magis appropinquat ad similitudinem Dei, anima rationalis; et ideo participat de nobilitatibus Dei, scilicet quod intelligit, et quod potest movere, et, quod habet esse per se; et anima sensibilis minus, et vegetabilis adhuc minus et sic deinceps. Dico igitur, quod animae non convenit movere, vel habere esse absolutum, inquantum est forma; sed inquantum est similitudo Dei.

6. Ad sextum dicendum, quod, secundum praedicta, in anima non est aliquid quo ipsa individuetur, et hoc intellexerunt qui negaverunt eam esse hoc aliquid, et non quod non habeat per se absolutum esse. Et dico quod non individuatur nisi ex corpore. Unde impossibilis est error ponentium animas prius creatas, et postea incorporatas: quia non efficiuntur plures nisi secundum quod infunduntur pluribus corporibus. Sed quamvis individuatio animarum dependeat a corpore quantum ad sui principium, non tamen quantum ad sui finem, ita scilicet quod cessantibus

nature of the individual, namely, matter, through which the nature is individuated, just as white and black in a human being. Thus they do not follow the total species, and the soul cannot be subject to such accidents. Certain things have *esse* of nature, however, but follow from the principles of the species, just as the properties following from the species. Granting that it is not its own *esse*, the simple form can be subject to such accidents by reason of the possibility that it is in its quiddity, as was said, and such accidents are the powers of the soul; for even a point and a unity themselves have properties in this manner.

5. To the fifth objection, it must be said that every form is a certain likeness to the First Principle, Who is pure act. Thus, the extent to which a form more a approaches the likeness of Him, the more it partakes of His perfections. Among corporeal forms, the rational soul more approaches toward likeness of God. And so it partakes of the God's nobility, namely that it understands, that it is able to move, and that it has existence through itself (*esse per se*); the sensible soul less, the vegetable soul even less, etc. I say, therefore, that moving or having absolute *esse* does not belong to the soul inasmuch at it is form, but inasmuch as it is a likeness of God.

6. To the sixth objection, it must be said that, according to previous remarks, there isn't anything in the soul by which it is individuated, and those who understood this denied that the soul is a determinate particular (*hoc aliquid*) but not that it has absolute existence through itself (per se absolutum esse). I say that the soul is only individuated through body. Thus the error of those who hold that the soul is created

corporibus, cesset individuatio animarum. Cujus ratio est quod cum omnis perfectio infundatur materiae secundum capacitatem suam, natura animae ita infundetur diversis corporibus, non secundum eamdem nobilitatem et puritatem: unde in unoquoque corpore habebit esse terminatum secundum mensuram corporis. Hoc autem esse terminatum, quamvis acquiratur animae in corpore, non tamen ex corpore, nec per dependentiam ad corpus. Unde, remotis corporibus, adhuc remanebit unicuique animae esse suum terminatum secundum affectiones vel dispositiones quae consecutae sunt ipsam prout fuit perfectio talis corporis. Et haec est solutio Avicennae, et potest manifestari per exemplum sensibile. Si enim aliquid unum non retinens figuram distinguatur per diversa vasa, sicut aqua; quando vasa removebuntur, non remanebunt proprie figurae distinctae; sed remanebit una tantum aqua. Ita est de formis materialibus, quae non retinent esse per se. Si autem sit aliquid retinens figuram quod distinguatur secundum diversas figuras per diversa instrumenta, etiam remotis illis, remanebit distinctio figurarum, ut patet in cera; et ita est de anima, quae retinet esse suum post corporis destructionem, quod etiam manet in ipsa esse individuatum et distinctum.	first and embodied later is impossible, because they are made many only because they are infused into many bodies. Although the individuation of souls depends on the body as to its beginning, but nevertheless not as to its end, there would certainly be individuation of souls after the cessation of bodies. The reason for this is that since very perfection is infused in matter according to its own capacity, the nature of the soul is infused into diverse bodies, not according to the same perfection and purity. Thus in in any given body, a soul will have a determine existence according to the measure of that body. However, although this determinate existence is acquired for the soul in the body, nonetheless it is not acquired from the body or through dependency on the body. Thus, bodies having been removed, there will nonetheless remain for each soul its determine existence according to the affections or disposition that are consequent upon it inasmuch as it was the perfection of a certain body. And this is the solution of Avicenna, and can be manifest through a sensible example. For if something one not retaining figure, such as water, is distinguished through diverse vessels, when the vessels are removed, then a properly distinct figure will not remain, but there will remain only one water. So it is concerning material forms that do not retain existence through itself. If, however, there is something retaining figure that is distinguished according to diverse figures through diverse instruments, when they are removed, then they will retain a distinct figure, as is clear with wax. And so it is concerning the soul, which retains its own existence after destruction of the body, which also remains an individuated and distinct existence.

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