

Distance Between Doctors: On Pluriformity in Bonaventure

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Introduction

Since its publication in 1973, John Francis Quinn's monumental *The Historical Constitution of Saint Bonaventure's Philosophy* has remained a classic in its field, perhaps the most exhaustive treatment of the Seraphic Doctor as a philosopher.¹ Eminent scholars of medieval thought, including John Wippel, have reviewed it favorably, and Quinn's book appears on nearly every bibliography and higher education syllabus on Bonaventure. It continues to be cited in doctoral dissertations, while peer-reviewed articles—with just cause—still genuflect to its exalted status. Among other things, Quinn attempts to rectify the perception of a gap between Aquinas and Bonaventure on the metaphysical constitution of the human person. He attributes to Bonaventure something like Thomas Aquinas's unicity of substantial form.

Yet, just as Quinn in some ways corrected the giants who preceded him (e.g., Étienne Gilson and Fernand van Steenberghen), the passage of time and expansion of Franciscan studies affords contemporary students of medieval philosophy and theology the opportunity to critically re-examine certain characterizations of Bonaventure's doctrine as propagated by Quinn's massive volume. One recent work in that vein is Franziska van

¹ John Francis Quinn, *The Historical Consciousness of Saint Bonaventure's Philosophy* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1973).

Buren's 2023 *Aristotle and the Ontology of Saint Bonaventure*,² a formidable monograph by a scholar as well-versed in ancient philosophy as in medieval studies. While she follows Quinn's judgment that Bonaventure offers a unique Aristotelian synthesis (against, for example, Gilson's characterization of Bonaventure as an anti-Aristotelian Augustinian), van Buren astutely detects a severe blind spot in *Historical Constitution*, carefully demonstrating how Quinn imposes a Thomisticizing lens on Bonaventure's anthropology against the text of Bonaventure's *Sentences* commentary. If van Buren is correct, then more recent authors relying on Quinn, like Matthew Dugandzic, would need to find alternate philosophical foundations for the wider critique of "hylomorphic enthusiasm" among Thomistic scholars and their propensity to use Bonaventure a foil to Aquinas.³

This article proceeds in three parts. First, with the aid of van Buren, I outline how Bonaventure does not in fact espouse something like Aquinas's unicity of substantial form, showing how a reading of the Seraphic Doctor which relies on Quinn (at least on this point) misreads or mistranslates Bonaventure in one case, and overlooks a key text in another. This section will accordingly hold—with the majority of Bonaventurian scholars—that the Bonaventure of the *Sentences* commentary is indeed a pluriformist, but not an Avicennian body–soul dualist. The second part acknowledges the limitations of philosophical studies like those of Quinn and van Buren—which focus heavily on the *Sentences* commentary—and turns to other works of Bonaventure to show why the "hylomorphic enthusiasts" condemned by Dugandzic may have reasonable grounds for inferring a type of body–soul opposition in Bonaventure, even if this does not rise to the level of a strict substance dualism. Third, by way of conclusion, I draw some consequences of this essay for a study of the passions, showing where Dugandzic is right and where some adjustment of the terms of the debate might be warranted.

Bonaventure as Pluriformist in the *Sentences* Commentary

The Problem of Lux and Substantial Forms

Those who argue that the rational soul is for Bonaventure a substantial form that is "one," "unique," and "single" face a contrast with Bonaventure's actual words:

² Franziska van Buren, *Aristotle and the Ontology of Saint Bonaventure* (Leiden: Leuven University Press, 2023).

³ Matthew Dugandzic, "Reason, Passion, and Metaphysics in Bonaventure: Against Hylomorphic Enthusiasm," *Nova et Vetera* (English) 22, no. 1 (2024): 123–34.

It is true that light [*Lux*], since it is the most noble form among bodily creatures [*forma nobilissima inter corporalia*], as the philosophers and saints attest, according to whose participation in greater or lesser degree pertains respectively to greater and lesser beings, *is a substantial form*. And it is also true that light [*lux*], because it is sensible and is an instrument of operation, and admits of increase and decrease, *except as a substantial form*, has the nature of an accidental form.⁴

Here Bonaventure introduces a crucial distinction overlooked by Quinn: there is a twofold sense of “light,” which can be taken either as a substantial form or as accidental form. Following van Buren’s convention, light as substantial form is capitalized [*Lux*], while light as accidental form [*lux*] is not capitalized. Bonaventure explains the difference further.

Previously, the Master considered the production of nature with respect to its material principle; but here he intends to consider its completion or formation with respect to its formal principle. And since there is a twofold formation [*duplex informatio*] of corporeal matter—some general, some specific—general formation occurs through the form common to all bodies, and this is the form of Light [*forma Lucis*]; specific formation occurs through other forms [*per alias formas*], whether of the elements or of mixtures.⁵

Not only is *Lux* the most noble form of all bodily creatures, it is also a *substantial form* of all bodily creatures, being common to all bodies, whether

⁴ Bonaventure, *In II sent.*, d. 13, a. 2, q. 2: “Verum est enim, quod Lux, cum sit forma nobilissima inter corporalia, sicut dicunt philosophi et sancti, secundum cuius participationem maiorem et minorem sunt corpora magis et minus entia, est substantialis forma. Verum est etiam, quod lux cum sit per se sensibilis, sit etiam instrumentum operandi, sit etiam augmentabilis et minuibilis, salva forma substantiali, quod ipsa habet naturam formae accidentalis.” Here and in what follows, I modify the Quaracchi text to capitalize *Lux* when referring to substantial light, after van Buren’s convention. Translations are all my own; the Latin of Bonaventure is from the Quaracchi ed.

⁵ Bonaventure, *In II sent.*, d. 26, art. unicus, q. 1: “Supra egit Magister de productione naturae quantum ad principium materiale; in hac vero parte intendit agere de eius completionem sive formationem quantum ad principium formale. Et quoniam duplex est informatio materiae corporalis, quaedam generalis, quaedam specialis—generalis per formam communem omnibus corporalibus, et haec est forma Lucis; specialis vero per alias formas, sive elementares sive mixtionis.”

earthly or heavenly.⁶ This includes human persons, who by their nature are bodies joined to souls. Indeed, for Bonaventure, *Lux* stands for the most general substantial form of all creatures, while *lux* is taken to mean a specific accidental form referring to a *property* of light-emitting bodies, such as stars and planets. This would mean that, in human persons, there would be at least two substantial forms: *Lux* and *anima rationalis*. Quinn, showing his bias against pluriformist interpretations of Bonaventure, “gives an interesting and creative spin” on the Seraphic Doctor’s words.

[Quinn] translates *informatio* not as “formation” but as the English (false) cognate “information.” According to this translation, Quinn goes on to interpret *Lux* as a means of information, in the sense of an “extrinsic influencing” rather than the (correct) “forming in.” This gives him leeway to claim that *Lux* is not itself the first substantial form of all creatures, but rather the substantial form of only some creatures (i.e., celestial bodies). He then interprets Bonaventure to mean that “earthly bodies are influenced by light, whereas heavenly bodies are formed by light.” This means, according to Quinn, that only heavenly bodies have the substantial form of light, whereas all other bodies receive light from them.⁷

Van Buren goes on to list several problems with Quinn’s argument, of which I will highlight only two. First, Bonaventure attributes light even to the lowest of corporeal creatures, matter, saying (against Thomas Aquinas) that “matter is not pure privation, for by the *ratio* of its essence it has something from beauty and something from light.”⁸ *Lux*, as a substantial form, thus informs even matter and all other corporeal creatures. Second, Bonaventure denies that the luminosity of the heavenly bodies (i.e., their light-giving capacity, or “light” understood in the common sense) is a substantial form. Since luminosity pertains to sensibility and admits of increase or decrease, for Bonaventure, this luminosity is accidental, not substantial. Quinn’s attempt to reinterpret Bonaventure’s clear statement that *Lux* is a substantial form of all bodies is therefore predicated on two errors: the construal of *informatio* as an extrinsic operation, and a failure to distinguish *Lux* (as substantial form) from *lux* (as accidental form)—a

⁶ Bonaventure, *In II sent.*, d. 12, a. 2, q. 1, arg. 4: “Lux est natura communis reperta in omnibus corporibus tam caelestibus quam terrestribus.”

⁷ Van Buren, *Aristotle*, 167–8; cf. Quinn, *Historical Constitution*, 236, 244.

⁸ Bonaventure, *In II sent.*, d. 1, p. 1, a. 1, q. 1: “Nam materia non est privatio pura, immo ratione suae essentiae habet aliquid de pulchritudine et aliquid de Luce.”

double classification to which Bonaventure devotes an entire question in his commentary on the *Sentences*.⁹ Note well here that Thomas Aquinas, in his own *Sentences* commentary, rejects the notion that light is involved in the composition of human bodies as substantial form, and the *quidam dicunt* of his answer seems to indicate, among others, Bonaventure.¹⁰

It is now becoming clear that, for Bonaventure, a being can have multiple substantial forms, the most general of which is *Lux*. But to explain this pluriformity more accurately, we must understand why Bonaventure feels comfortable holding this position, against the unicity thesis of Aquinas. The distance between the doctors on the matter of forms gestures to an ambiguity in Aristotle himself, which leads later commentators to develop the Aristotelian tradition in different, though legitimate, ways. Indeed, the Philosopher never mentions anything called “substantial form” in his own works, and the development of this notion among the high-medieval Latins is the result of continuous attempts to synthesize available Aristotelian texts with other sources. The paraphrase of a text from *De caelo* I as quoted by Bonaventure, Scotus, and others (“When I say *heaven* I mean the form, and when I say *this heaven* I mean the matter”),¹¹ combined with *Posterior analytics* I,¹² among other texts, are sourced by Bonaventure to argue not only that forms are universals, but that they *must*

⁹ Bonaventure, *In II sent.*, d. 13, a. 2, q. 2.

¹⁰ Aquinas, *In II sent.*, d. 17, q. 3, a. 1. This *Thomistic* construal of the role of light in the formation of bodies is the same position which Quinn mistakenly attributes to Bonaventure.

¹¹ Bonaventure, *In II sent.*, d. 3, p. 1, a. 1, q. 1: “Cum dico *caelum*, dico formam; cum dico *hoc caelum*, dico materiam,” cf. Aristotle, *De caelo* 1.9, where the Philosopher uses the terms “universe” and “this universe.” See also Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 6.

¹² Bonaventure, *In II sent.*, d. 3, p. 1, a. 1, q. 1: “Si tu dicas, quod materia vocatur ipsa hypostasis, sive ipsum quod est; ego quaero a te de hypostasi: aut addit aliquid supra essentiam et formam, aut nihil. Si nihil addit, ergo non contrahit: ergo sicut ipsum universale est natum semper esse et ubique, sic ipsa hypostasis, sicut patet in divinis, quia persona non addit supra essentiam, sed est ubique et immensa, sicut essentia. Ergo cum hypostasis Angeli sit finita et arctata et limita, et ita hic et nunc, necessario oportet, quod ultra formam addat aliquid arctans substantiale sibi; hoc autem non potest esse nisi materia”—“If you say that matter is called the hypostasis itself, or the very thing that is, then I ask you about hypostasis: either it adds something above the essence and form, or it adds nothing. If it adds nothing, then it effects nothing: therefore just as the universal itself exists always and everywhere, so does hypostasis add nothing, as is clear in divine things, because ‘person’ does not add anything to essence, but is everywhere and immense, like essence. Therefore, since the hypostasis of the angel is finite, narrow, and limited and remains so here and now, it is necessary that ‘hypostasis’ should add something determinate and substantial to itself beyond form; but this cannot happen except by matter”; cf. Aristotle, *Posterior analytics* 1.31.

be universals in order to be intelligible.¹³ Thus, the initial forms educed from matter (*formae elementaris*, *mixtionis*, and *complexionis*) are not really forms properly speaking, and in this, Quinn and Dugandzic are partially correct in holding that Bonaventure is not a pluriformist in respect of these lower forms.¹⁴ However, Bonaventure admits a wider scope for what might constitute those forms that are truly substantial and truly universal. Hewing closely to the *Categories*, Bonaventure considers substantial forms simply as what can be predicated essentially of a thing (i.e., of its substance *simpliciter*); universal definitions pertaining to genus and species describe such substantial forms. For van Buren's Bonaventure, "only those qualities which are necessary to the sensible composite and whose definition is said of the composite (e.g., animality or equinity) are substantial forms—that is, anything which we would call a secondary substance in the *Categories*."¹⁵ Any other form not pertaining to species or genus (i.e., attributable to the other nine categories) are accidental forms. Helpfully, van Buren further specifies how

a plurality of substantial forms is something assumed by Bonaventure rather than explicitly spelt out—indeed, in a manner similar to Aristotle, who likewise does not identify one form as being the substantial form. Indeed, as in Aristotle, this "doctrine" of a plurality of substantial forms in Bonaventure is precisely (and only) the absence of asserting that it is one form which, when compounded with matter, results in a substance. Bonaventure, again like Aristotle, considers a form to be substantial when it indicates the substance, or the essence, of something: white does not do this, humanity and animality do—i.e., there is no particular thing of which I predicate the definition of white, but there are things of which I predicate the definition of both animality and humanity.¹⁶

¹³ Bonaventure, *In II sent.*, d. 18, a. 1, q. 3: "Item, 'universale est semper et ubique' (cf. *Posterior Analytics* I.31) sed ratio seminalis respicit hanc materiam, in qua fundatur determinate: ergo ratio seminalis non potest esse forma universalis"—"Again, 'the universal is always and everywhere,' but the *ratio seminalis* is said with respect to the matter in which it is rooted. Therefore, the *ratio seminalis* cannot be a universal form." See also *Metaphysics* 7.8, where Aristotle famously notes that Socrates and Callias differ in matter but are the same or indivisible in form.

¹⁴ See note 5 above on the twofold *informatio* of corporeal matter: first and generally by *Lux*, second and particularly by other forms, *sive elementares sive mixtionis*.

¹⁵ Van Buren, *Aristotle*, 175.

¹⁶ Van Buren, *Aristotle*, 175.

Aquinas, by contrast, represents a minority (and perhaps unique) position in the mid-thirteenth century on substantial form,¹⁷ which is shown in his later controversies with two successive friar-Archbishops of Canterbury, both of whom opposed the unicity thesis: his Dominican confrere Robert Kilwardby and the Franciscan (and Bonaventure's pupil) John Peckham. Indeed,

Aquinas' standard for what is and what is not a substantial form is quite innovative, insofar as, for Aquinas, whether a form is substantial or not is tied not to how we know or predicate the form of the substance, as Bonaventure derives it from Aristotle—rather, it is tied to his own claim that it is one form which when combined with matter results in one particular substance, and whichever form that is, is the substantial one.¹⁸

Aquinas, then, pushes the Aristotelian tradition in a different way by emphasizing the particular nature of substantial form. Indeed, there is enough warrant in *Metaphysics* 7 (*zeta*) alone for developing a notion of substantial form in either Aquinas's or Bonaventure's mold.¹⁹ Both doctors are wrestling with ambiguities in Aristotle and must synthesize other sources and doctrines to arrive at their diverse metaphysical treatments. Van Buren's book is most useful in that it breaks from the tendency of contemporary medievalists to read—wittingly or not—Aristotle through Thomas; instead, she shows how an appreciation of Bonaventure on his own philosophical terms might contribute to the advance of Aristotelianism in contemporary philosophy.

If the discussion regarding *Lux* and the predication of other substantial

¹⁷ In the mid-thirteenth century, Thomas was the most prominent exponent of unicity. Explicit defenses of unicity increased following the instruction of the Dominican General Chapter of June 1286 to promote and defend the doctrine of Aquinas. Defenders include the Oxford Dominican Richard Knapwell (fl. 1284–1286), the French Dominican Giles of Lessines (d. 1304), and the Augustinian friar Giles of Rome (d. 1316). For an overview of the debates after Aquinas's death, see Antonia Fitzpatrick, "The Unicity of Substantial Form in the *Correctoria corruptorii fratris Thomae* of Richard Knapwell, Robert Orford and John of Paris," in *Individuals and Institutions in Medieval Scholasticism*, ed. Antonia Fitzpatrick and John Sabapathy (London: University of London Press, 2020), 71–88. For a wider treatment of Thomas's doctrine on this question, see Antonia Fitzpatrick, *Thomas Aquinas on Bodily Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

¹⁸ Van Buren, *Aristotle*, 176.

¹⁹ See Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 7.4, 7.11, and 7.15 for substance as universal; see 7.3 and 7.13 for substance as particular.

forms should distance the Seraphic Doctor from the unicity thesis, what are we to make of Dugandzic's many assertions that, for Bonaventure, the rational soul is the "only substantial form of the human body"?

The Problem of Death

With respect to the successive eduction of forms from prime matter, it is important not to overlook the *informatio* prior to the eduction by *rationes seminales*: this is the *informatio* of *Lux* as the first substantial form of all bodies, as described above. Those who do not acknowledge the role of *Lux* in Bonaventure's metaphysics tend to limit their analysis to lower posterior forms, which allow them to read the Seraphic Doctor in a Thomisticizing manner. Consider Matthew Dugandzic's recent description of the death of the human person, which reads more like a Thomist text than a Bonaventurean commentary.

When the soul leaves the body at death, the body corrupts. It disintegrates back into its component parts, which can later give rise to new substances, such as maggots. What this shows is that the *forma complexionis*, though it does prepare the body for ensoulment, does not suffice to sustain the body in existence after the departure of the rational soul. Furthermore, this shows that the antecedent forms that prepare the body for ensoulment are merely preparations. Once the body receives the rational soul, the rational soul is its unique substantial form, serving as the body's unique principle of unity and operation. . . . Without the rational soul, the human body is no longer a body, but rather a mass that disintegrates back into component parts.²⁰

In support of this characterization, Dugandzic cites Bonaventure's commentary on *Sentences* IV, d. 43, a. 1, q. 3. This reference is problematic, because the cited question does not treat of what happens to bodies at death, but concerns whether the resurrection of the dead will occur instantly or in successive moments ("utrum resurrectio sit omnium simul an successive"). That question contains a sixfold argument as to why the resurrection will happen in a single moment, but says nothing about the body or its disintegration after its separation from the soul. However, the following question—"utrum resurrectio sit eorundem corporum secundum numerum" ("whether resurrected bodies will be numerically the same as

²⁰ Dugandzic, "Reason, Passion, and Metaphysics in Bonaventure," 130–31.

the bodies before the resurrection”)—does mention the emergence of creatures upon bodily putrefaction. The response of this question is one of the lengthiest in Bonaventure’s *Sentences* commentary, covering about two whole pages in the Quaracchi edition, followed by an editorial *scholion* spanning about another page.²¹ An overview of this question is necessary to show whether Dugandzic’s characterization of corruption is correct.

Bonaventure answers the question in the affirmative, that is, that the resurrected body will be numerically the same as the body *in statu viatoris*. But he must wade through a number of difficulties to arrive at the conclusion. The first position he considers lists three reasons as to why the resurrected body will not be numerically one with the body in earthly life: (1) due to the difference of material and specific forms; (2) due to the diversity of the material forms themselves; and (3) due to the passage of time between bodily death and the resurrection. Bonaventure rejects this threefold position: the first reason, he says, “seems stupid” (*stultum videtur*), since it presumes that God could not simply reform bodies to be numerically identical; the second he rejects because numerical identity of substances does not come about through accidents or material forms; the third he also dismisses, since “discontinuity in *esse* does not imply discontinuity in number,” as in the case of a ship which is dismantled and reassembled later.²²

The other position considered by Bonaventure holds that “corruption” can be understood in two ways: either (1) by the dissolution or separation of the principal components or parts, or (2) by the corruption of form. After the first type of corruption, the reformed body can be numerically the same if the principal components or parts can be reassembled

²¹ Bonaventure, *In IV sent.*, d. 43, a. 1, q. 4.

²² Bonaventure, *In IV sent.*, d. 43, a. 1, q. 4: “Sed istud non videtur multum rationabile: primum quidem, quia stultum videtur dicere, quid Deus non possit omnino idem corpus reformare identitate secundum numerum. Amplius, identitas secundum numerum in substantia non venit ex accidentibus, licet per illa innotescat, nec dicere diversitas. Et iterum, quod discontinuatio in esse non indicat diversitatem in numero, videtur expresse in artificiatu, ut si arca dissolvatur et iterum ex eisdem tabulis et secundum eundem ordinem reparatur; non dicitur alia arca numero, sed eadem; et tamen desiit esse arca”—“But this does not seem very reasonable. Firstly, it seems stupid to say that God could not totally reform bodies to be numerically identical. Furthermore, neither numerical identity nor in substance comes through the accidents, although they can be known through the accidents. And so, that discontinuity in being does not indicate diversity in number can be seen in artificial things, like a ship dismantled and reassembled again from the same parts; this would not be considered a numerically different ark, even though it had ceased to be an ark.”

together in the same way as before. After the second type of corruption, Bonaventure states that the reformed body cannot be numerically the same as before (“quia quod corruptum est non potest esse idem”), because the essence of its form is a new thing as when newly formed/made (“quoniam nova est essentia formae, sicut de novo generatur”). The separation and dissolution of the human body would thus seem to be of the first type, such that God, as a good artisan, can gather the separated principal components of a person, and thereby re-form the same body.²³

However, this opinion also has difficulties, and this is where Bonaventure mentions bodily putrefaction as a counterpoint. The form of human flesh (*forma carnis humanae*) is corrupted as worms and maggots are generated therefrom. Just as human flesh can be corrupted into the flesh of maggots or other animals, so too can it be resolved into the four elements, as can the flesh of animals. Moreover, each of the elements can be corrupted into something else, just as the *formae mixtionis* and *formae elementalis* can be corrupted. Thus, corruption for Bonaventure cannot be understood simply as the separation of principal components, for the disintegration can be more extensive.

However, this does not mean that, for Bonaventure, the second type of corruption (i.e., corruption of form) must be the proper meaning. On the contrary, he argues that the “*rationes seminales* of all forms are present in the substance of matter.”²⁴ Therefore, when Augustine says that corrupted forms are reduced to matter (see *De Trinitate* 3.8.13 and 3.9.16), Bonaventure specifies that forms are more precisely reduced to the *rationes seminales*. “Thus let it suffice to say that when all forms are corrupted, they are not totally corrupted, but that these forms remain in some way.”²⁵ The

²³ Bonaventure, *In IV sent.*, d. 43, a. 1, q. 4: “Certum est enim, quod forma carnis humanae corrumpitur, dum generatur inde vermis et serpens; et sicut potest corrumpi in carnem serpentis vel alterius animalis, sic resolvi potest, sicut et illud animal, etiam in quatuor elementa, et unumquodque elementorum corrumpi in aliud, et ita corrumpantur formae mixti et elementi: ergo necesse est, elementa alia esse numero et aliam carnem. Et ita non potest stare ista responsio” — “It is certain that the form of human flesh is corrupted, from which worms and serpents are generated; and just as the flesh of a serpent or of another animal can be corrupted, so can it be resolved, just like any animal, into the four elements; and each of the elements can be corrupted into something else, just as the forms of mixtures and the elements can be corrupted. Thus, it is necessary that these elements are of one number and the flesh are of another. Thus this reply cannot stand.”

²⁴ Bonaventure, *In IV sent.*, d. 43, a. 1, q. 4: “Substantia materiae praegnans est omnibus: ergo rationes seminales omnium formarum sint in ipsa.”

²⁵ Bonaventure, *In IV sent.*, d. 43, a. 1, q. 4: “Nunc autem hoc dixisse sufficiat, quod omnes formae, cum corrumpuntur, non omnino corrumpuntur, sed manent aliquo modo.”

resurrected body is educed from the same *rationes seminales*, but not by some natural agent or agents, since agents impress something of their own form into patients, resulting in the eduction of a form which is somehow *new*, and therefore not numerically identical with what came before. Rather, God by his own power can draw *rationes seminales* to their perfection without imposing a new form, thereby causing the resurrected body to be numerically one with the old body. Like many solutions to difficulties in Bonaventure's *Sentences* commentary, his answer here is a voluntarist appeal to divine power. "Even if all the elements were converted into fire," he writes, "God would reform the same elements which were present in the *rationes seminales*, and from them educe the form of flesh through the same order."²⁶

There are many things to observe in this dense passage from Bonaventure, of which I will only highlight three.

First: corruption occurs gradually. Immediately after the separation of body and soul at death, a *forma carnis humanae* remains for some time before either the generation of other creatures, or reducing successively to the *forma mixtionis*, *forma elementaris*, and *ratio seminalis*. Further passages of time mediate these various stages of corruption. Second: not all forms are corrupted, and not all at the same time. Bonaventure explicitly says that the *rationes seminales* are never corrupted, but at any given moment of corruption, some form which the person possessed in life can be said to remain in greater or lesser degree. Third (and most important): if the *rationes seminales* are the terminus of corruption, then corruption does not affect the more fundamental principle of *Lux*, which is a substantial form of all bodily creatures, and what makes a body to be a body.

If, as shown above, the human person can be said to have at least two substantial forms (rational soul and *Lux*), it does not necessarily follow that the latter immediately loses its *ratio* upon separation from the former. A discernible bodily form—the *forma carnis humanae*—still persists for some time (at least until putrefaction) and continues to be informed by *Lux*. To claim that the human body ceases to be a body at death is to operate within the thought of Aquinas; however, such a claim remains *praeter Seraphicum*.

²⁶ Bonaventure, *In IV sent.*, d. 43, a. 1, q. 4: "Unde si omnia elementa convertantur in ignem, Deus ex illo igne reformat eadem elementa, quae ibi erant in rationibus seminalibus, et ex illis formam carnis per eundem ordinem."

The Nature of the Soul

Bonaventure's comparison of angels and human souls is also claimed by some scholars to indicate the Seraphic Doctor's adherence to the unicity thesis.

Bonaventure argues that the difference [between a human soul and an angel] is that the soul has an essential property called *unibilitas*, which is "not accidental to the soul, but rather essential to the soul. And so it cannot be separated from it." This is because it is the nature of the rational soul to be the substantial form of the body.²⁷

But if, as we have seen, the substantial form of *Lux* is the first informing principle of all bodies, then the conclusion that the soul is "the," "unique," "one," or "only" substantial form of the body is more difficult to hold. In fact, the notion of *unibilitas* was developed in the *Summa Halensis* as a key aspect of its *pluriformist* metaphysics,²⁸ and Bonaventure's own words subtly indicate a plurality. In his references to soul as substantial form, he simply says that the soul "est forma substantialis," never qualifying or emphasizing it with terms like *sola*, *unica*, or *illa*.²⁹ Neither is there

²⁷ Dugandzic, "Reason, Passion, and Metaphysics in Bonaventure," 132, citing Bonaventure, *In II sent.*, d. 1, p. 2, a. 3, q. 2.

²⁸ See Lydia Schumacher, "Christian Platonism in the Medieval West," in *Christian Platonism: A History*, ed. Alexander J. B. Hampton and John Peter Kenney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 183–206, at 195–98.

²⁹ Bonaventure, *In II sent.*, d. 1, p. 2, a. 3, q. 2: "Si [anima rationalis] est actus substantialis sive essentialis, ergo inest animae ratione sui quo est, sive formalis et completivi" — "If the rational soul is of a substantial or essential act, then it is in the soul by reason of itself, both formal and complete"; *In II sent.*, d. 1, p. 1, a. 3, q. 1: "cum anima sit substantia et forma substantialis" — "since the soul is substantial form"; *In II sent.*, d. 1, p. 1, a. 3, q. 2: "quia ratione illius est anima forma substantialis" — "for this reason, the soul is a substantial form." See the Quaracchi *scholion* on *In II sent.*, d. 13, a. 3: "S. Bonav. quaestionem illam de unitate formae substantialis explicite non tractat; nihilominus etiam in aliis locis modos loquendi adhibet, qui a sententia S. Thomae alieni esse videntur" ("Saint Bonaventure does not explicitly treat of the question of the unity of substantial form; yet in other places he uses a manner of speaking which seems alien to the opinion of Saint Thomas"); followed by an entire list of citations from Bonaventure's works in support. See also the Quaracchi *scholion* on *In II sent.*, d. 18, a. 1, q. 2: "De hac autem ratione seminali disputatur, quid proprie sit, et in specie, utrum sit qualitas activa et passiva, an forma substantialis, sed incompleta" — "The nature of the *ratio seminalis*—what it is, whether it is an active or passive quality in a species, or whether it is an incomplete substantial form—is subject to debate." The Quaracchi editors, therefore, acknowledge that "substantial form" for Bonaventure can be said in many ways, and that the Seraphic Doctor himself is not clear whether the *rationes seminales* are themselves a type of substantial form (although

any equivalent to the phrase “of the body” or “of the human person” in the references to soul as substantial form, despite some attempts by the Quaracchi *scholia* to explain Bonaventure’s doctrine in this way.³⁰ A better translation in any case would say that “the soul is *a* substantial form” or even that “the soul is substantial form.” The addition of singular specifications to substantial form *could* be warranted, since the use of the definite article in modern English has no direct counterpart in Latin; but neither would this philological point exclude the opposite possibility, namely, that Bonaventure is not indicating a *unique* substantial form.

Neither can the presence of the soul in each part of the body—a doctrine held in common with Thomas—simply indicate Bonaventure’s subscription to the unicity thesis. Bonaventure certainly argues for the presence of the soul in all parts of the body, indeed noting *en passant* in a reply to an objection that he is speaking here of substantial, not accidental, form. However, this does not immediately signify the *unicity* of substantial form, for the presence of the soul in each part of the body is a doctrine commonly held with other medieval masters, even the pluriformists: see, for example, question 64 of *Summa Halensis* II, as well as Richard of Middleton (Bonaventure’s own student) and Gabriel Biel, each in their respective commentaries on distinction 8 of the *Sentences* II.

What should now be clear is that Bonaventure and Aquinas are operating under two different definitions of “substantial form.” For the former, substantial form can indicate any form predicable of a substance, to include species and genus indicated in substantial definitions, as well as *Lux*, the substantial form of all bodies. Both “animality” and “rationality,” in this Bonaventuran construal, can indicate substantial forms. Thomas,

he denies that they are a *universal form* properly speaking; see *In II sent.*, d. 18, a. 1, q. 3, where he argues that the *rationes seminales* are not universal forms *sensu proprio*, but only in an extended sense).

³⁰ The editorial *scholion* on *In II sent.*, d. 25, p. 2, art. unicus, q. 6, lists some references in Bonaventure on “how the rational soul is the substantial form of the body” (*quomodo anima rationalis sit forma substantialis corporis*), but the cited texts of Bonaventure never actually use the phrase “substantial form of the body”; they only refer to the soul as *perfectio corporis*. Bonaventure also never cites Aristotle’s demonstration in *De anima* II for the *forma corporis* doctrine, whereas Aquinas does. The only explicit references to soul as *forma corporis* occur in various *scholia* in the Quaracchi edition: see, for example, the *scholia* on *In II Sent.*, d. 8, p. 1, a. 3, and d. 13, a. 3. Thomas, by contrast, is explicit in his description of soul as *forma corporis* and in his appeal to Aristotle in *De anima* II; see *In II sent.*, d. 8, q. 5, a. 2; *Summa contra gentiles* II, chaps. 56–58, 65, 68; *Summa theologiae* I, q. 76, a. 1; *De spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 3.

meanwhile, more strictly defines the parameters, such that there can be only one substantial form (i.e., the intellectual soul) in a human person.

What van Buren criticizes in Quinn's *Historical Constitution* is worth recalling. In Quinn we find the implicit acceptance of the *Thomistic* notion of substantial form—as if it were the only correct interpretation of Aristotle—which is then applied to Bonaventure. This is a classic *petitio principii*: the assumption that a “substantial form” *must be unique* (as a premise) is also present in the desired conclusion (Bonaventure holds to the unicity of substantial form). The work of van Buren is useful in that it takes Bonaventure on his own terms, meticulously mapping his unique Aristotelian-Neoplatonic synthesis, which can be understood as a legitimate alternative to a Thomisticizing Aristotelianism. Van Buren's specific critique of Quinn on substantial form shows that the Bonaventure-as-pluriformist consensus remains a robust position to be taken seriously.³¹ But this does not yet mean that Bonaventure is a kind of substance dualist, as hastily suggested by some Thomists such as Paul Gondreau. That Bonaventure describes the soul in terms similar to Thomas's, even if their definitions of substantial form differ, shows that both doctors see the human person—at least *in statu viatoris*—as marked by a strong union of body and soul.

The Body–Soul Problem in Bonaventure Post-1257

Let us consider a concession in Dugandzic's article which is nevertheless downplayed in the essay's wider context: “though [Bonaventure] speaks of body and soul as substances in their own right, he also says that, when united, they form one person with one nature.”³² Here Dugandzic refers us to *Breviloquium* II and VII, which are good starting points for surpassing the limits of contemporary scholarship on Bonaventure's metaphysics—to include the work of Quinn and van Buren—which is largely confined to the *Sentences* commentary. Thomistic scholars of today are generally cognizant of points of development in Thomas's doctrine, carefully reading

³¹ For concurring scholarship, see Richard Dales, *The Problem of the Rational Soul in the Thirteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 99–107; Robert Pasnau, “Form and Matter,” in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 635–46; Étienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of Saint Bonaventure*, trans. Iltyd Trethowan and Frank Sheed (Paterson, NJ: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1965), 245–64; Philotheus Boehner, *The History of the Franciscan School, Part 2: John of Rupella and Saint Bonaventure* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1943), 68–69.

³² Dugandzic, “Reason, Passion, and Metaphysics in Bonaventure,” 133.

his works in proper historical order while recalling the major periods of Thomas's life and their effect on his thinking. The same must be done for Bonaventure: just as a close reading of Thomas's *Sentences* commentary alone cannot yield a comprehensive picture of his doctrine, claims regarding Bonaventure's metaphysics must likewise balance the *Sentences* commentary with the later treatises.

However, this is admittedly less straightforward for Bonaventureans than for Thomists, since Bonaventure largely leaves aside the disputed-question format in favor of *collationes*, sermons, or spiritual treatises from the time of his election as minister general (1257) to his death. While one can look for parallel passages in Thomas's *Sentences* commentary and *Summa theologiae* to find detailed points of development expressed in the same idiom of *quaestiones disputatae*, the student of Bonaventure lacks this luxury. One must instead read Bonaventure's texts carefully, with close attention to differences in form and genre, against the background of the events in Bonaventure's life which influenced his own development as a university master, Franciscan friar, minister general, and cardinal-bishop.

In the passage of *Breviloquium* II noted by Dugandzic, Bonaventure says the following:

That the power of God might be manifested in man, God made man from two natures maximally diverse from each other, joined into one person and nature; such are the body and soul, of which one is a bodily substance, while the other, namely the soul, is a spiritual and incorporeal substance; these are maximally distant from one another in the genus of substance.³³

Later, he also says the following with regard to the resurrected body:

The nature of the rational and immortal soul also requires that, just as it has perpetual *esse*, so should it have a body into which life flows perpetually; through this the body, which is united to the soul, has from that same union an ordering toward perpetual incorruption, such that the thing in which the substance of the entire body consists (*in quo consistit substantia totius corporis*), such as the principal

³³ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium* II, chap. 7: "Ut igitur in homine manifestaretur Dei potentia, ideo fecit eum *ex naturis maxime distantibus*, coniunctis in unam personam et naturam; cuiusmodi sunt corpus et anima, quorum unum est substantia corporea, alterum vero, scilicet anima, est substantia spiritualis et incorporea; *quae in genere substantiae maxime distant*."

members and radical humidity and flesh according to its species, has a necessary ordering. But others, namely, the flesh according to matter and the parts which pertain to the good of the body, have an ordering of congruity: therefore the first parts are ordered to the resurrection according to the order of necessity, while all others are ordered according to congruity.³⁴

Is the language of two substances simply an informal manner of speaking which must be “corrected” by the more technical precision of the *Sentences* commentary, or might it constitute a genuine development in Bonaventure with some historical warrant? Perhaps we can elucidate the problem with reference to Bonaventure’s account of the soul’s union with God, which he describes, in part, through a synthesis of Aristotle and Augustine on elemental motion.

Since a thorough treatment of that topic requires a book-length exposition (already admirably executed by Robert Glenn Davis³⁵), we can only outline the basic points. Synderesis for Bonaventure is “the weight of the will (*pondus voluntatis*), or the will with that weight, insofar as it inclines to the honorable good (*bonum honestum*).”³⁶ This inclination or simple movement toward the good is infallible, insofar as synderesis does not immediately dictate practical reason. Synderesis is moreover also described as a “spark” (*scintilla*) at the affective peak of the soul (*affectus, apex animae, apex affectus*) where union with God occurs.³⁷ With the *pondus voluntatis* depicted as a spark capable of ardent (i.e., burning) charity, Bonaventure (echoing Augustine’s *Confessions* 13) is able to describe how the peak of the soul, enflamed with this divine love, rises to its natural place as fire naturally ascends above the other three elements (earth, air, and water).³⁸

³⁴ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium* VII, chap. 5: “Requirat etiam natura animae rationalis et immortalis, quod sicut habet esse perpetuum, sic corpus habeat, cui perpetuo influat vitam; ac per hoc corpus, quod animae unitur, ex ipsa unione ordinationem habet ad incorruptionem perpetuam, ita tamen, quod illud, in quo consistit substantia totius corporis, sicut sunt membra principalia et etiam humiditas radicalis et caro secundum speciem, habeat ordinationem necessariam; alia vero, scilicet caro secundum materiam et partes, quae sunt de bene esse corporis, habeant ordinationem de congruo: et ideo primae partes sunt ordinatae ad resurrectionem secundum ordinem necessitatis, aliae vero omnes secundum ordinem congruitatis.”

³⁵ Robert Glenn Davis, *The Weight of Love: Affect, Ecstasy, and Union in the Theology of Bonaventure* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016).

³⁶ Bonaventure, *In II sent.*, d. 39, a. 2, q. 1.

³⁷ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium* I.6, VII.4.

³⁸ See Aristotle, *De caelo* IV.

Sin, by contrast, is a different *pondus*—like the weight of earth—that opposes the upward natural motion of ardent affection, and prioritizes love of one's body over love of God and neighbor.³⁹ Here we see the lineaments of a body–soul dichotomy which is not necessarily a strict dualism, but is nevertheless seen as an inversely proportional relationship.

The *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum* further describes this contrast between body and soul in its famous seventh chapter. After rising through the various levels of contemplation, the ultimate passage of the mind to God is described as *transitus*—the same Franciscan term for the death of St. Francis. Worth citing in full, the final paragraph of the treatise paradoxically combines the themes of affective ardor and ascent with the deathly appearance of the body. After listing the several things which come with this final ascent of the *apex affectus* and its total transfer into God, such as the cessation of intellectual operations and the silencing of the senses,⁴⁰ the Seraphic Doctor concludes by saying:

But if you ask how these things should come to pass, seek grace, not doctrine; desire, not understanding; the groaning of prayer, not the study of lectures; the bridegroom, not the magister; God, not man; the dark cloud [*caliginem*], not clarity; not light, but a fire totally enflamed and transferred into God with excessive anointings and most ardent affections. This fire is God, and this path is in Jerusalem, and Christ ignites it in the fervor of his most ardent Passion, and he who truly perceives it, says: “My soul chooses hanging and my bones choose death.” Whosoever loves this death can see God, for it is doubtlessly true: “No man shall see me and live.” Let us die

³⁹ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium* V, chap. 8.

⁴⁰ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium* VII, chaps. 4–5: “In hoc autem transitu, si sit perfectus, oportet quod relinquatur omnes intellectuales operationes, et apex affectus totus transferatur et transformetur in Deum. Hoc autem est mysticum et secretissimum, quod nemo novit, nisi qui accipit, nec accipit nisi qui desiderat, nec desiderat nisi quem ignis Spiritus sancti medullitus inflammat, quem Christus misit in terram . . . Tu autem, o amice, circa mysticas visiones, corroborato itinere, et sensus desere et intellectuales operationes et sensibilia et invisibilia et omne non-ens et ens”—“But in this passing, if it is to be perfect, one must leave behind all intellectual operations, and the whole apex affectus is to be transferred and transformed into God. This is most mystical and secret, which nobody knows, and nobody accepts it unless he should desire it, and nobody desires it unless the fire of the Holy Spirit, which Christ sent into the world, should inflame him to the marrow. . . . But you, friend, having strengthened your journey concerning the mystical visions, must abandon both the senses and intellectual operations and sensible and invisible things and all non-being and being.”

[*moriatur*], therefore, and enter into the dark cloud; let us impose silence on our cares, desires, and phantasms; let us pass over [*transeamus*] with Christ crucified from this world to the Father, so that, with the Father shown to us, we might say with Phillip: “It is enough for us”; let us hear with Paul: “My grace is enough for you”; let us rejoice with David, saying: “My flesh and my heart fail, O God of my heart, and you O God are my portion always. Blessed be the Lord forever, and let all the people say: let it be, let it be.” Amen.⁴¹

The mystical union described correlates precisely with the conferral of the stigmata on Francis by the fiery, six-winged seraph,⁴² and the *Legenda Maior* itself makes the connection clear. Upon Mount Alverna, “the unquenchable fire of [Francis’s] love for the good Jesus had risen up into so many flaming lamps that many waters could not quench such a powerful

⁴¹ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium* VII, chap. 7: “Si autem quaeras, quomodo haec fiant, interroga gratiam, non doctrinam; desiderium, non intellectum; gemitum orationis, non studium lectionis; sponsum, non magistrum; Deum, non hominem; caliginem, non claritatem; non lucem, sed ignem totaliter inflammantem et in Deum excessivis unctionibus et ardentissimis affectionibus transferentem. Qui quidem ignis Deus est, et huius *caminus est in Ierusalem*, et Christus hunc accendit in fervore suae ardentissimae passionis, quam solus ille vere percipit, qui dicit: *Suspendium elegit anima mea, et mortem ossa mea*. Quam mortem qui diligit videre potest Deum, quia indubitanter verum est: *Non videbit me homo et vivet*. Moriamur igitur et ingrediamur in caliginem, imponamus silentium sollicitudinibus, concupiscentiis et phantasmatibus; transeamus cum Christo crucifixo *ex hoc mundo ad Patrem*, ut, ostenso nobis Patre, dicamus cum Philippo: *Sufficit nobis*; audiamus cum Paulo: *Sufficit tibi gratia mea*; exultemus cum David dicentes: *Defecit caro mea et cor meum, Deus cordis mei et pars mea Deus in aeternum. Benedictus Dominus in aeternum, et dicet omnis populus: Fiat, fiat. Amen*.”

⁴² Bonaventure, *Itinerarium* VII, chap. 3: “Quod etiam ostensum est beato Francisco, cum in excessu contemplationis in monte excelso—ubi haec, quae scripta sunt, mente tractavi—apparuit Seraph sex alarum in cruce confixus, ut ibidem a socio eius, qui tunc cum eo fuit, ego et plures alii audivimus; ubi in Deum transiit per contemplationis excessum; et positus est in exemplum perfectae contemplationis, sicut prius fuerat actionis, tanquam alter Iacob et Israel, ut omnes viros vere spirituales Deus per eum invitaret ad huiusmodi transitum et mentis excessum magis exemplo quam verbo”—“What was shown to the Blessed Francis during his ecstatic contemplation on the high mountain—where I meditated on the things written here—the six-winged seraph affixed on a cross appeared to him, as we heard from the companion who was with him and from many others. Here he passed unto God through an excess of contemplation and was made an example of perfect contemplation, as perfect as he had been before in action, like Jacob and Israel, so that all true spiritual men might be invited to this *transitus* and *excessus mentis* by example more than by word.”

love.”⁴³ The image of fire again describes the strength of the *pondus amoris* in the holy founder, which results in his soul’s ascent toward the divine. “By the seraphic ardor of his desire he was being brought up [*agregetur*] into God, and by sweet pity he was being transformed into him who chose to be crucified out of his great charity [*ex caritate nimia*].”⁴⁴ The wounds of Christ crucified—that is, the marks of death—paradoxically signify Francis’s most ardent union with God.

Other episodes also link Francis’s deathly appearance with his ecstatic ascent. Once when passing through the town of Borgo Santo Sepolcro on a donkey, Francis was so rapt in a mystical vision that he failed to notice the crowds mobbing about him. Bonaventure narrates that Francis “was pulled and held back, pushed to and fro and touched many times, but he seemed unaware [*insensibilis videbatur*] and paid no heed, as if he were a dead corpse [*velut exanime corpus*].”⁴⁵

Yet another story has Francis speaking of a corpse as an example of true obedience.

Take a dead corpse [*corpus exanime*], and place it where you wish. You will see that it does neither resist motion, nor whines about its place, nor complains when dismissed. If placed on a *cathedra*, it does not gaze upward but downward. If clothed in purple, it becomes doubly pale. This is truly the obedient one, who does not judge why it is moved, and cares not where it is placed. It makes no demand for a transfer. If appointed to office, it keeps its usual humility. The more it is honored, the more it reckons itself unworthy.⁴⁶

⁴³ Bonaventure, *Legenda Maior* XIII, chap. 2: “Excreverat quidem in eo insuperabile amoris incendium boni Iesu in lampades ignis atque flammaram, ut aquae multae caritatem eius tam validam extinguere non valent.”

⁴⁴ Bonaventure, *Legenda Maior* XIII, chap. 3: “Cum igitur seraphicis desideriorum ardoribus sursum ageretur in Deum et compassiva dulcedine in eum transformaretur, qui ex caritate nimia voluit crucifigi.”

⁴⁵ Bonaventure, *Legenda Maior* X, chap. 2: “Tractus autem et detentus ab eis, compressus quoque ac multipliciter attrectatus, insensibilis videbatur ad omnia et velut exanime corpus de his quae fiebant circa ipsum, nihil penitus advertabat.”

⁴⁶ Bonaventure, *Legenda Maior* VI, chap. 4: “Tolle corpus exanime, et ubi placuerit, pone! Videbis non repugnare motum, non murmurare situm, non reclamare dimissum. Quod si statuatur in cathedra, non alta sed ima respiciet; si collocetur in purpura, duplo pallescet. Hic verus obediens est, qui, cur moveatur, non diiudicat; ubi locetur non curat; ut transmutetur, non instat; evectus ad officium, solitam tenet humilitatem; plus honoratus plus reputat se indignum.”

More than a mere memory about Francis, the image of the *exanime corpus* is a key Bonaventuran literary device foreshadowing not only the imposition of the stigmata, but also the role of Francis's body in the *Legenda Maior*'s final chapters. During his final illness and with the approach of his *transitus*, Francis must be carried by the friars to the Porziuncola. He is described by Bonaventure as a *corpus emortuum*, a dying body which is not only a sign of Francis's excessive charity for God and conformity to Christ; it also becomes the inspiration for the affective burning of his brethren.⁴⁷ The incitation of affective piety by Francis-as-corpse is intensified at his death; while his soul is witnessed as a brightly burning star ascending on a cloud to heaven,⁴⁸ the stigmatized body below is the real point of focus. The miraculous nails in his limbs and the wound in his side become plainly visible, while his flesh, which had grown dark and tough with *rigor mortis*, became pliable and bright once again. This newly glorious body in turn "excited the desire" not only of those who saw it in person, but also of those who heard of it. "It would be clear, then, even if Bonaventure did not point it out explicitly, that Francis's corpse has been transformed into

⁴⁷ Bonaventure, *Legenda Maior* XIV, chap. 1: "Voluit certe per omnia Christo crucifixo esse conformis, qui pauper et dolens et nudus in cruce pependit. Propter quod et in principio conversionis suae nudus remansit coram antistite et in consummatione vitae nudus voluit de mundo exire, fratribusque sibi assistentibus in obedientia caritatis iniunxit, ut, cum viderent eum iam esse defunctum, per tam longum spatium nudum super humum iacere permitterent, quod unius milliarii tractum suaviter quis perficere posset"—"Certainly he wished for all things to be conformed to Christ crucified, the poor man who painfully hung naked on the cross. Because of this, he remained nude before the bishop [of Assisi] in the beginning of his conversion, and, wishing to depart from this life naked, in obedience of charity he ordered his brethren and their assistants that, upon seeing him dead, they should let him to lie naked for the time it takes a person to easily walk one mile."

⁴⁸ Bonaventure, *Legenda Maior* XIV, chap. 6. Note how Bonaventure describes Francis's separated soul as a brightly burning (i.e., *fiery*) star, lifted upon clouds of the *air*, over the *earth*, and *above the many waters*. The motif of Aristotelian elemental motion thus reappears in the exact description of Francis's entrance into heavenly glory: "Unus autem ex fratribus et discipulis eius vidit animam illam beatam, *sub specie stellae praeifulgidae a candida subvectam nubecula super aquas multas* in caelum recto tramite sursum ferri, tamquam sublimis sanctitatis candore praenitidam et caelestis sapientiae simul et gratiae ubertate repletam, quibus vir sanctus promeruit locum introire lucis et pacis, ubi cum Christo sine fine quiescit"—"One of the brethren saw his blessed soul appearing as a shining star, *carried on a white cloud above the many waters*, going straight upward to heaven, shining with the brightness of sublime holiness and filled with heavenly wisdom and the abundance of grace, by which the holy man deserved to enter a place of light and peace, where he rests with Christ without end."

a resurrection body [*illius secundae stolae pulchritudinem praetendebat*],⁴⁹ despite its obvious separation from the soul which has ascended like fire to heaven. Bonaventure's Francis is the radicalization of the *excessus mentis* which characterizes mystic union: the "mystical and most secret" ecstasy of Bonaventurian mysticism is shown in "the body of Francis *in excess of* the soul in its deliberative faculties."⁵⁰ In a wondrous paradox, Francis's own *exanime corpus*, while remaining inanimate, continues to vivify the faithful according to its new mode of being.

Certainly, the example of Francis in Bonaventure's hagiography is an unusual and exalted one, but it is precisely its exemplarity which allows us to examine philosophically the relationship between an exemplary soul and its exemplary body. Indeed, after the separation of his body from the soul, the body is still clearly *Francis's body*, and through its own form *qua* corpse, it retains a real continuity with the previously ensouled body while still communicating, in absence of the soul, something of the message which Francis preached in life. Far from "a mass that disintegrates back into its component parts," this *forma carnis humanae* (to use the language of the *Sentences* commentary) is a true, exemplary human body—"et Lux in tenebris lucet." While this account would be difficult to square with a purported Bonaventurian adherence to the unicity of substantial form, the language of body and soul as two substances in the *Breviloquium* is far more assimilable with the model of mystical death at the heart of Franciscanism. Moreover, in keeping with the clear (and sometimes overdrawn) parallels between Christ and Francis in nearly all early Franciscan hagiographies, the *Breviloquium's* language of two substances, like the *Legenda Maior's* description of Francis's corpse, coheres with the majority

⁴⁹ Davis, *Weight of Love*, 129, citing Bonaventure, *Legenda Maior* XV, chaps. 2–3: "Caro vero ipsius reliqua, quae prius tam ex infirmitate quam ex natura ad nigredinem declinabat, candore nimio renitescens, illius secundae stolae pulchritudinem praetendebat. . . . Membra ipsius adeo mollia et tractabilia se praebebant palpantibus, ut conversa viderentur in teneritudinem puerilis aetatis et quibusdam cernerentur evidentibus signis innocentiae decorata. Cum igitur in candidissima carne clavi nigrescerent, plaga vero lateris ut vernans roseus flos ruberet, mirandum non est, si tam formosa et miraculosa varietas iucunditatem et admirationem contuentibus ingerebat"—"The flesh he left behind, which before had turned black due to his sickness and death, became white again, manifesting the beauty of the 'second stole.' His limbs became soft and moveable to those who touched it, as if returning to the tenderness of childhood, and seemed to be adorned with certain signs of innocence. Because the nails seemed black in contrast with the white flesh, and the wound in his side became red as a blossoming rose, it is no surprise that these many beautiful and miraculous signs inspired joy and admiration."

⁵⁰ Davis, *Weight of Love*, 130, citing Bonaventure, *Itinerarium* VII, chap. 5.

Scholastic opinion of the 1230s and 1240s on the enduring bodily form of Christ in the tomb, as well as with later pluriformists like Peckham, Kilwardby, and Richard of Middleton.⁵¹

Why the apparent discrepancy from the *Sentences* to the later works? As van Buren points out, Bonaventure in the *Sentences* commentary in many ways breaks from the anterior Franciscan form of Avicennian Aristotelianism represented by the *Summa Halensis*, employing other strategies to synthesize Aristotle with Christian doctrine. One of the Avicennian tenets adopted in the *Summa Halensis* but restrained in Bonaventure's *Sentences* commentary is the assignation of a proper form to corporeity.⁵² Thus, Quinn and Dugandzic are right to say that Bonaventure is not a substance dualist, insofar as the *Sentences* commentary retreats from the dualistic leanings of Alexander of Hales and John of La Rochelle. But, as we have seen, the *Breviloquium* speaks of body and soul as two substances, while in the *Legenda Maior*, the dead body of Francis is still the body of Francis. Does the later Bonaventure undergo a re-Avicennization, and if so, why?

Obviously that question is too large to address here, and I myself do not wish to claim that Bonaventure had undertaken some broad Avicennization in his later years. However, perhaps we can pursue some speculative historical justification for why Bonaventure might have later moved to conciliate his position with those of his Franciscan predecessors at Paris. The matter turns on Bonaventure's own election as minister general in 1257, which saw him thrust into the role of peacemaker between the hard-line "Spirituals," or *zelanti*, and the moderate "Conventuals," or *relaxati*, in the growing dispute over apostolic poverty.⁵³ Bonaventure, who was admitted with Thomas Aquinas in *consortio magistrorum* at Paris in the same year of his election (after waiting around four years due to the anti-mendicant controversy),⁵⁴ had already completed his *Sentences* commentary by 1254, in a

⁵¹ Note well: Bonaventure (in the *Sentences*) and Aquinas resolve this problem similarly, holding to the unbroken hypostatic union of Christ's human nature (and therefore his corpse) to the eternal Word. However, they differ greatly in the details, since Aquinas holds to unicity, while Bonaventure holds to universal hylomorphism.

⁵² Van Buren, *Aristotle*, 36–39; cf. Amos Bertolacci, "On the Latin Reception of Avicenna's Metaphysics before Albertus Magnus: An Attempt at Periodization," in *The Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Reception of Avicenna's Metaphysics* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 197–223; and Schumacher, "Christian Platonism," 183–206.

⁵³ Damien Vorreux, "Introduction to Bonaventure," in Francis of Assisi, *Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, ed. Marion Hebig, trans. Raphael Brown et al. (London: SPCK, 1981), 614–26.

⁵⁴ Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1, *The Person and His Work*, trans. Robert

context where both the philosophy of Averroes and a new Parisian edition of the *Corpus Dionysiacum* provided scholars more resources to expand inquiry beyond the fascination with Avicenna that marked the early thirteenth century at the University of Paris. Bonaventure, with Aquinas, was indeed on the cutting edge of scholarship in this regard. Nevertheless, the influential nature of Avicenna's thought on Franciscans both before and after Bonaventure's election meant that Avicennian dualism remained a potent and formative doctrine among the Friars Minor throughout the thirteenth century.

But beyond the reception of Avicenna and the later controversies over Averroism, the internal Franciscan dispute over poverty became a question of most pressing importance for the young minister general. In his role as conciliator, Bonaventure aimed to re-center the attention of all friars on the mystical exemplarity of their blessed founder.⁵⁵ Both Bonaventure and the general chapter at Narbonne in 1260 understood that this required a single *legenda Sancti Francisci* to supersede all other *vitae*, many of which contained contradictory stories or were being abused for polemical purposes by the warring factions. All of Bonaventure's theological, philosophical, and literary skills were pressed into service for this monumental task, which was completed by 1262 and thereafter made obligatory on the entire order. If the *Legenda Maior* is rightly understood as a tool of reconciliation, then the description of Francis therein should not simply express a bespoke non-Avicennian metaphysics. Rather, Bonaventure perhaps accepted certain Avicennian tendencies into his hagiographic text precisely to guarantee a wide appeal across an order for whom the Commentator was a special authority. The attempted reconciliation, therefore, was not only aimed at competing groups with regard to poverty, but also embraced Friars Minor who increasingly took part in university disputations armed with the thought of Avicenna.

What can be said about the *Legenda Maior* can also be said of the *Breviloquium*, written in 1259 according to current consensus, or in the period 1262–1267 (according to Jay Hammond).⁵⁶ In either case, its

Royal (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 76–79: “Thomas waited about eighteen months for his admission into the *consortium magistrorum*. Bonaventure, however, had waited four years, and he gave his *principium* when he had already been minister general of the friars minor for six months.” Cf. Jay Hammond, “Dating Bonaventure's Inception as Regent Master,” *Franciscan Studies* 67 (2009): 179–226, for an alternate timeline.

⁵⁵ Vorreux, “Introduction to Bonaventure,” 618.

⁵⁶ Jay M. Hammond, “The Textual Context,” in *Bonaventure Revisited: Companion to the*

composition occurred while Bonaventure was already minister general and proceeding with the project of reconciliation. The *Itinerarium* likewise belongs to the time of the generalship. Thus, the language of body and soul as two substances in the *Breviloquium*, the motif of bodily death in the *Itinerarium*, and the description of Francis's corpse in the *Legenda Maior* can all be shown to serve the purpose of reaffirming devotion to the Franciscan way of life, which involves humbling oneself even unto death (like Christ and Francis), such that the affective ascent of the soul and the humiliation of the body are paradoxically linked aspects of the mystical life. Does this inversely proportional relationship between body and soul in Bonaventure's mysticism imply a body-soul dualism? In the strict sense, one would have to answer "no," but one can nevertheless recognize how the language of these later treatises at least permits some resonances with the Avicennized early Franciscan school. In the same breath, we must acknowledge two other points. First, these later treatises do in fact seem to represent subtle yet discernible shifts from the *Sentences* commentary, such that a comprehensive vision of Bonaventurian metaphysics must account for these texts. Second: the same texts preclude us from accepting the Quinn-Dugandzic thesis on non-pluriformity in Bonaventure's metaphysics.

Conclusion: Consequences for the Study of the Passions

From the foregoing, we can hold a certain concurrence with Dugandzic when he says that "whatever differences there may be between Bonaventure and Aquinas on how each understands reason's rule of the passions, these differences are not corollaries of their respective metaphysical views of the relationship between body and soul."⁵⁷ Dugandzic is right to critique "hylomorphic enthusiasts" who almost uncritically accept that Bonaventure was a substance dualist, as if the Seraphic Doctor considered body and soul to be joined only extrinsically or accidentally, and that therefore his views of the passions' relation to reason is one of a subject to his despot. This line of reasoning simply does not follow. Quinn, Dugandzic, and van Buren all correctly acknowledge that, in the wayfaring state, the metaphysical relationship of the body and soul is indeed a close one, although sin does introduce a kind of struggle between the two principles. However, I would

Breviloquium, ed. Dominic Monti and Katherine Wisley Shelby (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2017), 30–41.

⁵⁷ Dugandzic, "Reason, Passion, and Metaphysics in Bonaventure," 133.

push back on the stronger claim that “whatever differences there might be between Aquinas and Bonaventure on the relationship between reason and passion, *these differences are not due to any differences in their respective metaphysical views*” (emphasis added).⁵⁸ Here I would say that the “hylomorphic enthusiasts” are justified in interrogating the differences between the doctors and their respective construals of body–soul composition in the service of specifying divergent approaches to human affectivity.

Dugandzic’s article is to be commended for its fundamental conviction that human passions are virtuous if and only if they remain directly under the command of reason. This subordination of bodily motions in the sensitive soul to the political rule of intellect and will must in turn be rooted in intrinsic metaphysical union of body and soul as presented in the doctrine of the unicity of substantial form. On this point, Dugandzic and I are in complete agreement, and I look forward to future contributions in moral theology emphasizing how reason’s rule over the passions, while political in exercise, remains a *rule* requiring the immediate cooperation of the passions. Such contributions, however, must acknowledge Thomas as a principal authority, against the pluriformism of Bonaventure as described above.

One way this conversation could proceed is by reference to Thomas’s doctrine of participation as found in his commentary on Boethius’s *De hebdomadibus*, specifically on the second mode of participation, according to which *matter participates form*.⁵⁹ This is a robust and innovative metaphysical doctrine which, as far as I can tell, has no equivalent in Bonaventure. It is worth mentioning that one of the great strengths of van Buren’s work is her inclusion of an entire chapter on participation in Aquinas, allowing her to contrast this doctrine with Bonaventure’s philosophy. The participation of matter and form in Aquinas, applied to body and soul, indeed signifies a strong essential connection between the two principles in the human person. By contrast, Bonaventure’s construal of body–soul union—whether in terms of (non-unique) substantial form in the *Sentences* commentary, or as the union of “two substances in one nature” in the *Breviloquium*, or in the inverse proportionality of the *Itinerarium* and *Legenda Maior*—does not necessarily express the same tight, co-inherent unity as implied by Thomistic unicity of substantial form and its concomitant metaphysics of participation. If, for Bonaventure, the inflammation of the *affectus* by divine charity results in a deathly cessation of normal bodily

⁵⁸ Dugandzic, “Reason, Passion, and Metaphysics in Bonaventure,” 126.

⁵⁹ Aquinas, *In de hebdomadibus*, lec. 2.

operations, then, at the very least, a quite *different* theory of participation must be developed to account for this either-or relationship.

Finally, the spiritual treatises, sermons, and collations cannot be excluded from scholarship on Bonaventure's metaphysics and anthropology. The *Sentences* commentary, important as it is, does not exhaust Bonaventure's doctrine, and indeed, his emphasis on affect and charity in the mystical works must play a larger role in re-reading the major passages of the commentary on *Sentences* II on the passions. In this respect, Davis's *The Weight of Love* is an outstanding point of departure, and by the same token, the (over-)emphasis on the *Sentences* commentary as seen in both Quinn and van Buren must be regarded as a serious handicap. Any sufficient treatment of the Seraphic Doctor's teaching must read the *Sentences* commentary in light of the non-Scholastic writings of 1257 and beyond, because the latter works bear the stamp of the two crucial turning points in Bonaventure's life: his election as minister general for an order in existential crisis, and his own mystical experience of the six-winged seraph atop Mount Alverna. N.V.