

The Personhood of the Separated Soul

MARK K. SPENCER

University of St. Thomas

St. Paul, MN

A DEBATE has recently arisen over the questions of whether, on the Thomistic view, the human soul is a person after death and prior to resurrection, and whether it is the same person as the soul-matter composite of which it was a part before death. Such questions are of great importance for those who hold to the immortality of the soul. Answering them requires us to inquire deeply into what we human persons are, and into the plausibility of the Thomistic answer to that question. According to many Thomists, a person is a substance with the highest degree of dignity that a substance can have, is incommunicable, and is capable of ruling itself (*dominus sui, sui iuris*) and acting autonomously with subjective interiority.¹ If the separated soul lacks these character-

¹ Aquinas uses “lord of oneself” (*dominus sui*) and “lord of his acts” (*dominus sui actus*) in his account of free will, not as a defining mark of personhood as such (though it is of the essence of persons to be free) at *Scriptum super sententiis* I, d. 17, q. 2, a. 3; II, d. 7, q. 1, a. 2; III, d. 18, q. 1, a. 2; *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate* q. 5, a. 10; *Summa contra gentiles* (SCG) II, c. 23; III, c. 111–13, 155; *Summa theologiae* (ST) I-II, q. 6, a. 2, ad 2; II-II, q. 64, a. 5, ad 3; q. 122, a. 1. He uses “a law to himself” (*sui iuris*) similarly at ST II-II, q. 104, a. 5. All citations from Aquinas are from www.corpusthomicum.org (Navarre: Fundación Tomás de Aquino, 2012), and all translations are mine. The later Thomistic tradition considered these to be defining marks of personhood as such; cf. Thomas de Vio Cajetan, *Expositio super sancti Thomae Aquinatis* (Rome: Leonine ed., 1888), vol. 4, I, q. 29, a. 1, n. 11, 329; Salmanticenses, *Cursus theologicus* (Paris: Victor Palme, 1877), vol. 3, t. 6, d. 9, dub 1, 341; Edouard Hugon, “Si l’âme séparée est une personne,” *Revue Thomiste* 17 (1909): 593; Norris Clarke, *Person and Being* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1993), 117. Oth-

istics, then it is difficult to see how the soul's existence after death can provide me with a rational basis, apart from supernatural hope and faith in the resurrection, for the commonly held beliefs that I shall live on after death, and that my dead loved ones are now alive in another place.² Most Thomists have denied that the separated soul is a person because they hold that the human person is essentially a composite of matter and soul.³ It is thought that to hold that the separated soul is a person is to be a substance dualist, not a Thomistic hylomorphist.⁴ Each account of the separated soul thus runs into problems.

In this essay, I argue that a Thomist can hold that human persons survive their deaths constituted by separated souls, and thus can hold the common beliefs about personal immortality. Unlike others who have defended this "alternative" or "survivalist" view (in distinction to

ers in this tradition describe the person as "autonomous," "for oneself," "interior to oneself" or "possessing oneself": Mariasusai Dhavamany, *Subjectivity and Knowledge in the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1965), 34; Jacques Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, trans. Gerard Phelan (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 463; *The Person and the Common Good* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), 41; Clarke, *Person and Being*, 30–32. Aquinas calls the human person incommunicable in his *Commentary on the Sentences at In III Sent* d. 5, q. 2, a. 1, ad 2, and this is examined by all his major commentators.

² Aquinas argues that the immortality of the soul satisfies somewhat one's personal desire for immortality at SCG II, c. 79.

³ When writing strictly, I say "matter and soul," not "body and soul," because the body is matter formed by the soul, on one sense of "body"; on another sense, the body is matter under quantified dimensions, without any powers. Still, I think it makes sense and is in accord with the standard usages of the Thomistic tradition to say that the soul is "apart from the body" to refer to the state of the soul when not informing matter, and to say that the soul is "in the body" when it is in the state of informing matter. Phrases like "the soul in the body" just mean "the soul in the state of informing matter such that they constituted the body." Cf. *De ente et essentia* c. 2; SCG IV, c. 81; ST I, q. 75, a. 5, ad 1; q. 76, a. 5, ad 1. Cf. Eleonore Stump, "Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism and Materialism without Reductionism," *Faith and Philosophy* 12 (1995): 512; Patrick Toner, "St. Thomas on Death and the Separated Soul," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 91 (2010): 590–91; Christina Van Dyke, "Not Properly a Person: The Rational Soul and Thomistic Substance Dualism," *Faith and Philosophy* 26 (2009): 195; John Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 298–99.

⁴ David Oderberg, "Hylemorphic Dualism," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 22 (2005): 72; Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2003), 208–16; Stump, "Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism," 517–23.

the “standard” or “corruptionist” view that the separated soul is not a person), I shall show that Aquinas and many of his followers did not hold this view, implicitly or explicitly.⁵ Nor do I think that the corruptionist view is an implausible interpretation of Thomism. However, I argue that one can (and perhaps should) hold the survivalist view, while also holding to other, more fundamental Thomistic positions on being and personhood. A full investigation of the question of whether a Thomist can hold the survivalist view requires inquiry into and synthesis of the historical Thomistic tradition, in a deeper way than has been done by others in this debate. I engage in that inquiry and synthesis in this essay, and locate the current debate within that tradition. I show which elements of the Thomistic tradition can be held, and how these must be interpreted, to be both a Thomist and a survivalist. I first summarize the arguments of the two views, considering the metaphysical arguments for these views, not the moral arguments related to the punishment or rewarding of the soul.⁶ Next, I present an interpretation of Thomistic views on existence, personhood, and the separated soul. Finally, on that basis, I argue for my position.

The Survivalist View

A first argument for the survivalist view is based on the fact that Aquinas thinks that the separated soul can engage in the acts typical of persons;⁷ I

⁵ For this terminology, see Christopher Brown, *Aquinas and the Ship of Theseus* (London: Continuum, 2009), 120–21; Patrick Toner, “Personhood and Death in St. Thomas Aquinas,” *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 26 (2009): 121; Toner, “St. Thomas on Death,” 597.

⁶ For moral arguments for the survivalist view, see David Hershenov, “Soulless Organisms? Hylomorphism vs. Animalism,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 85 (2011): 474–76; David Hershenov and Rose Koch-Hershenov, “Personal Identity and Purgatory,” *Religious Studies* 42 (2006): 441; Stump, “Resurrection and the Separated Soul,” in Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 463. For a response from the corruptionist view, see Toner, “Personhood and Death,” 130–31. Cf. *De veritate* q. 13, a. 3, ad 1; *ST I*, q. 21, a. 1; q. 23, a. 3; q. 75, a. 4; I-II, q. 1, a. 1; II-II q. 61, a. 4, ad 1; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus thomisticus*, vol. 3, *Philosophia naturalis, De anima* (Paris: Vives, 1883), q. 9, a. 1, 432–33.

⁷ For those who hold this view, see Brown, *Aquinas and the Ship*, 77–79; Christopher Brown, “Souls, Ships, and Substances,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 81 (2007): 655–68; Jason Eberl, “Aquinas on the Nature of Human Beings,” *Review of Metaphysics* 58 (2004): 341–42; “Do Humans Persist between Death and Resurrec-

refer to this as the *Argument from Acts*.⁸ The separated soul thinks, wills, loves, and desires;⁹ it experiences pleasure or pain;¹⁰ it remembers forms that it abstracted in the body;¹¹ it has relationships and communicates with other separated souls, angels, and God;¹² it can pray and hear prayers;¹³ it can appear to composite humans.¹⁴ One of Aquinas's axioms is that the way that a thing acts follows from the way that it exists, that is, its mode (or kind) of operation follows its mode of being.¹⁵ The fact that the separated

tion?," in *Metaphysics and God*, ed. Kevin Timpe (New York: Routledge, 2009); "The Metaphysics of Resurrection," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 74 (2001): 215–30; "Varieties of Dualism," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 50 (2010): 39–56; David Oderberg, *Real Essentialism*, (New York: Routledge, 2007), chap. 10; Oderberg, "Survivalism, Corruptionism, and Mereology," *European Journal for the Philosophy of Religion* 4 (2012): 1–26; Stump, *Aquinas*, 50–54; Eleonore Stump, "Resurrection and the Separated Soul," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), ed. Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump, chap. 34; Eleonore Stump, "Resurrection, Reassembly, and Reconstitution," in *Die menschliche Seele: Brauchen wir den Dualismus?*, ed. Bruno Niederberger and Edmund Runggaldier (Frankfurt: Ontos Verlag, 2006); J. P. Moreland and Scott Rae, *Body and Soul* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 206.

⁸ Stump, *Aquinas*, 52–53, 208. Cf. Mary Rousseau, "Elements of a Thomistic Philosophy of Death," *Thomist* 43 (1979): 582–601; Victor Edmund Sleva, *The Separated Soul in the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1940), 120–77.

⁹ *De veritate*, q. 19, a. 1; *Quaestiones de quodlibet* 3, q. 9, a. 1; *In II Sent* d. 19, q. 1, a. 1; *SCG* II, c. 83; *ST* I, q. 89, a. 1; *ST Supplement* q. 69, a. 2; q. 70, aa. 2 and 3. Although the last source is not by Aquinas but a compilation of his other writings, I cite it because those who defend the survivalist view cite it, and I wish to convey their views here.

¹⁰ *De veritate*, q. 8, a. 4, ad 12; *Quaestiones de quodlibet* 7, q. 1, a. 1, and q. 2, a.un.; *SCG* IV, c. 91; *ST* I-II, q. 4, a. 5; *Supp* q. 70, a. 3.

¹¹ *Sentencia libri de anima*, I, lect 10, n. 152; *Quaestio disputata de anima*, a. 15, ad 17; *De veritate* q. 19, a. 1; *Quaestiones de quodlibet* 3, q. 9, a. 1; *In IV Sent* d. 50, q. 1, a. 2; *SCG* II, c. 81; *ST* I, q. 89, a. 4–6.

¹² *De veritate*, q. 19, a. 1; *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 15, ad 11 and 20; *Quaestiones de quodlibet* 3, q. 9, a. 1; *In IV Sent* d. 50, q. 1, a. 1; *ST* I, q. 89, aa. 2 and 8.

¹³ *De veritate*, q. 8, a. 4, ad 12; *In IV Sent* d. 15, q. 4, a. 5, qu. 1, corpus and ad 3; *ST* II-II, q. 83, a. 11; *Supplement* q. 72, aa. 1–3. Aquinas says that prayers are acts, and acts are attributed to persons, at *In IV Sent* d. 45, q. 3, a. 2, ad 3, and *Supplement*, q. 72, a. 2, ad 3, though at *ST* II-II, q. 83, a. 11, ad 5, he says that separated souls are invoked as persons only because they were parts of persons and will be part of persons after the resurrection. Cf. Eberl, "Do Humans Persist?," 193; Hugon, "Si l'âme," 590. I am grateful to Tim Pawl for this point.

¹⁴ *In IV Sent* d. 45, q. 1, a. 1, qu. 3; *ST* I, q. 89, a. 8, ad 2; *Supplement*, q. 69, a. 3.

¹⁵ *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 2; *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 1 and 2;

soul engages in acts typical of human persons suggests that it is a human person, so as to be the kind of thing capable of such acts. The person is in an unnatural condition without matter, lacking nonintellectual powers and operations, except insofar as these are “rooted” in the soul.¹⁶ Despite being unable to exercise these powers, it can at least weakly exercise the rational powers, which are the powers most proper to human nature.¹⁷

A second argument for the survivalist view turns on the claim that for Aquinas, composition or constitution is not identity; I refer to this as the *Argument from Constitution*. Aquinas holds that a substantial whole is greater than the sum of the parts that compose it, or the principles that constitute it, that is, that internally give it existence of some kind.¹⁸ For example, in the present life, the whole human being is composed of, but greater than, not identical to, soul and matter.¹⁹ The survivalist view holds that a thing can lose parts, and the remaining parts can still

Quaestiones de quodlibet 10, q. 3, a. 2; SCG III, c. 113; ST I, q. 50, a. 5; q. 75. aa. 2 and 3; q. 105, a. 5. Cf. Clarke, *Person and Being*, 8; Robert Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 373.

¹⁶ SCG IV, c. 81; ST I-II, q. 4, a. 5, ad 2; Eberl, “Do Humans Persist,” 194–96, 201. Aquinas says the nonintellectual powers remain “in root” (*radice*) in the separated soul, not as actually present, because they require bodily organs to be actually present, at *Quaestiones de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 3; *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 19, ad 5; *Quaestiones de quodlibet* 9, q. 4, a. 2. One thing is in another “in root” when the latter immediately causes the former when placed in the right conditions. Cf. *Sententia libri De anima* I, lec. 14, n. 199; Domingo Bañez, *Scholastica commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 1 (Salamanca, 1585), q. 76, a. 1, dub 5, concl 1 n. 2, 162. John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 3, *De anima*, q. 9, a. 2, 441, says the soul contains the powers *eminenter*, able to “emanate” or cause them when placed in its natural condition of informing matter.

¹⁷ Stump, *Aquinas*, 52–53; Eberl, “Aquinas on the Nature,” 339–41. Cf. *Quaestiones de quodlibet* 10, q. 4, a. 2; *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 6, ad 14; a. 19, od, 5; ST I, q. 89, a. 1; q. 117, a. 4.

¹⁸ *Sententia libri metaphysicae* VII, lect 17, n. 1674: “quia aliquid est sic ex aliquo compositum ut omne, idest totum sit unum, et non hoc modo sicut cumulus lapidum, sed sicut syllaba, quae est unum simpliciter; in omnibus talibus oportet, quod ipsum compositum non sit ea ex quibus componitur: sicut syllaba non est elementa.”

¹⁹ Stump means the same thing by “constitution” as Brown means by “composition.” Aquinas and later Thomists sometimes use *compositio/compositum* and sometimes use *constitutio/constitutum* for situations where one set of principles gives rise to a whole that is greater than their sum. See Oderberg, “Survivalism, Corruptionism, and Mereology,” 15, on the lack of distinction between constitution and composition. Cf. *Quaestiones de quodlibet* 2, q. 2, a. 2, a. 9; q. 2, a. 1, ad 1; SCG II, c. 68; ST I, q. 76, a. 1; III q. 2, a. 1, ad 2.

constitute the original whole, if the remaining part or parts retain these characteristics: first, the principle of specific identity for the original whole, that is, that in virtue of which the original whole is the kind of thing that it is; second, the same act of existence as the original whole, that is, the same ultimate actuality whereby the whole exists; third, what remains must be able to perform the operations typical of the species of thing that the original whole was. In the human person, the soul is the principle of identity. The soul is the primary bearer of the human person's act of existence, and so is able to exist apart from matter, while continuing to bear that same act of existence. And, as we saw in the *Argument from Acts*, the soul is that in virtue of which the person performs intellectual operations, the operations most typical of the human species, and it can perform these operations separated from the composite.²⁰ So a human person could lose all of his or her matter and still be constituted, as the same whole, by the soul, though he or she would not thereby be identical to the soul.²¹ On this basis, the survivalist holds that identity of soul is necessary and sufficient for personal identity.²² Some proponents of this view contend that I ordinarily refer to myself as "I" and others refer to me by name in virtue of my soul, my "chief part," because it is the subject of my intellect, and I am identified by myself and others in virtue of my psychological or intellectual characteristics and behavior. For this reason, I can still refer to myself as "I" and others can refer to me by name when I am constituted just by my soul.²³

The separate soul does not seem to fulfill the definition of a person as an "individual substance of a rational nature," because it lacks

²⁰ *Quaestiones de anima* a. 1, 3, 5; SCG II, c. 50; ST I, q. 75, a. 2; q. 76, a. 1; q. 79, a. 1. Cf. Sleva, *Separated Soul*, 71.

²¹ Brown, *Aquinas and the Ship*, 78–79; Eberl, "Do Humans Persist," 340; Stump, *Aquinas*, 52; Stump, "Resurrection," 461.

²² Brown, "Souls, Ships, and Substances," 657; Eberl, "Do Humans Persist," 194; Oderberg, *Real Essentialism*, 255–57; Stump, "Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism," 516. An extreme version of this position is held by J. P. Moreland and Scott Rae, who hold as Thomists that human persons are essentially just souls, though souls are substantially united as form to matter; matter becomes part of what is essentially a soul. This is contrary to what Aquinas says, but we shall see later (at note 164) that it is not as at odds with Thomism as might be at first thought. Cf. Moreland and Rae, *Body and Soul*, 14, 201, 206; Van Dyke, "Not Properly a Person," 187–88, 196–200.

²³ Oderberg, "Hylemorphic Dualism," 96. The soul is called "what is principally" (*quod est principale*) in the human person at ST I, q. 75 a. 4.

a complete nature.²⁴ Still, the survivalist holds that a separated soul retains what is necessary and sufficient to constitute a human person. The survivalist agrees with Aquinas that a human person is not identical to a soul, but contends that, in the separated state, a person is constituted by a soul, while remaining an individual rational animal and individual substance of a rational nature.²⁵ This situation is similar to a thought experimental situation in which a human person is reduced to a disembodied head; persons are not just heads, though they can be constituted by heads.²⁶ Despite the strangeness of the claim that there could be disembodied animals, it is necessary for the survivalist to maintain that the separated soul is an animal, since Aquinas holds that human persons are essentially animals.

The Corruptionist View

The texts of Aquinas are on the side of the corruptionist view.²⁷ The main argument for this view is that the separated soul cannot be or constitute a human person because it lacks complete human nature.²⁸ I refer to this

²⁴ *Quaestiones disputatae de potentia dei*, q. 9, a. 2; *In I Sent* d. 25, q. 1, a. 1; *ST I*, q. 29, a. 1: *persona est rationalis naturae individua substantia*.

²⁵ Stump, *Aquinas*, 52–54; “Resurrection,” 462. Aquinas denies that the soul is a person at *ST I*, q. 75 a. 4, and *Super I epistolam beati Pauli ad Corinthios lectura* 15, lec. 2: “anima autem cum sit pars corporis hominis, non est totus homo, et anima mea non est ego.”

²⁶ Brown, “Souls, Ships, and Substances,” 657.

²⁷ This view has been defended or presented in the contemporary debate by: Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind* (London: Routledge, 1993), 138; Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 215–20; Leo Elders, *The Philosophy of Nature of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1997), 274–84; Robert George and Patrick Lee, *Body-Self Dualism in Contemporary Ethics and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 66–81; John Haldane, “The Examined Death and the Hope of the Future,” *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 74 (2001): 253–54; Toner, “St. Thomas on Death”; Patrick Toner, “Hylemorphic Animalism,” *Philosophical Studies* 155 (2011): 65–81; “On Hylemorphism and Personal Identity,” *European Journal of Philosophy* 19 (2009): 454–73; “Personhood”; “Thomas versus Tibbles,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 81 (2007): 639–53; Van Dyke, “Not Properly a Person.”

²⁸ *De potentia*, q. 9, a. 2, ad 14; *ST I*, q. 29, a. 1, ad 5: “...anima est pars humanae speciei, et ideo, licet sit separata, quia tamen retinet naturam unibilitatis, non potest dici substantia individua quae est hypostasis vel substantia prima; sicut nec manus, nec quaecumque alia partium hominis. Et sic non competit ei neque definitio personae, neque nomen.” Cf. Sleva, *Separated Soul*, 110; Van Dyke, “Not Properly a Person,” 202–3.

argument as the *Argument from Nature*.

Things belong to their species essentially, and, in order to belong to a species, a thing must have all the essential parts of that species: in our case, matter and soul. Patrick Toner argues that the idea of something retaining animality while constituted by only an immaterial soul is incoherent, since humanity requires animality, animality requires being able to sense, and this requires having bodily organs.²⁹ In this way, he objects to some of the premises of the *Argument from Constitution*. Aquinas consistently holds that without matter the soul is not a person; for example, in considering “raptures,” experiences in which one has a direct experience of God, he says that if this involves one’s soul leaving the body, then one is dead and is not a person or a human during the experience.³⁰ The corruptionist view holds that if the separated soul alone had human nature, then it would be unnecessary and impossible for it to unite to matter because it would be substantially complete on its own, or, at least, matter would be just accidentally, not naturally and substantially, united to the soul.³¹ Matter would be a mere instrument of the soul, as Plato thought.³² But the soul does need to unite to matter for substantial completion and for its natural operations. So the separated soul, though the principle of specific identity for the human person, does not have complete human nature and is not a human person.

Furthermore, as Toner objects to the *Argument from Constitution* in what I call the *Argument from Parthood*, it is unclear what a person is on the survivalist view. A thing cannot be constituted by just one of its proper parts without a supplementing proper part. There is no supplementing proper part in the separated soul, and so, on the survivalist view, after death and before the resurrection, the person is constituted by just one part. But then there is no way to distinguish the soul and the

²⁹ Toner, “Hylemorphic Animalism,” 74–77. As Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind*, 28, argues, we do not have bodies; rather, we are bodies, that is, matter formed by a soul. Cf. Toner, “St. Thomas on Death,” 589.

³⁰ *De veritate*, q. 13, a. 5, ad 3; *ST* II-II, q. 175, a. 6, ad 1. Cf. Toner, “St. Thomas on Death,” 595.

³¹ *Quaestiones de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 3, ad 10.

³² *Quaestiones de anima*, aa. 1–2; *Sentencia libri De anima* I, lect 8–9; *ST* I, q. 76, aa. 1–2.

person, such that they could be related as constituting thing to constituted thing. So the separated soul cannot constitute a person.³³

Corruptionists also diffuse the claim that their view lessens our rationally based hope for personal immortality. I refer to this set of arguments as the *Arguments from Death and Resurrection*. Toner emphasizes that although the soul is not the person, the relation between them is unique; no other thing besides the human person has a form that is subsistent, capable of surviving the things' demise because the form is the primary bearer of its act of existence. Death deprives *me* of existence, but it does not destroy my act of existence.³⁴ Bearing that act of existence, and being the form by which the person has human nature, allow intellectual activity to continue in the soul, and they provide the possibility that the person could return to existence through resurrection. We cannot know, except by faith, that there will be a resurrection, but we can know that this is a possibility because of the nature of the soul.³⁵ So there is room for rationally based hope.³⁶ But death is still an

³³ Toner, "Hylemorphism and Personal Identity," 456–62. But Oderberg, "Survivalism, Corruptionism, and Mereology," 14–15, suggests that Aquinas did not hold to the principle of supplementation presented here, and that there is independent reason not to hold to this principle: two things (he gives the example of a statue and the clay that constitutes it) can share all their proper parts but still be different things. Furthermore, the mereological principle invoked here has to do with spatial things and does not apply in the case of the soul. Later in the essay, I shall present a version of this principle of supplementation.

³⁴ *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 1; *SCG* IV, c. 80, 81; *ST* III, q. 50, a. 4: "Pertinet autem ad veritatem mortis hominis vel animalis quod per mortem desinat esse homo vel animal, mors enim hominis vel animalis provenit ex separatione animae, quae complet rationem animalis vel hominis." Cf. Toner, "St. Thomas on Death," 593. As we have seen, some (e.g., Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 387–89) think that the person could partially survive as the separated soul, but this is not Aquinas's meaning. In some places, he does seem to allow this as when, at *In IV Sent* d. 43, q. 1, a. 1, qq. 1, ad 2, he says "anima Abrahae non est, proprie loquendo, ipse Abraham, sed est pars ejus"; one could interpret *proprie loquendo* as allowing for an "improper speaking," according to which the soul is partially the person. But Aquinas just means that we can refer to the separated soul as the person, but this is just to refer to a part by the name of the whole of which it is or was a part. When John of St. Thomas, at *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 2, q. 7, a. 3, 114, says of death that "perit esse hominis, ut hominis, non ut animae," then this must be taken similarly.

³⁵ Toner, "St. Thomas on Death," 594; "Personhood and Death," 130; Charles Hart, *Thomistic Metaphysics* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1959), 157.

³⁶ George and Lee, *Body-Self Dualism*, 73, urge caution here: we are here at the limits of what reason can tell us about life after death.

evil for us, because it deprives us of existence. The corruptionist view claims that the survivalist view lessens both the sense of evil that we feel about death, and the marvelousness of the resurrection. The resurrection is wonderful, the corruptionist view holds, because it restores my very self, whereas on the survivalist view, the self survives death and is not restored, but only completed at the resurrection.³⁷

The proponents of the corruptionist view furthermore point out, in response to the *Argument from Acts*, that although personal acts continue in the separated soul, they are diminished, and this is evidence that the separated soul is not a person; I refer to this as the *Argument from Weakness*. The separated soul is only capable of limited thought since it cannot turn to phantasms, which is its natural mode of operating. It must rely on forms that it abstracted while in the composite, on the insights it can have into other separated souls, and on divine infusion of forms. It lacks most moral virtues, since most of these are habits of bodily powers, which it lacks. These diminished powers indicate that it is not a person, despite the fact that it will have more perfect self-knowledge than it had in this life, and will be able to understand forms directly without phantasms. This higher mode of cognition is not better for souls, because it is contrary to their nature, which is to inform matter.³⁸ Toner argues that the separated soul is, strictly speaking, “nobody.”³⁹ The fact that something acts like a person does not necessitate that it is a person; indeed, Aquinas thinks that there are things, like the Eucharistic species, that act like something—for example, bread and wine—without actually being that thing.⁴⁰ Since there are independent reasons to say that the separated soul is not a person, the corruptionist holds, the fact that it acts like a person does not show that it is a person. We can refer to separated souls as persons, as when we pray to saints, but in doing so

³⁷ *ST* III, q. 50, a. 4; *Supplement* q. 86, a. 2, ad 3. Toner, “St. Thomas on Death,” 592. Cf. Giuseppe Butera, “The Immaterial Grounds of Transcendentality,” *St. Anselm Journal* 6 (2008): 5–6.

³⁸ *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 19, ad 5; *ST* I, q. 89; Capreolus, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis* (Turin: Alfred Cattier, 1900), IV, vol. 7, d. 50, q. 1, concl 2, 259; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 2, q. 76, a. 1, dub 5, concl 1, 162. Cf. Rousseau, “Elements of a Thomistic Philosophy”; Hart, *Thomistic Metaphysics*, 156–57.

³⁹ Toner, “Personhood and Death,” 129.

⁴⁰ I am grateful to Patrick Toner for raising this point.

we employ synecdoche, referring to a part by the name of the whole of which it was, and hopefully will again be, a part.

David Hershenov objects that both views fall prey to a “too many thinkers problem.” On both views, the soul after death can think. But if the soul after death can think, and it is the same soul as was part of the composite prior to death, then the soul prior to death would be capable of thinking. But then there are two thinkers where there appear to be only one: the soul and the soul-matter composite. This is one thinker too many. According to Hershenov, whether or not the soul is a person, it is a thinker, and thus either view seems to lead to the unacceptable situation of too many thinkers thinking a human person’s thoughts.⁴¹

Toner responds to this argument on behalf of the corruptionist view, and turns it into an objection to the survivalist view. He argues that, on the Thomistic view, prior to death, the composite is what (*quod*) thinks, and the soul is that by which (*quo*) it thinks. So when I say, prior to death, that my soul thinks, what I mean is that *I* think in virtue of a power that belongs *to me* only in my soul, not in my body.⁴² At death, as John Haldane explains, the powers of the soul are “transferred” to the soul alone, just as, when one chemical is precipitated out of another, the precipitated chemical takes on powers that belonged to the prior chemical.⁴³ Prior to death, there is one thinker, the composite person, and after death, there is another thinker, the soul. Thus, on the corruptionist view, there are not too many thinkers. However, Toner argues that for the survivalist, the problem remains. The survivalist view says that the person constituted by the separated soul can think. But Aquinas says that the separated soul itself can think, since it can operate intellectual powers. But then, Toner contends, on the survivalist view, there are two thinkers there: the separated soul and the person it constitutes; this is one thinker too many.⁴⁴

The corruptionist view is thus able to raise at least five arguments in its defense and in objection to the survivalist view. A complete defense

⁴¹ Hershenov, “Soulless Organisms,” 474–76.

⁴² Toner, “Hylemorphic Animalism,” 73; “Personhood and Death,” 133–34.

⁴³ Haldane, “Examined Death,” 254.

⁴⁴ Toner, “Personhood and Death,” 134.

of the latter, and response to the former, requires a deeper understanding of the traditional Thomistic view of personhood.

Thomism on Existence

In order to understand fully the place that this debate has in traditional Thomism, and in order to understand my own later arguments, one must understand more deeply the Thomistic metaphysics of existence; what follows is my interpretation of that metaphysics, according to which the thesis that the separated soul is the person can be held.

Central to this metaphysics is the real distinction between the essence of a created thing and its existence;⁴⁵ this is at the core of the Thomistic account of personhood and of my expansion on the *Argument from Constitution*. The essence of a thing, considered either as its specific or individualized nature, can be understood without a thing having that essence actually existing; *what* a thing is, is separable from *that* a thing is.⁴⁶ For example, *what* a human is—a rational animal—is different from the reality *that* some human actually exists. In order for there to be really existing created beings, essences must be actualized, or made to exist; to exist is to be actual, and not to be nothing or a mere conceivable or causable possibility.⁴⁷ Existence is what is most actual in and “intimate” to a thing; that is, it is the complete fullness and actuality of a thing and of all of its parts. It is the perfection of an essence, even more perfect and actual than the form that is part of every created essence.⁴⁸ The act of ex-

⁴⁵ *Expositio libri Boetii de hebdomadibus* lec. 1; *De ente*, c. 4; *De potentia*, q. 7, a. 2; *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1; SCG II, c. 52; ST I, q. 3, a. 4. Cf. Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 82, a. 3, n. 13, 300; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 1, q. 3, a. 4, dub 2, concl 2, 222; Ralph McInerny, *Praeambula Fidei* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2006), 61–68, 142–50; Lawrence Dewan, “Etienne Gilson and the *Actus Essendi*,” *Maritain Studies* 15 (1999): 70–96; Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 136.

⁴⁶ *De ente* c. 4.

⁴⁷ *De potentia*, q. 7, a. 2, ad 9; *De ente*, c. 4; ST I, q. 5, a. 1, ad 1. Cf. Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 1, q. 3, a. 4, dub 1, concl 3, 216; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus in summa theologiae divinae Thomae*, vol. 1 (Paris: Vives, 1883), I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 1, n. 25, 606–7; Ludovico Billot, *De verbo incarnato* (Rome: Propaganda Fide, 1895), 135; Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 454.

⁴⁸ *In II Sent* d. 1, q. 1, a. 4: “Esse autem est magis intimum cuilibet rei quam ea per quae esse determinatur”; *De potentia*, q. 7, a. 2, ad 9: “esse est inter omnia perfectissimum . . . esse est actualitas omnium actuum, et propter hoc est perfectio omnium

istence or of being (*actus essendi, esse, esse actualis existentiae*) formally causes a being, its essence, and its parts, actually to be.⁴⁹

Like other actualities, such as substantial forms, in order to be individuated the act of existence must be received and limited by a potentiality really distinct from it, an essence.⁵⁰ For example, in order for an act of existence to be mine, it must be received and limited by my human essence. The act of existence is prior to and more fundamental to a thing than the essence, in the sense that actuality is prior in the order of nature to potentiality. The essence entirely depends on the act of existence for its reality.⁵¹

One might object that a thing must exist in order to receive and limit, and thus an essence would have to exist in order to receive exis-

perfectionum"; SCG II, c. 54; ST I, q. 8, a. 1. Cf. Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 1, q. 3, a. 4, dub 1, concl 3, 216; Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. L. K. Shook (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956), 33–34; Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 190; Hans Urs Von Balthasar, Brian McNeil, et al., trans., *The Glory of the Lord*, vol. 4, *The Realm of Metaphysics in Antiquity* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 402.

⁴⁹ The first two terms are used by Aquinas, and all three are used by his commentators. Cf. *Expositio De hebdomadibus*, lec. 2; *De ente* c. 4; *De potentia*, q. 7, a. 2; *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 6, ad 2; SCG I, c. 22, 28; ST I, q. 3, a. 4; q. 4, a. 1; q. 7, a. 1; q. 8, a. 1. On *esse* as what is most formal in a thing: Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 1, I, d. 8, q. 1, a. 3, ad Aur, 328; *Defensiones*, vol. 5, III, d. 6, q. 1, a. 3, ad 1Aur, 119; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, q. 3, a. 4, dub 1, ad 3, 220; Lawrence Dewan, "A Text from Cajetan Touching on Existence," *Acta Philosophica* 16 (2007): 306; "Gilson and the *Actus Essendi*," 78, 87.

⁵⁰ *De ente*, c. 4; *Super librum de causis expositio* lec. 9; *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 1, ad 16; *Quaestiones de quodlibet* 9, q. 2, a. 1, ad 4; *De potentia*, q. 3, a. 4, ad 4; SCG I, c. 32; II, c. 52; ST I, q. 7, a. 3; I-II, q. 85, a. 4. This is developed in Francis Sylvester of Ferrara, *Commentary on Summa contra Gentiles* (Rome: Leonine ed., 1918–26), vol. 13, II, c. 68, n. 4.1–2, 442–43: the form or *forma partius* formally gives existence to the composite, while the essence or *formal totius*, including form and matter, is the proper recipient (*susceptivum*) of an act of existence. Cf. Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 5, III, d. 6, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3 aliorum, 121; Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, vol. 13, II, c. 52, n. 3.2 and 9.3, 388, 391; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 2, n. 26, 607; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 1, q. 3, a. 4, dub 1, concl 4, 217; dub 2, ad 2, 4, 223–24; Billot, *De verbo incarnato*, c. 2, a. 1, q. 2, 130; Dewan, "St. Thomas and the Ground of Metaphysics," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 54 (1980): 151; Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 186–89.

⁵¹ *In II Sent* d. 1, q. 1, a. 4; *De potentia*, q. 7, a. 2, ad 9; ST I, q. 3, a. 4; Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 5, III, d. 5, q. 3, a. 3, ad 3 Scotus, 106; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 1, q. 3, a. 4, dub 1, concl 5, and ad 2, 217 and 219; Gilson, *Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 34.

tence, leading to a vicious circle.⁵² The Thomist responds that in any act of generation, a whole being, including both essence and act of existence is generated, but with a structure of actuality and potentiality, that is, of act of existence and essence. Neither is temporally prior to the other, but the act of existence is, as actuality, prior metaphysically and in the explanation of the thing as a real being. The essence explains the limitation of this act to being the act of a particular thing of a specific kind, but it does not exist temporally prior to receiving existence. A potentiality can receive an actuality without existing temporally prior to that actuality, if it is what explains the limitation of that actuality in the thing of which they are both principles. For example, when a human person is generated, he or she comes into existence as a complete being, with a human essence and an act of existence. But the act of existence explains why he or she really exists, while the essence explains why he or she is not pure actuality, but an actual human being. The essence explains the limitation of the act of existence, but this essence did not exist prior to its actualization in the event of generation.

The two principles of being, act of existence and essence, are two sorts of completion in a thing. A thing is complete in the order of essence (*esse essentiae*) when it has everything that it needs to be the kind of thing that it is, such as form, individual matter, and substantial modes. A thing is complete in the order of existence or being (*esse existentiae*), when this essence is actualized by an act of existence.⁵³ The relation between these two orders will be important for my version of the *Argument from Constitution* and my response to the *Argument from Nature*.

The act of existence is not a part or an accident. According to Thom-

⁵² I owe this objection to Tim Pawl.

⁵³ Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 1, I, d. 8, q. 1, a. 1, concl 1–2, 301–12; Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 4, I, q. 3, a. 5, n. 3, 43; vol. 11, III, q. 17, a. 2, n. 18, 228; Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, vol. 13, II, c. 68, n. 7.2, 444; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem* q. 3, a. 4, 213; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 4, a. 19, aa. 25–27, 603, 606–7; Salamanticenses, *Cursus*, vol. 14, d. 9, dub 1, 148; Billot, *De verbo incarnato*, 72; Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 454–57. For an argument, wrong in my view, that this is not Aquinas's position, see Norman Wells, "Capreolus on Essence and Existence," *Modern Schoolman* 38 (1960): 24. Wells is correct that Capreolus bases this distinction on the work of Henry of Ghent (*Quodlibet* 1, q. 9, *Opera omnia*, vol. 5; available at <http://philosophy.unca.edu/henry-ghent-series>), as Capreolus says, but Capreolus also shows the roots of this distinction in the work of Aquinas, e.g., SCG II, c. 52; *Quaestiones de quodlibet* 2, q. 2, a. 1.

ism, one principle can add to another without adding in the manner of a part or accident; this point will be central to my response to the *Argument from Parthood*. The act of existence does give a thing kindhood; it is because I have a human essence, not because I have an act of existence, that I am human. Likewise, the act of existence does not add any definable content to *what* a thing is, as parts and accidents do; knowing that I have an act of existence does not add to my knowledge of the kind of thing that I am.⁵⁴ Though it inheres in a created being, the act of existence comes to a being from without, not from its own formal or material causality, as do a thing's parts.⁵⁵

The act of existence that belongs to a given thing fits or is proportioned to that thing's essence.⁵⁶ This is important for my expansion on the *Argument from Constitution*. Furthermore, the act of existence helps to explain a thing's transcendental properties. A thing is one insofar as its principles are actualized by one act of existence.⁵⁷ Acts of existence are indivisible, so there are no partial existences, because the act of existence is an actuality, and things are only divisible insofar as they have potenti-

⁵⁴ *De potentia*, q. 5, a. 4, ad 3; q. 7, a. 2, ad 9; *Sententia libri metaphysicae* IV, lect 2, n. 558. Cf. Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 1, I, d. 8, q. 1, a. 1, concl 3, 313; Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 11, III, q. 4, a. 2, n. 12, ad 4, 77; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 1, q. 3, a. 4, dub 1, concl 3, 216–17; Billot, *De verbo incarnato*, c. 2, s. 1, q. 2, 122; Gilson, *Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 36; Hart, *Thomistic Metaphysics*, 87; Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 106.

⁵⁵ *Expositio de hebdomadibus*, lec. 2; *De potentia*, q. 1, a. 1: “esse significant aliquid completum et simplex sed non subsistens”; q. 7, a. 2, ad 7: *esse non est subsistens sed inhaerens*; SCG II, c. 52; ST I, q. 75, a. 5, ad 4; Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, vol. 13, II, c. 52, n. 9.1, 390; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 4, n. 18, n. 25, 602, 606; Balthasar et al., *Realm of Metaphysics*, 402–3; Gilson, *Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 35–36.

⁵⁶ SCG I, c. 42; II, c. 52; ST I, q. 75, a. 5, ad 1; q. 104, a. 1, ad 1. On what it is for one thing to “fit” or “be proportioned” (*convenit*) to another, see *Sententia libri De anima* I, lect 8, n. 130; *Super epistolam Beati Pauli ad Collosenses*, 1, lec. 4, n. 41; ST III, q. 1, a. 1. Cf. Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 76, a. 1, n. 33, ad 1 Scotus, 214; Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, II, c. 80–81, n. 1, ad 1, n. 2.2, 507; Hart, *Thomistic Metaphysics*, 208; Balthasar et al., *Realm of Metaphysics*, 401–3; Gilbert Narcisse, *Les Raisons de Dieu* (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1997), 102–4, 164–76; Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 107; Dewan, “Gilson and the *Actus Essendi*,” 83.

⁵⁷ *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 2; *Quaestiones de quodlibet* 6, q. 1; 9, q. 2, a. 2, ad 2; ST III, q. 17, a. 2. Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 76, a. 1, n. 32, 214; *Expositio* III, vol. 11, q. 17, a. 2, n. 3–4, 223–24.

ality.⁵⁸ Existence, as a thing's supreme actuality, is the cause of knowledge of that thing;⁵⁹ this is important for my expansion on the *Argument from Acts*. Existence also makes a thing good.⁶⁰ It is the highest perfection, and it confers value or "nobility" (*nobilitas*) on a thing, so that the greater the potency for existence a thing has, the more perfection and nobility it has.⁶¹ This is important for the Thomistic account of personhood.

For my expansion on the *Argument from Constitution* and my response to the *Arguments from Nature* and *from Death and Resurrection*, and in order to understand the traditional Thomistic view on personhood and the separated soul, we must consider how the above principles are

⁵⁸ Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 5, III, d. 6, q. 1, a. 3, ad 1 aliorum, 120; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 4, n. 1, 594. The Thomistic tradition is opposed to the view of Francisco Suárez, *Commentaria una cum quaestionibus in libros Aristotelis de anima* (Madrid: Salvador Castellote, ed., 1992), vol. 1, d. 2, q. 4, n. 18 (available at <http://www.salvadorcastellote.com>); *Disputationes metaphysicae* (hereafter *DM*) d. 31, s. 11, n. 15, n. 32, n. 35, that every entity is its essence and existence, and matter and soul each contributes its partial existence to the complete existence of the whole person; cf. P. Joseph Gredt, *Elementa philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae*, vol. 1 (Freiburg: Herder, 1909), 419. The tradition is also opposed to Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 387–89, 461, who holds, building on the non-Thomistic arguments for partial survival in Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 245–306, that the separated soul could have "part" of the existence of the human person.

⁵⁹ *ST I*, q. 5, a. 2; q. 14, a. 3; q. 16, a. 1, ad 3; q. 87, a. 1. Cf. Dewan, "Text from Cajetan," 306; Lawrence Dewan, "Is Truth a Transcendental for St. Thomas Aquinas?," *Nova et Vetera* (English) 2 (2004): 13.

⁶⁰ *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1; q. 21, a. 1; q. 22, a. 2, ad 2; *ST I*, q. 5, a. 1; q. 16, a. 4; Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 82, a. 3, n. 13, 214. Cf. Balthasar et al., *Realm of Metaphysics*, 406; Dewan, "Text from Cajetan," 297–98, 302.

⁶¹ *De ente*, c. 1; *Sentencia libri De anima* III, lect 10, n. 733; *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 1, ad 18; *De veritate*, q. 2, a. 3, ad 2; *Compendium theologiae*, c. 17; *SCG I*, c. 23, c. 28; II, c. 52, c. 62, c. 68; *ST I*, q. 5, a. 5; q. 50, a. 5; q. 75, a. 2–3. Ferrara explains the link between actuality and nobility well at *Commentary on SCG I*, c. 11, n. 8.2, 27; c. 18, n. 5, 50; c. 23, n. 7, 73; c. 28, n. 2.4, 86; c. 65, n. 10, 183; c. 77–78, n. 2.4, 86; II, c. 50, n. 2, 385. Cajetan links nobility to intellect, freedom, and lordship at *Expositio* vol. 4, I, q. 26, a. 3 n. 5, n. 7, 302–3; cf. *Expositio* vol. 4, I, q. 44, a. 4, n. 4, 462; vol. 5, I, q. 82, a. 3, n. 1–2, n. 12, 299, 300. Dhavamany, *Subjectivity and Knowledge*, 47–49, emphasizes the link between personhood, existence, and having the transcendental properties to a high degree. Cf. Balthasar et al., *Realm of Metaphysics*, 404; Dewan, "Gilson and the *Actus Essendi*," 74; Gilson, *Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 30; Hart, *Thomistic Metaphysics*, 90; McInerney, *Praeambula Fidei*, 143; Caitlin Smith-Gilson, *The Metaphysical Presuppositions of Being-in-the-World* (New York: Continuum, 2010), 101; Albert Wingell, "'Vivere viventibus est esse' in Aristotle and St. Thomas," *Modern Schoolman* 38 (1961): 117; Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 187.

found in human persons. This can be understood through a contrast between humans and nonhuman material things. In the latter, the whole composite, both form and matter, receives and exercises the act of existence. It does so in virtue of (*quo*) its essence.⁶² Form and essence receive existence “first” in that they are the principles by which (*quo*) a thing is the act of existence, but the whole composite receives this act “first” in that it is what (*quod*) exists.⁶³

An act of existence is an essence’s dynamic self-manifestation into reality as an actual being capable of and oriented to operations, which perfect the existing being. The act of existence is not a static and passive placement into existence, or merely something received, but is an “exercised” actuality.⁶⁴ Essential parts, form and matter, are joined by a thing’s efficient causes and then receive their actuality, the act of existence, from God, and they thereby “constitute” and exercise the existence that has been conferred on them and inheres in them.⁶⁵ When essential parts come apart, then the potentiality that underlies that act of existence ceases to be, and the being goes out of existence.⁶⁶ For example, when a nonrational animal, such as a horse, is generated, it is essentially composed of matter and soul, which it receives from its parents. When these two come together to compose a complete individual essence, they receive existence, and thereby are the potentiality that constitutes and exercises that act, and a real horse comes about. When the horse dies, the essential parts that

⁶² One thing acts in virtue of another when the former is properly the agent, but the latter is the proximate subject of the power whereby the former performs this action.

⁶³ SCG II, c. 54. Cf. Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 1, I, d. 8, q. 1, a. 1, concl 2, 313; Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 76, a. 1, n. 28, 213; Gilson, *Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 33; Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 461.

⁶⁴ Capreolus argues that created substances have their existence in themselves (*in se*) received (*susceptivum*) and exercised (*elictum*) at *Defensiones*, vol. 5, III, d. 5, q. 3, a. 3, ad 4 Aureolus, 110. Cf. Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 82, a. 3, n. 13, 300; Clarke, *Person and Being*, 7–9; Gilson, *Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 191; Smith-Gilson, *Metaphysical Presuppositions*, 101–2; Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 460–63.

⁶⁵ *Sentencia libri metaphysicorum* IV, lec. 2, n. 558: “Esse enim rei quamvis sit aliud ab eius essentia, non tamen est intelligendum quod sit aliquod superadditum ad modum accidentis, sed quasi constituitur per principia essentiae. Et ideo hoc nomen ens quod imponitur ab ipso esse, significat idem cum nomine quod imponitur ab ipsa essentia.” Cf. *Expositio De hebdomadibus*, lec. 2; McNerny, *Praeambula Fidei*, 144, 155; Balthasar et al., *Realm of Metaphysics*, 402.

⁶⁶ *In II Sent* d. 19, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2; *De veritate*, q. 13, a. 4, ad 2.

received, constituted, and exercised its act of existence are no longer able to do so, and the horse ceases to exist.

In human beings, by contrast, the soul first exists, both in that it is that by which (*quo*) the human being receives its act of existence, and in that it is what (*quod*) first exists in the order of nature. Unlike in nonhuman material things, the human soul is complete in the order of being before being complete in the order of essence.⁶⁷ The human body exists only because it shares in the soul's act of existence. We can know that the soul receives and exercises the act of existence prior in the order of nature to the body, because it can operate on its own. One thing is prior to another in this sense just in case the former can exist without the latter and the latter is substantially united to the former but is dependent for existence on the former; the former "communicates" existence to the latter. The soul does not temporally preexist the body, but is created in its natural condition of informing and "communicating" existence to the body.⁶⁸ It is individual because it receives existence in individual matter, but once it has individuality, it does not need to stay in matter to remain individual, though it always is oriented to matter.⁶⁹

The soul's perfection and nobility exceeds that of the body, though the perfections of both soul and body belong to the whole human per-

⁶⁷ *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 8; SCG II, c. 68; ST I, q. 76, a. 1; I-II, q. 4, a. 5, ad 2. Cf. Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 76, a. 1, n. 5, 211; Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, II, c. 68, n. 2.3, 442; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 3, *De anima*, q. 9, a. 2, 437–43; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 2, q. 76, a. 1, dub 1, ad 2, dub 5 sol, 154, 161–62; Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 457; Hart, *Thomistic Metaphysics*, 159.

⁶⁸ *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 1, ad 1, 16–18; *Quaestiones de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 2–3; SCG II, c. 68. Cf. Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 76, a. 1, n. 24, ad 5; n. 30, 213, 214; Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, II, c. 68, n. 6.3, 444; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 2, q. 76, a. 1, dub 4, concl 2, 159; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 2, q. 7, a. 2, 110; vol. 3, *De anima*, q. 9, a. 1, 428–30; a. 2, 441; Clarke, *Person and Being*, 35; Stephen Hipp, *The Doctrine of Personal Subsistence* (Fribourg: Studia Friburgensia, 2012), 219–20; Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 360.

⁶⁹ *De ente*, c. 4; *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 1, ad 2: "unumquodque secundum idem habet esse et individuationem"; *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 3; ST I, q. 50, a. 5; q. 76, a. 2, ad 1. Cf. John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 3, *De anima*, q. 9, a. 1, ad 2, 435; James Lehrberger, "The Anthropology of Aquinas's 'De ente et essential,'" *Review of Metaphysics* 51 (1998): 839; Maritain, *Person and the Common Good*, 36; Sleva, *Separated Soul*, 103; Stump, *Aquinas*, 208.

son,⁷⁰ because the soul has an infinite potency for existence and for operation, so that it can know and love all things, and so has the highest degree of dignity that a created substance can have.⁷¹ The body can share in this potency, as it will after the resurrection, but it does not have it in itself.⁷² Since the soul is more perfect than the composite, it more perfectly exercises the human act of existence than does the composite; the human act of existence is a spiritual actuality, in which the body imperfectly shares.⁷³

This account of the human act of existence points to the need for a deeper account of the human essence, which will be important for my expansion on the *Argument from Constitution* and responding to the *Argument from Nature*. The human person is essentially a “rational animal.” Our genus, “animal,” refers to our essence as undetermined, and our specific difference, “rational,” refers to the species’ determination of that essence. Animality and rationality are not two things; rather, the whole human person is an animal wholly determined in a rational way.⁷⁴ Genera are ascribed to species analogously; there is no univocal content that all animals share, for the animality of different animal spe-

⁷⁰ *Quaestiones de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 3, resp., ad 4; *Quaestiones de anima* a. 1, ad 17–18; SCG II, c. 65.

⁷¹ Not all created persons have the same value. Although human persons have infinite value in the ways described here, they have less value than angels, who have more actuality and so more value; the Thomistic view is thus committed to different “degrees” of infinite value. Cf. *Super librum de causis*, lec. 4–5; *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 1, ad 18. Another source of the dignity of persons is their obediential potency to receive grace and the supernatural end of union with God; cf. *ST* I-II, q. 113, a. 10; Lawrence Feingold, *The Natural Desire to See God According to St. Thomas Aquinas and His Interpreters* (Ave Maria: Sapientia Press, 2010), 159.

⁷² SCG IV, c. 81, c. 89; *Compendium theologiae*, c. 177; *Supplement*, q. 6, a. 2, ad 3. Cf. Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, vol. 15, IV, c. 81, n. 2.1.

⁷³ *In II Sent* d. 17, q. 2, a. 1, ad 2; *Quaestiones de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 2, resp., ad 4; Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, vol. 13, II, c. 68, n. 2.1–2, n. 7.2, n. 8.1, 441–45; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 3, *De anima*, q. 9 a. 1, 429; a. 2, 441. Since, on this view, there is just one act of existence in the human person, which is properly the spiritual soul’s, this act is itself spiritual; on a view like Suárez’s, the soul’s existence is spiritual, but that of the composite person is material; cf. *In libros de anima* vol. 1, d. 2, q. 4, n. 13; vol. 3, d. 14, q. 1, n. 3; *DM* d. 31, s. 11, n. 15; d. 34, s. 5, n. 7–8.

⁷⁴ *De ente*, c. 1–2; *Quaestiones de spiritualibus creaturis* a. 3, ad 3, ad 15. Cf. *Expositio libri posteriorum analyticorum* 2, lec. 2, lec. 4, lec. 7, lec. 20; Gilson, *Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 30.

cies is determined differently by each species' difference.⁷⁵ Humans are essentially animals, requiring matter, but the human soul either is or potentially is the lowest member of the genus of spiritual substances; it can exist and act like the spiritual substances, but in this life it is just in potential to such a state, because it is naturally a form of a body.⁷⁶ The human animal exists in a spiritual manner, since it receives its existence from a spiritual substance, which is a part of the composite and which communicates itself to the material composite. Indeed, as Francis Sylvester of Ferrara says, the act of existence is in the soul according to its proper nature, but the composite human body just exists as drawn to the soul, raised to a higher level of existence than the normal way of existing for a material thing.⁷⁷

But Aquinas also says that the soul is "reductively" and incompletely in the genus "animal" because it is our form.⁷⁸ The actuality and po-

⁷⁵ *In I Sent* d. 19, q. 5, a. 2, ad 1; *Quaestiones disputatae de malo*, q. 2, a. 9, ad 16; *ST I*, q. 88, a. 2, ad 4. Cf. Armand Maurer, "St. Thomas and the Analogy of Genus," *New Scholasticism* 29 (1955): 127–44; Dhavamany, *Subjectivity and Knowledge*, 44–45.

⁷⁶ The human soul either is or potentially is in the lowest species of spiritual substance, or is of the same genus as the angels at: *Quaestiones de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 2; *In II Sent* d. 3, q. 1, a. 6, ad 2; *SCG II*, c. 68, c. 91; *IV*, c. 11; *ST I*, q. 55, a. 1; q. 55, a. 2; q. 87, a. 1; q. 88, a. 2, ad 4; q. 89, a. 1; q. 90, a. 4, ad 2; *III*, q. 8, a. 4, ad 1; *In librum beati Dionysii de divinis nominibus expositio* 7, lec. 4. Because of this, and because our act of existence first belongs to the soul, James Lehrberger argues that the human person could be defined as an "incarnate spirit." He cautions that we cannot understand this definition in this life since we cannot, in our current life, understand what a "spirit" is; see Lehrberger, "Anthropology of Aquinas's," 842–44. However, if Edith Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being*, trans. Kurt Reinhardt (Washington, DC: ICS, 2002), 298, 396, is correct that we can grasp in this life what spirit is, then such a definition might be available to us. Clarke, *Person and Being*, 32–34, 40–41, defines "human person" as "embodied spirit," and Smith-Gilson, *Metaphysical Presuppositions*, 168–69, says the human person shares a genus with the angels (though this is not quite in accord with Aquinas). Such a definition might problematically imply either that we must always be embodied, or the possibility of the soul preexisting the body, or not being united to the body as its form; cf. Alexis Lépecier, *Dello Stato e Della Operazione Dell' Anima Umana Separata Dal Corpo* (Rome: A. Befani, 1895), 95–96, cited in Sleva, *Separated Soul*, 69.

⁷⁷ Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG II*, c. 68, n. 2.2, 442.

⁷⁸ *Quaestiones de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 2, ad 16; *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 1, ad 4; a. 2, ad 10; *ST I*, q. 90 a. 4 ad 2. Domingo Bañez and Vicente Beltrán de Heredia, eds., *Comentarios ineditos a la tercera parte de santo Tomas*, vol. 1 (Matrita, 1951), q. 2, a. 2, n. 14, 84, explains that although the soul raises the body above every sensible genus, it always remains limited to the animal genus, since it is the form of an animal.

tentiality that constitute a being are in the same categories as that being not *simpliciter* but by “reduction,” that is, in virtue of their ordering to constituting a being of that category. The soul is not an animal *simpliciter* but, as the form of an animal, it is an animal “reductively.” The human soul is not, on Aquinas’s view, a substance in the fullest sense of the term, because it is also naturally the form of the body and so lacks complete human nature, but it is a substance in that it is a “this something” (*hoc aliquid*), is subsistent, and is able to underlie accidents. We are the kind of animals that we are because of our form, which is a spiritual substance; we exist as animals through a spiritual act of existence. Aquinas’s guiding principle here is that the highest of each substantial genus participates in the perfections of the lowest of a higher genus.⁷⁹ The human soul, and the whole human person in virtue of the soul, is on the “border” and “horizon” between the spiritual and the corporeal.⁸⁰

It seems that what primarily exists is the soul, but that human nature includes both soul and matter, and so the composite only exists derivatively upon the existence of the soul.⁸¹ There seems to be a problem of too many existing things here, similar to the too many thinkers problem: where there should be one existing thing, the person, there seem to be two, the soul and the person. Answering this requires that we now examine Thomistic views on personhood.

⁷⁹ *In librum de divinis nominibus*, 7, lec. 4; SCG II, c. 68: “infimum supremi generis contingere supremum inferioris generis.” cf. Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, II, c. 68, n. 8.1, 445. We are metaphysical “amphibians,” both spiritual and material; cf. Stump, “Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism,” 514; Clarke, *Person and Being*, 38; Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 19.

⁸⁰ *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 1; *De potentia*, q. 3, a. 9; *In III Sent* pr.; *In IV Sent* d. 50, q. 1, a. 1; SCG II, c. 68: “anima intellectualis dicitur esse quasi quidam horizon et confinium corporeorum et incorporeorum”; SCG II, c. 80: “anima humana . . . in confinio corporum et incorporearum substantiarum, quasi in horizonte existens aeternitatis et temporis, recedens ab infimo, appropinquat ad summum”; *ST I*, q. 77, a. 2; *Super librum de causis*, lec. 9. Aquinas defines “horizon” at *Super librum de causis*, lec. 2: “circulus terminans visum, et est infimus terminus superioris hemisphaerii, principium autem inferioris”; it is applied by analogy to the person; cf. Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, vol. 13, II, c. 68, n. 8.1, 445; Clarke, *Person and Being*, 38; Smith-Gilson, *Metaphysical Presuppositions*, 167.

⁸¹ Other things belong properly to the soul, and only by communication to the composite: the image of God (*ST I*, q. 93, a. 6), grace (*ST I-II*, q. 110, a. 2), and beatific vision (*ST I-II*, q. 4, a. 5).

Thomism on Personhood

Most Thomists have held that something must be added to human nature to constitute a human person.⁸² Discovering what this constitutive principle is will help to answer Toner's *Arguments from Parthood* and *from Nature*, and to expand on the *Argument from Constitution*.

Aristotle argued that acts are attributed to singulars, not common natures. But accidents, and substantial parts, forms, and matter are all singular, but cannot act on their own, so singularity is insufficient for a thing to be an agent. *Supposits* or *hypostases*, not mere singulars, exist and act. A supposit or hypostasis is something subsistent, that is, exists *per se* not through another, that has or "subsists in" its nature, and that is capable of acting *per se*.⁸³

Thomists argue for a distinction between person and individual nature primarily because of the Incarnation. Christ has a human nature, but is not a human person, so personhood must be constituted by some-

⁸² Aquinas is not always clear on this issue. In *III Sent* d. 5, q. 1, a. 3; SCG IV, c. 55; *De potentia*, q. 9, a. 1; *Quaestiones de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 5, ad 9, say that nature and personhood differ in human persons, in which a principle of individuation is added to the nature, but not in angels. *Quaestiones de quodlibet* 2, q. 2, a. 2, a passage taken by many later Thomists to be decisive, says that in all created persons, personhood really adds to individual nature; *ST* III, q. 4, a. 1, ad 3, implies this by saying that one of the divine persons could hypostatistically unite Himself to an angelic nature but not an angelic person. On reconciling these, see Capreolus, *Defensiones*, III, d. 5, q. 3, a. 3, ad 4 Aureolus, 110; Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 4, I, q. 3, a. 3, n. 5–8, 43; vol. 11, III, q. 2, a. 2, n. 4, ad 1, 26–27; Thomas Mullaney, "Created Personality: The Unity of Thomistic Tradition," *New Scholasticism* 29 (1955): 369–402; James Reichmann, "St. Thomas, Capreolus, Cajetan, and the Created Person," *New Scholasticism* 33 (1959): 1–31, 202–30; Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 240–52. They are reconciled by saying that person and individual nature name the same thing, according to intrinsic essential content, but that they do so by different formalities: person adds to individual nature a formal constitutive principle that is not part of the nature.

⁸³ *ST* I, q. 29, a. 2; III, q. 2, a. 2; a. 3, ad 2; *Quaestiones de quodlibet* 9, q. 2, a. 1; Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 1, I, d. 4, q. 2, a. 1, concl 2, 228–29; Suárez, *In libros de anima*, vol. 1, d. 2, q. 4, n. 4; Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 11, III, q. 2, a. 2, n. 1, 25–26; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 2, q. 7, a. 2, 109–10; Hart, *Thomistic Metaphysics*, 200–201. Suárez, *DM* d. 34, s. 7, n. 6–12, distinguishes "being a supposit" from "being subsistent"; actions belong to supposits, but subsistence is a necessary condition for being a supposit. The separated soul, though not a supposit, can act because it is a "principle of life."

thing more than nature. It cannot be constituted by matter or form,⁸⁴ or by biological life.⁸⁵ It cannot be constituted morally, as if what constituted it were free will or responsibility; or religiously, as if what constituted it were the ability to make religious acts, or have religious experiences; or by consciousness or personal character.⁸⁶ Christ has all these, but He is not a human person, so none of these constitutes personhood. Since any individual nature can be assumed by a divine Person, no nature alone constitutes personhood.⁸⁷

Persons cannot be “assumed” by other persons, and still remain persons.⁸⁸ Christ’s human nature is not a person because it has been “assumed” by a divine Person, Who gives existence to the nature and

⁸⁴ George Duggan, “The Teaching of St. Thomas Regarding the Formal Constitutive of Human Personality,” *New Scholasticism* 15 (1941): 327–28, following Casper Freit-hoff, *De mysterio incarnationis* (Rome, 1939), argues that individual essence ordered to existence constitutes personhood, but this is rejected by other Thomists because Christ too has a human essence ordered to existence; cf. Mullaney, “Created Person-ality,” 370–77. Similar views, which hold that created personhood is constituted by an individual nature connoting or ordered to the act of existence or accidents, with-out any positive addition, are rejected by Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 11, III, q. 4, a. 2, n. 3, views 2, 3, 5, who finds them in Hervaeus Natalis and Capreolus. Cf. Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 5, III, d. 5, q. 3, a. 3, ad 1 Scotus, where Capreolus says that person-ality adds to individual nature a “connotation” of existence, though this is generally taken not to be his considered view.

⁸⁵ Toner, “Hylemorphic Animalism,” 77–78, says that life on the Thomistic view is having certain powers and a certain sort of essence, not a biological phenomenon. Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 11, III, q. 17, a. 2, n. 17, 227, argues that life is having a certain sort of essence (*esse essentiae*), not of existence (*esse existentiae*), with an animating form in matter, which is lost at death, and is not present in the separated soul. But, as Wingell, “*Vivere viventibus est esse*,” 100, 108–9, emphasizes, Aquinas sometimes speaks of life as the existence of the living thing, which remains in the separated soul; cf. Gredt, *Elementa philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae*, vol. 1, 423. On life, cf. *De veritate*, q. 4, a. 8; SCG I, c. 98; ST I, q. 18, a. 2; III, q. 50, a. 4–5; the former three support Wingell’s view, the last supports Cajetan’s. Aquinas says that the soul has life at *Quaestiones de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 3, ad 6.

⁸⁶ Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Trinity and God the Creator*, trans. Frederic Eck-hoff, Introduction p. 3; c. 3, q. 29, a. 1, n. 302 (available at <http://www.ewtn.com/library/theology/trinity.htm>); Billot, *De verbo incarnati*, 87–88; Alexis-Henri-Marie Lépicier, *Dell’anima umana separata dal corpo, suo stato, sua operazione*, 2nd ed., (Rome: Libreria pontificia Federico Pustet, 1901), 103–4; Sleva, *Separated Soul*, 113.

⁸⁷ Cf. ST III, q. 4, a. 2.

⁸⁸ Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 5, III, d. 5, q. 3, a. 1, concl 2, 86–87; Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 11, III, q. 4, a. 2, n. 1, 74; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 1, n. 1, 551.

operates its powers. Capreolus likens this to a branch that is grafted onto a tree: the branch continues to produce leaves and fruit according to its nature, but its powers are now exercised by the supposit, the tree, by which it has been assumed.⁸⁹ Stump likens this union to the situation in Robert Heinlein's novel *The Puppet Masters*, in which aliens take over humans and thereby experience their consciousness and direct their actions.⁹⁰ To be a person is not only to have free will, but to be the one who can autonomously exercise it; it is not only to have an intellect, but to be the one who can experience and exercise it, and thus to have "interiority" or "subjectivity."⁹¹ Nature, act of existence, intrinsic accidents, and acts are all united in a person and are the person's own.⁹² Personhood requires "incommunicability" (*incommunicabilitas*), that is, being a complete totality, not existing in or being apt to exist in another.⁹³

Aquinas presents at least five definitions of "person," since, as

⁸⁹ Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 5, III, d. 5, q. 3, a. 3, ad 4 Aureolus, 110. For the image, see Aquinas, *In I Sent* d. 18, q. 1, a. 5; d. 19, q. 3, a. 2; *In III Sent* d. 1, q. 1, a. 1; *Super epistolam beati Pauli ad Romano lectura* 6, lec. 1; c. 11, lec. 3.

⁹⁰ Stump, *Aquinas*, 420–21.

⁹¹ An inquiry into the nature or phenomenological character of this interiority or subjectivity is beyond the scope of this essay. But it should not be taken from what is said here that persons are necessarily conscious or always able to exercise or experience their intellects or wills; no claim is being made here as to whether, for example, human fetuses or those in persistent vegetative states are persons. The key Thomistic point is that to be a person requires that one, in one's metaphysical constitution, possesses one's intellect and will as one's own. Some persons, such as human fetuses, may not be able currently to exercise or experience these powers, but, if they are persons, then they have them as their own and not as belonging to another, and this is sufficient to say that they have autonomy and interiority or subjectivity. The subjective experience of self-possession follows upon the metaphysical constitution of self-possession, not vice versa. I am grateful to Matthews Grant for calling this point to my attention. Cf. *SCG* III, c. 112–13.

⁹² Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 11, III, q. 2, a. 2, n. 6, 27.

⁹³ *In I Sent* d. 25, q. 1, a. 1, ad 6, ad 8; *In III Sent* d. 5, q. 2, a. 1, ad 2; *ST* I, q. 29, a. 3, ad 4; Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 1, I, d. 4, q. 2, a. 1, concl 2, 228–29; a. 3, ad 9 Aureolus, 237; vol. 5, III, d. 5, q. 3, a. 3, ad 2 Aureolus, 108; Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 4, I, q. 3, a. 3, n. 1, 40; vol. 11, III, q. 4, a. 2, n. 11, 76–77; Bañez, *Comentarios a la tercera parte*, vol. 1, q. 2, a. 2, n. 12, 83; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 1, n. 2, 552; a. 2, n. 5, 569 Garrigou-Lagrange, *Trinity and God the Creator*, c. 3, q. 29, a. 1, corollary, n. 1; Hart, *Thomistic Metaphysics*, 204–9.

he says, we do not know the specific difference of “person” as such:⁹⁴ Boethius’s definition, according to which a person is an “individual substance of a rational nature”;⁹⁵ Richard of St. Victor’s definition according to which a person is an “incommunicable existent of a rational nature”;⁹⁶ “a hypostasis distinguished by a proper characteristic pertaining to nobility” (or “dignity”);⁹⁷ “what is complete in intellectual nature”;⁹⁸ and “what has existence subsisting *per se* in an intellectual nature.”⁹⁹ Aquinas considers these to be equivalent.¹⁰⁰ On Aquinas’s

⁹⁴ *De potentia* q. 9, a. 2, ad 5.

⁹⁵ *In I Sent* d. 23, q. 1, a. 3; d. 25, q. 1, a. 1; *In II Sent* d. 3, q. 1, a. 2; *In III Sent* d. 6, q. 1, a. 1, qq. 1; SCG IV, c. 38; *ST I*, q. 29, a. 1; q. 34, a. 3; q. 40, a. 3; III, q. 2, a. 2: *persona est rationalis naturae individua substantia*, from Boethius, *Contra Eutychen*, c. 3–4: *naturae rationabilis individua substantia* (available at http://individual.utoronto.ca/pking/resources/boethius/Contra_Eutychen.txt).

⁹⁶ *In I Sent* d. 25, q. 1, a. 1, ad 6, ad 8; *ST I*, q. 29, a. 3, ad 4: *rationalis naturae incommunicabilis existentia*, from Richard of St. Victor, “*De Trinitate* IV, c. 23–24,” in *Opera Omnia, Patrologia Latina*, vol. 196 (Paris: J. P. Migne, 1855), 945–47. Hugon, “*Si l’âme*,” 592, defines the person as “an individual substance of a rational nature completely and entirely incommunicable.”

⁹⁷ *In I Sent* d. 25, q. 1, a. 1, ad 8; *ST I*, q. 29, a. 3, ad 2: *hypostasis distincta proprietate ad nobilitatem pertinente*; *In I Sent* d. 10, q. 1, a. 5: “oportet ad hoc quod constitutur persona, quod determinetur per specialem modum ad dignitatem pertinentem.” Cf. *In I Sent* d. 23, q. 1, a. 1. This definition is attributed to Alexander of Hales, *Glossa in IV Libros Sententiarum* (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventura, 1957), I, q. 23, a. 9, 225–26: “persona est hypostasis distincta proprietate ad dignitatem pertinente”; *Summa Fratris Alexandri* (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventura, 1948), I, 387, 9, 570, by Walter Principe, *Alexander of Hales’s Theology of the Hypostatic Union* (Toronto: PIMS, 1967), 66–68, though Principe says some features of the definition are found in Alan of Lille’s *Theologicae regulae*. Alexander takes dignity to be what distinguishes persons from other hypostates. Alexander and Aquinas attribute the definition to unnamed *magistri*. The definition is attributed to Peter Lombard by Michael Smith, *Human Dignity and the Common Good in the Aristotelian-Thomistic Tradition* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellon, 1995), 49–51.

⁹⁸ *In I Sent* d. 23, q. 1, a. 2, ad 2: *quid completum in natura intellectuali*.

⁹⁹ *In I Sent* d. 23, q. 1, a. 2: “quod habet esse per se subsistens in natura intellectuali.”

¹⁰⁰ *In I Sent* d. 23, q. 1, a. 1–2; d. 25, q. 1, a. 1, ad 6, ad 8; *ST I*, q. 29, a. 3, ad 4; Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 4, I, q. 29, a. 1, n. 14. Some medieval philosophers, like Scotus, *Quaestiones in I Sententiarum, Opera Omnia*, vol. 10 (Paris: Vives, 1893), d. 23, q.un., 261, and some contemporary philosophers, like John Crosby, *The Selfhood of the Human Person* (Washington: CUA Press, 1996), 59–60, have taken the second to be superior to the first because they did not equate them like Aquinas, as Cajetan notes in the case of Scotus. Richard (*De Trinitate* IV c. 21) rejects Boethius’s definition as not fitting the divine persons, since it refers to “substance,” which is one in God. Previous to Aquinas, Alexander of Hales took the first three to be equivalent; see texts from

view, “incommunicable existent” is what is meant by “individual substance” in Boethius’s definition, rather than “something that underlies accidents”; otherwise, Boethius’s definition would not apply to the divine Persons, who are not each substances, but are incommunicable.¹⁰¹ Having nobility follows from being incommunicable and having the existence pertinent to a rational nature, since the act of existence is the foundation of nobility. Thus the definition based on nobility reduces to Boethius and Richard’s definitions. To be incommunicable is to be maximally complete, unable to be assumed by others, and to exist and subsist of oneself, and so the last two definitions reduce to the others.

Personal incommunicability requires being complete, not a part, since parts communicate themselves to wholes. Integral parts like organs, essential parts like forms, and logical parts like rationality, cannot be persons. Personal incommunicability requires being a particular, not a universal, which communicates what it is to particulars. Personal incommunicability requires self-possession, not being assumed by another.¹⁰² But persons are not incommunicable in every way: Francisco

his *Glossa* cited in Principe, *Alexander of Hales’s Theology*, 66–69. Cf. Smith, *Human Dignity*, 49–51. Carolus Billuart, *Cursus theologiae juxta mentem divi Thomae*, vol. 2, *Tractatus de Incarnatione* (Paris: Mellier, 1847), diss 4, a. 1, a. 2, a. 1, 362, defines the person by combining these definitions as *intellectualis naturae individual et incommunicabilis substantia*.

¹⁰¹ Aquinas follows Albert the Great, *Commentaria in Sententiarum, Opera Omnia* (Paris: Vives, 1893), vol. 25, I, d. 23, a. 2, ad 4, 586; and William of Auxerre, in the texts from his *Summa aurea* cited in Walter Henry Principe, *William of Auxerre’s Theology of the Hypostatic Union* (Toronto: PIMS, 1963), 44. Cf. Hipp, *Doctrine of Personal Subsistence*, 99–102. I am grateful to Stephen Hipp for calling these texts to my attention.

¹⁰² For these three sorts of incommunicability, see *In III Sent* d. 5, q. 2, a. 1, ad 2: “triplex incommunicabilitas est de ratione personae: scilicet partis, secundum quod est completum; et universalis, secundum quod est subsistens; et assumptibilis secundum quod id quod assumitur transit in personalitatem alterius et non habet personalitatem propriam. Non est autem contra rationem personae communicabilitas assumentis.” Aquinas draws these from Albert the Great, *In I Sent*, vol. 25, d. 23, a. 6, ad 2, 599, and they have roots in earlier writers who held that the person is *per se una* and so the soul is not the person, e.g., William of Auxerre, *Summa aurea*, cited in Principe, *William of Auxerre’s Theology*, 46–47; Gilbert of Poitiers, cited in Principe, *William of Auxerre’s Theology*, 190; Alan of Lille, *Theologicae regulae, Opera omnia, Patrologia latina*, vol. 210 (Paris: J. P. Migne, 1855), r. 32, 637. Cf. Hipp, *Doctrine of Personal Subsistence*, 51–54, 101. Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 4, I, q. 3, a. 3, n. 1, 40, lists five necessary marks of supposit: substantiality, completion, individuality, subsistence, incommunicability. Cf. Suárez, *DM*, d. 34, s. 7, n. 1; Garrigou-Lagrange,

Suárez shows that they communicate existence as efficient and final causes, and by giving existence to accidents.¹⁰³ Persons can give existence to other beings, but not their own proper existence; they cannot communicate themselves such that they cease to be their own.

Some, like Scotus, consider incommunicability to be a set of negations: to be a human person is to be an individual human nature that has not been assumed by another person, and that is not apt or able to be assumed by another.¹⁰⁴ Thomists allow that these negations follow from being incommunicable, but that incommunicability itself, because of the nobility or dignity that it confers, requires a positive perfection over and above perfections of essence.¹⁰⁵ The formal constituent of incommunicability must be a real addition to the nature of created persons, but not so as to add a new part or essential principle, that is, not so as to alter the individual nature.¹⁰⁶ There are two main Thomistic theories as to what this constitutive principle is. On either view, and on a combination of them, one can hold that the separated soul constitutes the person.

The first theory is that what constitutes human personhood is the act of existence;¹⁰⁷ when a “this something” (*hoc aliquid*) that has a com-

Trinity and God the Creator, c. 3, q. 29, a. 1, corollary, n. 1; Hipp, *Doctrine of Personal Subsistence*, 251; Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 239.

¹⁰³ Suárez, *DM*, d. 34, s. 5, n. 54–57. Cf. Albert, *Commentaria*, vol. 28, III, d. 5, a. 3, 100.

¹⁰⁴ Scotus, *Quaestiones*, vol. 10, I, d. 23, q.un., 261–62. Some Thomists—e.g., O. Schweitzer, *Person und hypostatische Union bei Thomas von Aquin* (Freiburg, 1957), 114–17, cited in Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 252—defend this view of incommunicability.

¹⁰⁵ We frequently refer to simple things negatively, when they are really positive things, since we cannot conceive of them insofar as they are, but just as they are not; see *ST* I, q. 10, a. 1, ad 1.

¹⁰⁶ Theologically, it must also not be the sort of thing that Christ would have had to assume in order to redeem us, given that what He did not assume, He did not redeem.

¹⁰⁷ Billot, *De verbo incarnato*, c. 2, s. 1, q. 2, 69–75; Dhavamany, *Subjectivity and Knowledge*, 38–41; Reichmann, “St. Thomas, Capreolus, Cajetan, and the Created Person,” 229; Clarke, *Person and Being*, 27, 29: a person is “an actual existent (i.e., with its own act of existence) [*sic*], distinct from all others, possessing an intellectual nature, so that it can be the self-conscious, responsible source of its own actions”; Smith-Gilson, *Metaphysical Presuppositions*, 101–2. This view is often attributed to Capreolus (e.g., by Dhavamany and Reichmann), *Defensiones*, vol. 5, III, d. 5, q. 3, a. 3, ad 1 Scotus, ad 4 Aureolus, 105, 110; d. 6, q. 1, a. 3, ad 8 Scotus, ad 1 aliorum, 118–19. These thinkers draw on Aquinas, *In III Sent* d. 5, q. 1, a. 3; *Quaestiones de quodlibet* 2, q. 3–4; 9, q. 3, ad 2; *ST* III, q. 19, a. 1, ad 4: *esse pertinet ad ipsam constitutionem personae*. Cf. Hipp, *Doctrine of Personal Subsistence*, 147–50.

plete individualized nature has been actualized by an act of existence, it is incommunicable and is a supposit or person.¹⁰⁸ When actualized, a human subsists in its nature, with personal dignity, able to perform actions proper to persons.¹⁰⁹ Once the act of existence is received by a nature, it can never be given to anyone else; to be a person is to possess an act of existence proportioned to one's nature. The act of existence is not a part of the person, but is added to a nature by composition of actuality and potentiality.¹¹⁰

The second theory is that a "mode" of subsistence or personality constitutes a person prior to its reception of the act of existence.¹¹¹ This

¹⁰⁸ Thomas Sutton, *De principio individuationis* (available at www.corpusthomicum.org), cited in Capreolus (where it is wrongly attributed to Aquinas), *Defensiones*, vol. 3, II, d. 3, q. 1, a. 1, concl 2, 201; cf. Capreolus, *Defensiones*, III, d. 5, q. 3, a. 3, ad 1 Scoti, ad 4 Scoti, 105–6. Cajetan argues for the second theory, but he admits this much about the unification in existence, at *Expositio*, vol. 11, II, q. 17, a. 2, n. 23, 229.

¹⁰⁹ *In III Sent* d. 15, q. 1, a. 3; *ST* III, q. 17, a. 2; Billot, *De verbo incarnato*, c. 2, s. 1, q. 2, 72, 75.

¹¹⁰ Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 11, III, q. 4, a. 2, n. 3, view 4, and Garrigou-Lagrange, *Trinity and God the Creator*, c. 3, q. 29, a. 1, rightly object to the idea that existence constitutes the person by adding a part, but this is not the view endorsed here. I endorsed that view in my "A Reexamination of the Thomistic Theory of Death," *Review of Metaphysics* 63 (2010): 852, but I now reject it for the reasons given here.

¹¹¹ Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 11, III, q. 4, a. 2, n. 10–12, 76–77; Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, vol. 13, II, c. 68, n. 7.3, 445; vol. 15, IV, c. 43, n. 3.1, 146; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 1, q. 3, a. 4, concl 2, 222; *Comentarios a la tercera parte*, vol. 1, q. 4, a. 2, n. 2, 144; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 1, n. 10, 556; Salmanticenses, *Cursus*, vol. 3, t. 6, d. 9 dub 1, 343; vol. 14, d. 9 dub 1, 147–51; Billuart, *Cursus*, vol. 2, diss 4, a. 1, a. 2, a. 1, 362; Vincent Louis Gotti, *Theologia Scholastico-Dogmatica*, vol. 3 (Bologna, 1786), t. 1, q. 6, d. 2, s. 1, 58; Garrigou-Lagrange, *Trinity and God the Creator*, c. 3, q. 29, a. 1; Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 454–55; Mullaney, "Created Personality," 398–402; Peter Coffey, *Ontology* (London: Longmans, Green, 1914), 270–71. This view is attributed to Capreolus (by Mullaney), *Defensiones*, III, d. 5, q. 3, a. 3, ad 2 Aureolus, 108. Cf. Aquinas, *In III Sent* d. 5, q. 3, a. 3; *De veritate*, q. 21, a. 6, ad 5; *De potentia*, q. 9, a. 2, ad 6. *In I Sent* d. 10, q. 5, a. 5 says that persons are constituted through a special mode pertaining to dignity. It is helpful to contrast this view to that of Suárez, *DM* d. 34, s. 4, n. 20, n. 23, who holds that the mode is posterior to existence, since an entity is its existence on his view; if existence differed from an entity, it would render it incommunicable, but as things are on his view, existence requires a completing mode to be incommunicable. Billot, *De verbo incarnati*, 81, argues that this makes the mode an accident, since it is posterior to substantial existence; this is problematic because this makes an accident constitute substantial incommunicability. Suárez, *DM* d. 34, s. 5, n. 59–62, distinguishes the modes of subsistence and of suppositality. The former renders a thing unable to inhere in another as an accident, but it can belong to a part, like the soul. Suppositality renders a thing entirely incom-

is priority in the order of essence, not in the order of being: an essence first receives the mode, and only then the act of existence, though the latter still is prior in that it is the actuality of both the mode and the essence. The act of existence can only be received and exercised by an individual essence that is already incommunicable. A mode is a way of being a kind of thing, or a determination or limitation of some actuality; it is not a part or form, and it could not exist on its own, apart from that of which it is the mode.¹¹² The mode of personality is the “completion” or “termination” of an essence; it is having one’s essence as one’s own, capable of receiving and exercising *per se* existence.¹¹³ The composition of mode and essence is not a composition of parts; rather, the mode is added by a composition of what can be determined or completed, and its determination or completion. Cajetan likens this mode to the point that ends a line; such a point is not anything separable from the line, and does not add any new essential content to the line but is what completes the line. Likewise, the mode completes an essence “in the order of essence,” and renders it capable of being completed in the order of being.¹¹⁴ When a human person is generated, this mode immediately follows upon the composition of the essential parts and the principle of individuation, unless some other person, such as a divine Person, inter-

municable, and only belongs to something with a complete nature, like a person. By this distinction, Suárez precludes the possibility of the separated soul being a person. Cf. Hipp, *Doctrine of Personal Subsistence*, 150–64.

¹¹² *De veritate*, q. 21, a. 6, ad 5; *ST* I, q. 5, a. 5; q. 49, a. 2; I-II, q. 85, a. 4; *Cursus*, vol. 1, q. 3, d. 4, a. 1, n. 22, 560; Mullaney, “Created Personality,” 392–96. Other examples of modes include: the compatibility that a subject has for an accidental form such that it is able to receive it, the possibility that an accidental form has for being succeeded by a contrary form, the impossibility of a subject receiving incompatible accidental forms simultaneously, and the possibility of a subject receiving such forms successively; cf. John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 1, *Ars Logica*, I, c. 20, 40–41.

¹¹³ John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 2, n. 10, n. 13–14, 571, 573–74, who cites SCG IV, c. 49; *ST* I, q. 29, a. 1, ad 2; a. 2. cf. Bañez, *Comentarios a la tercera parte*, vol. 1, q. 2, a. 2, n. 2, 79; Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 462–63. Bañez says the mode adds a determination of the nature such that it has existence of a specific kind through which it subsists; *Comentarios a la tercera parte*, vol. 1, q. 2, a. 2, n. 6: *tale esse existentiae per quod natura subsistat*.

¹¹⁴ Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 11, III, q. 4, a. 2, n. 10, 76; Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, vol. 15, IV, c. 43, n. 3.1, 145; Salmanticenses, *Cursus*, vol. 14, d. 9, dub 1, 148–51. Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 1, q. 3, a. 4, dub 3, ad 6, likens existence to a point that ends a line as well.

venes and assumes that nature; the mode is intrinsic to the person, not requiring divine causality as existence does.¹¹⁵ The mode is a perfection over the nature, as it is that whereby the nature is a separate whole, able to develop through acts, virtue, and grace.¹¹⁶

I contend that both the act of existence and the mode of subsistence are necessary for personhood, though I think that on either theory, the separated soul constitutes a person; thus, for the remainder of the paper, I will incorporate aspects of both theories into my argument.¹¹⁷ I follow John Crosby in holding that, since to be a person is to be wholly incommunicable and complete, to be a person is to possess fully both one's essence and existence in a unique and personal way, since it is in virtue of principles of incommunicability that we are autonomous subjective agents.¹¹⁸ There is a difference between incommunicably possessing one's essence, that is, all that one definably is, and incommunicably existing, that is, being a complete being and agent; it is fitting to ascribe the two sorts of incommunicability to two different principles, the mode and the act of existence.¹¹⁹ Dignity is a defining mark of personhood, corresponding to

¹¹⁵ Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, vol. 15, IV, c. 43, n. 3.1, 145; Bañez, *Comentarios a la tercera parte*, vol. 1, q. 4, a. 2, n. 3.3, n. 8, 145, 148; q. 35, a. 5, n. 4, 351; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 1, n. 34, 564; Billuart, *Cursus*, vol. 2, diss 4, a. 3, cor 2, ad 1, 375.

¹¹⁶ Billuart, *Cursus*, vol. 2, diss 4, a. 3 cor1, 375; Hugon, "Si l'ame," 596.

¹¹⁷ One person is a being (*ens*) by its act of existence, a thing (*res*) by its nature, a "this" (*hoc*) by its individuation, and a "something" (*aliquid*) complete in itself and separate from all others by its mode, its existence, or both; cf. *De veritate*, q. 1 a. 1; Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, vol. 15, IV c. 43, n. 2, 145. Supposit is related to the transcendental *aliquid* by Hart, *Thomistic Metaphysics*, 201–2; cf. Jan Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 225–26; Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 239, 241.

¹¹⁸ Crosby, *Selfhood of the Human Person*, 44–48, 50–51, 59–65. Cf. Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 462–63; *Person and the Common Good*, 41; Salmanticenses, *Cursus*, vol. 3, d. 9 dub 1, 341; Anton Pegis, *At the Origins of the Thomistic Notion of Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), 58; Smith-Gilson, *Metaphysical Presuppositions*, 163–71. Cf. Clarke, *Person and Being*, 31–32, on the definition of a person as *ens autonomum intellectuale* from Umberto degl'Innocenti, *Il Problema della persona nel pensiero di San Tommaso* (Rome: Pontificia Università Lateranense, 1967).

¹¹⁹ Hart, *Thomistic Metaphysics*, 204–9, says existence *completes* a person, but he wrongly thinks that it does not render a person *incommunicable*, since existence is communicable to everything. But a person does not receive *existence as such*, but existence proportioned to its species (*Quaestiones de anima*, a. 1, ad 16), which is incommunicable to others and renders the being incommunicable as a being.

one's degree of existence, and a creature has its degree of existence from its essence, which must be incommunicably its own. Both incommunicable essence and existence constitute a person as a person, and render it the most complete and perfect sort of substance there is.¹²⁰

Thomism on the Separated Soul

Having seen how the Thomistic tradition understands personhood, we must now consider how the Thomistic tradition understood the relation between the separated soul and personhood. This will aid my expansion on the *Argument from Constitution*, and my response to the *Arguments from Nature, Parthood, and Death and Resurrection*.

Although Thomists typically deny that the separated soul is a person, they allow that it retains characteristics typically associated with personhood.¹²¹ The human composite is subsistent by sharing the mode of subsistence of the soul, just as it exists by sharing the soul's act of existence. There can be only one mode of subsistence in the soul and the composite, because this mode is indivisible, and is that by which the person is able to receive its proper act of existence. This mode must belong primarily to the soul, so that the soul can first receive existence, and can remain a unified agent, capable of intellectual acts

¹²⁰ Thomism allows multiple sources of incommunicability; e.g., matter renders form incommunicable, and the act of existence renders a being incommunicable. Cf. *In II Sent* d. 3, q. 1, a. 2; Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 3, II, d. 3, q. 1, a. 1, concl 3, 203; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 1, n. 34, 564; Garrigou-Lagrange, *Trinity and God the Creator*, c. 3, q. 29, a. 1, corollary, n. 3; Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 463; Maritain, *Person and the Common Good*, 37–43; Gilson, *Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 40. Bañez, *Comentarios a la tercera parte*, vol. 1, q. 17, a. 2, n. 1, distinguishes having complete essence (*esse essentiae*), being a complete supposit (*esse subsistentiae*), and complete being (*esse existentiae*), each of which confers a different sort of incommunicability; cf. Suárez, *DM* d. 31, s. 1, n. 2. Albert distinguishes individuality and incommunicability at *Commentaria* vol. 28, III, d. 5, a. 15, 115, though he says human incommunicability is from matter at vol. 25, I, d. 19, a. 14, 535.

¹²¹ Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 1, I, d. 4, q. 2, a. 1, concl 2, 229; Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 11, III, q. 6, a. 3, n. 2, 98; Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, vol. 13, II, c. 68, n. 7.2, 444; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 2, q. 76, a. 1, dub 3, concl 2, 160; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 2, n. 18, 574–75; Billot, *De verbo incarnato*, 128; Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 463; Hugon, “Si l’âme,” 594; Gredt, *philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae*, 423–44; A.D. Serpillanges, O.P., *Foundations of Thomistic Philosophy*, trans. Godfrey Anstruther, O.P., (St. Louis: Herder, 1931), 226.

and relationship, in its separated state, with the same existence as the composite.¹²² The separated soul retains “in root” every essential feature of the person, as Ferrara explains, including its corporeality, the forms of “mixed bodies,” vegetative nature, sensitive nature, and humanity in general.¹²³ Alexis Lépecier contends that the same “stream of consciousness” as was in the composite is in the separated soul, though without any of our current sensitive consciousness, so the separated soul can call itself “I,” with the same sense of “I” as the composite used prior to death.¹²⁴

But the separated soul is unable to implement most of the powers that it contains “in root.” For a substance to have the actual perfection of its nature, all that is contained in the nature must be able to be “explicated”; that is, the nature must be able to cause all of the powers and properties that it is naturally oriented to cause. The separated soul cannot explicate its whole nature because it lacks matter, which is required for many of the powers that it is oriented to cause.¹²⁵ Proper accidents (*propria*) follow necessarily from a nature; humans have proper accidents that require matter, so the separated soul can be known to lack human nature, and not be a person, because it lacks

¹²² Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 11, III, q. 6, a. 3, n. 2–3, 98; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 2, q. 76, a. 1, dub 3, concl 2, 160; Maritain, *Person and the Common Good*, 41; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 2, q. 7, a. 2, 110; *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 2, n. 18, 574–75. Relationality is a key feature of personhood according to some Thomists; e.g., Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 1, q. 29, a. 4, concl 2, 930, argues that since created persons are persons by analogy to the divine persons, divine persons are constituted by relations, and personhood is constituted by incommunicability, which involves a relation to others, then created personhood mediately and inadequately signifies relationality. Cf. Mullaney, “Created Personality,” 399–401; Clarke, *Person and Being*, 14, 64–65, 69–70, which cites Josef Pieper, *Living the Truth* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1983), 83; Maritain, *Person and the Common Good*, 47; Smith-Gilson, *Metaphysical Presuppositions*, 189; Matthew Walz, “What Is a Power of the Soul? Aquinas’ Answer,” *Sapientia* 60 (2006): 344.

¹²³ Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, vol. 15, IV, c. 81, n. 6.1–5, 256–57.

¹²⁴ Lépecier, *Anima Umana*, 103–4, cited in Sleva, *Separated Soul*, 113.

¹²⁵ *Quaestiones de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 2, ad 5: “Non est autem aliquid perfectum in sua natura, nisi actu explicari possit quod in eo virtute continetur.” Cf. John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 2, n. 18, 575; Salmanticenses, *Cursus*, vol. 14, d. 9, dub 2, 161. “Nature” here is said analogically, since in Aquinas’s view the soul does not, strictly speaking, have a nature, as it is a mere part.

some human proper accidents.¹²⁶ The separate soul does not subsist as a complete substance because it is oriented toward communicating its subsistence to matter.¹²⁷ Human personhood is spiritual, but this spirituality is oriented toward matter.¹²⁸ Likewise, the separated soul has the existence of a human person, but as communicable to matter, not as its own complete act of existence, and so its existence in the separated state cannot be called “the existence (*esse*) of a human being.”¹²⁹ The separated soul is capable of actions, even the most satisfying action, contemplating God, but even during that action, it longs to be joined to matter and so to be a complete substance.¹³⁰ Human persons lose existence when soul and matter, which naturally constitute the human act of existence, come apart, even though this act of existence continues, constituted by the soul.¹³¹ If the human person did not essentially have matter, then it would be false to say that the human person is mortal, corruptible, or composite.¹³² Traditional Thomism supports the corruptionist *Arguments from Nature and Death and Resurrection*.

The most decisive reason why most Thomists think that the separated soul is not a person is that the separated soul is not incommunicable, since it is by nature a part, and so does not fulfill the definition of “person”; I refer to this as the *Argument from Incommunicability*.¹³³ The soul

¹²⁶ ST I, q. 29, a. 4. John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 2, n. 1, 567. Cf. Ferrara, *Commentary on ScG*, II c. 68 n. 13 reply; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, q. 3, a. 4, resp.; Coffey, *Ontology*, 264; Sleva, *Separated Soul*, 107.

¹²⁷ Coffey, *Ontology*, 263; Sleva, *Separated Soul*, 109.

¹²⁸ Maritain, *Person and the Common Good*, 43.

¹²⁹ John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 2, q. 7, a. 3, 114; *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 2, n. 18, 575; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 2, q. 76, a. 1, dub 4, ad 6, 161; Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 457; Hart, *Thomistic Metaphysics*, 203–4.

¹³⁰ SCG II, c. 79; ST I-II, q. 4, a. 4, ad 4; ST I-II, q. 4, a. 5, ad 2. Cf. Coffey, *Ontology*, 264; Hugon, “Si l’âme,” 592–93; T. L. Cardinal Mercier, *A Manual of Modern Scholastic Philosophy*, trans. S. A. Parker, vol. 2 (London: Kegan Paul, 1932), 485; Sleva, *Separated Soul*, 111–12; Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 457.

¹³¹ In II Sent d. 19, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2; *De veritate*, q. 13, a. 4, ad 2; ST III, q. 50, aa. 4–5. Cf. Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 2, q. 76, a. 1, dub 4, ad 4, ad 6, 161; Wingell, “*Vivere viventibus est esse*,” 112; Toner, “St. Thomas on Death,” 597.

¹³² John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 3, *De anima*, q. 9, a. 2, 437.

¹³³ ST I, q. 50, a. 4; Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 1, I, d. 4, q. 2, a. 1, concl. 2, 229; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 3, *De anima*, q. 9, a. 2, 438; Garrigou-La-grange, *Trinity and God the Creator*, c. 3, q. 29, a. 1, corollary, n. 1.

is independent in existence and subsistence, but dependent by its orientation to matter.¹³⁴ Though conscious, its consciousness is of a different experiential character from ours, since it lacks sensible powers.¹³⁵ Persons cannot be assumed by other persons, but the soul can be assumed by the composite; that is, it can be substantially united to the complete person, revealing its incompleteness.¹³⁶ According to some Thomists, the fact that the soul continues to bear the composite's act of existence is what prevents it from being a complete person. When any other part of any other subsistent thing, such as an integral part like the heart, is detached from the whole of which it was a part, it takes on a new mode of subsistence and a new act of existence, and becomes a new supposit, and is no longer the mere part that it was. But because the soul continues to bear the composite's act of existence, it retains its parthood, because it retains its orientation to communicating its act to the composite.¹³⁷ All of this supports the corruptionist objections to the *Argument from Constitution*, since it provides further reasons for thinking that the soul, being communicable, could not constitute or be identical to a person. But the Thomistic tradition also provides a basis for building on the survivalist *Arguments from Acts* and *from Constitution*, and for responding to the corruptionist *Argument from Weakness*, by considering the new perfections that the soul attains in its separated state.

The separated state is not the soul's "natural" state, informing matter. But most Thomists contend that the state of separation is not "violent" or "contrary" to the soul's nature (*contra naturam*). A state is violent to a thing when that thing cannot, when in that state, exercise its

¹³⁴ John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 3, *De anima*, q. 9, a. 1, ad 2, 435. Cf. Hipp, *Doctrine of Personal Subsistence*, 119–20.

¹³⁵ Sertillanges, *Foundations*, 199, 227. Clarke, *Person and Being*, 40–41 emphasizes that human action must unfold on both the material and the spiritual "levels." Pegis, *At the Origins*, 34–58, argues that the structure of human existence reveals that, experientially, a human person is an intellectual being that lives out its intellectuality in the composite and so is characterized by history and the drama of engagement in the world. To lose the "lived experience" of "incarnated intelligence" is to lose something essential to human personhood; cf. Pegis, *St. Thomas and the Problem of the Soul in the Thirteenth Century* (Toronto: PIMS, 1978), 152–56.

¹³⁶ Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 11, III, q. 6, a. 3, n. 2, 98.

¹³⁷ Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 11, III, q. 2, a. 2, n. 10, 27; q. 4, a. 2, n. 28, 90; q. 6, a. 3, n. 4, 98; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 1, q. 29, a. 1, *resp.*, 918; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, q. 3, d. 4, a. 2, n. 18, 575.

powers or attain its proper end. But the separated soul can exercise its highest powers, and attain its ends, knowledge of and union with God. The separated state is a “preternatural” state (*praeter naturam*), that is, a state of existing and attaining knowledge higher than its natural state.¹³⁸ It participates in the intellectual way of life proper to the separate intellectual substances.¹³⁹ The soul is potentially in the genus of intellectual substances, and this potentiality is actualized in its separated state.¹⁴⁰ The soul has the potential for subsisting forever separate from the composite. Although actions are attributed to supposits, supposits exercise actions in virtue of their subsistence, and the soul is subsistent, so the soul can act even if always separated.¹⁴¹

On the Thomistic view, the soul attains a new perfection in its separated state, though it also loses a perfection in being separated from the body.¹⁴² When in the composite, the soul is naturally, immediately, and substantially united to matter. In virtue of being united, the soul has a special mode; John of St. Thomas calls it the mode of “being *in se* applied (*applicata*) and communicated” to the body.¹⁴³ Because the soul exists as communicated to the body, it is properly the composite as a whole that exists. Ferrara argues that although the human soul first receives and exercises the act of existence, it does not do so as a person, but only in such a way that it immediately communicates this act to the

¹³⁸ SCG IV, c. 81; *ST* I, q. 50, a. 4; Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 89, a. 1, n. 13, 373; Suárez, *In libros de anima*, vol. 1, d. 2, q. 4, n. 26, ad 9; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 3, *De anima*, q. 9 a. 2, 438. Ferrara, *Commentary on ScG*, vol. 13, II, c. 83 n. 7–9, 526–27, contends that it is contrary to the nature of the soul, which is oriented to matter. Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 1, q. 76, a. 1, dub 5, concl 1, n. 2, ad 4 notes that these positions are reconcilable: separation is contrary to the soul’s nature in one sense, but not in another.

¹³⁹ The separated state is not “supernatural”; i.e., it is not unattainable by any creature without divine assistance, since the soul is raised to the natural level of higher creatures.

¹⁴⁰ Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 7, IV, d. 50, q. 1, a. 1, concl 5, 262.

¹⁴¹ John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 3, *De anima*, q. 9, a. 2, 440–41; Hugon, “Si l’âme,” 592–93; Sleva, *Separated Soul*, 111.

¹⁴² Cajetan, *Expositio*, I, q. 76, a. 1, n. 33, ad 2 Scotus, 214; vol. 11, III, q. 6, a. 3, n. 3, 98; John of St. Thomas, *Expositio*, vol. 4, I, q. 55, d. 21, a. 2, n. 13, 721. *ST* I, q. 89, a. 1, says the soul has one mode in the body and one when separated. Contrast to Suárez, *In libros de anima*, vol. 3, d. 14, q. 1, n. 2–3; *DM* d. 34, s. 5, n. 28–29, 32–34, who says it just loses a perfective mode of union, though it retains its subsistence.

¹⁴³ John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 3, *De anima*, q. 9 a. 2, 442. Cf. Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 5, II, d. 6, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3 Scotus, 117.

whole composite person.¹⁴⁴ Because of this mode, when in the composite, the soul only thinks by turning to phantasms. But, in the composite, the soul, because of its subsistence, also potentially exists as a separate substance, subsistent in itself, not as communicating subsistence and existence to the composite.¹⁴⁵

When the soul is separated, a new mode of separate existence is actualized, but the old mode of being communicated to the body is lost. The soul always has the same mode of subsistence, but it changes another mode when it leaves the composite.¹⁴⁶ The new mode of “being separate” renders the soul capable of acting in new ways. It can understand without turning to phantasms, perfectly understand itself, and intuit the existence of things.¹⁴⁷ In many ways the separated soul’s cognition is diminished, but in other ways it is enhanced. Though the soul is naturally in the body, in some respects the separated state is better for it.¹⁴⁸

Cajetan holds that this new mode constitutes the separated soul as

¹⁴⁴ Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, II, c. 68, n. 6.3, 444; II, c. 69, n. 4, 448–49, argues that the soul is not, while in the body, properly speaking subsistent and abstracted from the body, but rather subsists with the mode of subsistence that belongs properly to the composite; II, c. 68, n. 6.3, 444, argues that although the act of existence belongs to the soul and by communication to the composite, the mode of subsistence, whereby the person formally is a person, just belongs to the composite. But this view is rejected by later commentators in favor of Cajetan’s view, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 76, a. 1, n. 23, 213, that the soul, even while in the body, subsists; i.e., it has the capability to receive existence per se, prior to the composite (and thus, though he does not say it in that passage, has the mode of subsistence prior to the body); cf. Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 2, q. 76, a. 1, dub 3, ad 4, 157.

¹⁴⁵ John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 2, q. 7, a. 3, 114; *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 2, 571. Cf. Gilson, *Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 195–96; Sleva, *Separated Soul*, 72–73. Henri-Dominique Gardeil, *Introduction to the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. John Otto, vol. 3, *Psychology* (St. Louis: Herder, 1956), 231: the human person has a “dual nature,” “body-dependent” and “body-transcendent.”

¹⁴⁶ Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 76, a. 1, n. 33, ad 1 Scotus, 214; vol. 11, III, q. 6, a. 3, n. 4, 98.

¹⁴⁷ *Sentencia libri De anima*, II, lect 6, n. 301; *ST I*, q. 89, a. 1; Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 89, a. 1, n. 13, 373; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 3, *De anima*, q. 9 a. 2, 440; *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 4, I, q. 55, d. 21, a. 2, n. 13, 721; Billot, *De verbo incarnato*, 237; Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages of the Interior Life*, trans. M. Timothy Doyle (available at www.christianperfection.info), part 3, c. 31, n. 38; Sertillanges, *Foundations*, 230; Gardeil, *Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 3, 230–31.

¹⁴⁸ Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 89, a. 1, n. 13, 373; Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, vol. 13, II, c. 79, n. 1.2, 500; Suárez, *In libros de anima*, vol. 3, d. 14, q. 9, n. 6.

a “semiperson,” having everything necessary for personhood except a complete nature. The semiperson subsists, but it has its act of existence “inadequately,” because its existence is the actuality of a whole composite person.¹⁴⁹ In virtue of this new mode, the soul’s essence is immediately present to its intellect, and it knows itself fully. In order to understand why this is, we must consider the nature of self-cognition, according to Aquinas; this will aid my revision of the *Argument from Acts*. In the composite state, one is capable of acts of intellectual self-cognition, such as perceiving that one exists, only when one is aware of oneself understanding other things, because in the composite, the intellect is directed toward forms received through the senses, and can only self-cognize by reflection on outward directed acts of understanding. But actual self-cognition is possible because the soul has “habitual self-cognition,” the potential to become aware of oneself. This “habitual self-cognition” is not literally a habit, but is like a habit insofar as it is a tendency to perform certain sorts of acts, acts of self-cognition. Rather, this habitual self-cognition is identical to the soul. The soul is an immaterial spiritual substance, and so its nature is to understand and to be capable of acts of self-cognition through the intellectual power.¹⁵⁰ Immaterial substanc-

¹⁴⁹ Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 11, III, q. 6, a. 3, n. 3, 98. Inadequate exercise of existence is not partial existence, in the manner described by Suárez or Pasnau. Suárez, *In libros de anima*, vol. 3, d. 14, q. 1, n. 5, calls the soul a “semiperson” both when separate and when in the composite; he denies, contrary to Cajetan, that the soul has more personal characteristics when separated than in the composite.

¹⁵⁰ *De veritate*, q. 10, a. 8, *resp.*, ad 1, esp. ad 14: “quod notitia qua anima seipsam novit, non est in genere accidentis quantum ad id quo habitualiter cognoscitur, sed solum quantum ad actum cognitionis qui est accidens quoddam; unde etiam Augustinus dicit quod notitia substantialiter inest menti, in IX de Trinitate, secundum quod mens novit se ipsam.” *In I Sent* d. 3, q. 5, a. 1, ad 1: “ipsa essentia animae, prout est mota a seipsa, habet rationem habitus.” *In I Sent* d. 3, q. 5, a. 1, ad 2: “habitus isti erunt consubstantiales, cum sint in ipsa substantia animae, nec sunt ibi alii habitus.” SCG IV, c. 11; ST I, q. 87, a. 1. The soul is likened to a habitual rather than an operative actuality at *Sentencia libri De anima* II, lec. 1, n. 227. Cf. Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 470–71; Smith-Gilson, *Metaphysical Presuppositions*, 76; R. T. Lambert, “Habitual Knowledge of the Soul in Thomas Aquinas,” *Modern Schoolman* 60 (1982): 1–19. Dhavamany, *Subjectivity and Knowledge*, 67–74, argues that habitual self-cognition is not identical to the soul but to the power of the intellect, though he thinks it is rooted in the “ontological self-presence” of the soul, and so is “consubstantial” with the substance of the soul, since self-knowledge is “proper to every spirit”; my argument based on the identity of habitual self-cognition and the soul works just as well, *mutatis mutandis*, if Dhavamany’s view is correct.

es understand themselves immediately insofar as they are actual and thereby intelligible, and their essence is to understand.¹⁵¹ Here again we see the status of the human person on the “border” between the material and the immaterial: the composite human person is composed of matter formed by a soul that is essentially habitual self-cognition or subjectivity.

After death, the soul is immediately aware of itself, because the soul is its own habitual self-cognition, and, when separated, it is not impeded from understanding itself immediately by its immersion in the body and consequent orientation toward the senses. To be known adds a perfection to a thing, and to know is a perfection for the soul and involves formally becoming that which is known; in knowing itself and being known by itself, the soul is more intimately united to itself and more perfected than it was in the composite.¹⁵² As John of St. Thomas says, it is present to itself both insofar as it exists and gives rise to the intellect, as the subject underlying the intellect, and insofar as it immediately knows itself, as object of the intellect.¹⁵³ This semipersonal mode is a personal perfection, and thus, in the resurrected body, the soul will be present both semipersonally, with the consequent cognitive perfections, and as communicating existence to the body, such that it will also know by turning to phantasms. When resurrected, the human person will have all the modes of existence and action of which it is capable.

It must be noted that a philosopher influenced by Thomism prior to the contemporary debate, Edith Stein, held that the person survives in the separated soul. Her views will aid my expansion on the *Argument from Constitution*. Stein argues that a person is an incommunicable “bearer” or “carrier” of a rational nature.¹⁵⁴ To bear a rational nature is to have an interiorly experienced life “as one’s own,” and thus to understand

¹⁵¹ *Super librum de causis*, lec. 13; cf. John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 3, *De anima*, q. 9, a. 1, ad 4, 436.

¹⁵² cf. *De veritate*, q. 2, a. 2.

¹⁵³ John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 4, q. 55, d. 21, a. 2, n. 6, n. 13, 720–21. Cf. Garrigou-Lagrange, *Ages of the Interior Life*, part 3, c. 31 n. 38; Gardeil, *Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 3, 182–83, 230–31; Stump, *Wandering in Darkness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 133–34; Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 470.

¹⁵⁴ Edith Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being*, trans. Kurt Reinhardt (Washington: ICS, 2002), 81, 343, 361. I leave aside the question here of how Thomistic she was; the important point is that she argued using Thomistic terms that the separated soul is the person.

oneself and have free control over oneself.¹⁵⁵ Self-possession arises from the soul because it is a spiritual substance, in virtue of which the person is a *self* and calls itself “I.” The way in which a person manifests him- or herself in actions “radiates” from the interiority of the soul, wherein is the image of God, and the body only exists through and is formed by the spiritual and personal existence of the soul. This foundation of personal interiority whereby the person bears his or her nature persists even in the separated soul.¹⁵⁶ Thus the person, the bearer of a rational nature, persists in the separated soul, albeit with a diminished nature.¹⁵⁷

Arguments for the Survivalist View

The contemporary arguments for the survivalist view need to be expanded in light of the foregoing exploration of the Thomistic tradition. First, I shall expand on the *Argument from Constitution*, and then on the *Argument from Acts*, while responding to the corruptionists. In order to expand on the *Argument from Constitution*, I first respond to the *Argument from Incommunicability*, so as to show that the separated soul has the sorts of incommunicability necessary for being a person. I contend that the Thomistic requirements regarding which kinds of incommunicability are necessary for personhood require revision. It is clear that a person must be an individual, but the other two requirements—that the person must be unassumable and cannot communicate as a part to a whole—require more exploration.

There is good reason to say that certain parts can constitute the person. For example, if I were to lose all of my integral parts except my brain, but this was sustained by a machine so that it was still capable of cognitive activity, then it seems plausible to say that I would be consti-

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 361–62.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 441–42, 448. However, Stein says that “the soul has neither its only nor its true being in the informing of the body”; such a claim may sound as though she denies that the soul is a form. But she says that the soul naturally forms the body at *ibid.*, 364. Her point is the Thomistic point that the soul’s existence and primary operations are not dependent on the body.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 597. Bernard Lonergan, *Insight* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 543, makes a similar argument: the human form is spiritual and so retains its identity apart from matter. The human person has identity through its form, which makes a person intelligible as a person, and grounds one’s core personality; the person survives as long as this “core” survives.

tuted by that brain. The brain would retain my power to perform the intellectual activities that are indicative of the human species, and thus it would retain my act of existence and mode of subsistence. I would not thereby, strictly speaking, *be* a brain; rather, I would be *constituted by* a brain, because my brain, a composite of soul and matter, would be completed by my mode of subsistence and actualized by my act of existence. This mode and act would continue to constitute me as a person. It seems possible for me to be constituted by an integral part, although that part is communicable to a whole body, that is, as a part it does not possess itself but is oriented to giving its existence and nature to, and being possessed and controlled by, a whole body. This is contrary to the Thomistic view that no part can be or constitute a person, and suggests that the conditions for incommunicability require revision. It could be objected that the brain alone, or at least the cerebrum alone, cannot constitute the person, since it lacks animal sensory and vegetative powers; since it does not seem to be an animal, it cannot be a human person.¹⁵⁸ Later, I shall show how something that lacks these powers can still be an animal.

Furthermore, Aquinas's requirement that, for a thing to be a person, it must be able to "explicate" all of its powers, that is, actually have the powers that follow from its nature, is too stringent a requirement. Taking such a requirement strictly, it is questionable whether a person missing *any* organs or powers is a person. For example, a human that was blind because it lacked all the organs pertinent to sight—both the eyes and the entire neurological visual system—would thereby lack the visual power. Such a human would be unable to "explicate" some of human nature's powers and proper accidents. As Matthew Walz explains, bodily powers require their organs in order to be actual powers, since the matter of these organs is the proper potentiality for these powers. Without their organs, the powers remain only "virtually" or "in root" in and identical to the essence of the soul, not as actual powers rooted in a subject. But surely, just like the disembodied brain considered above, the blind human has the human nature that is the root of these powers, as well as the mode of subsistence and the act of existence, and thus is a person. Certain material conditions required for explicating all of

¹⁵⁸I owe this objection to Patrick Toner.

his or her powers are just lacking.¹⁵⁹ Aquinas probably did not mean for his claim about the explication of powers to be taken in so strict a sense. However, it seems that the claim can be opposed on even a looser interpretation: surely a person can lack most parts or powers, even all integral parts but the brain, and still be a person. This does not yet show that the human person could be constituted by a soul that wholly lacked matter, but it does show that a human person can lack powers and proper accidents proper to his or her nature and still be a human person. Contrary to what Aquinas seems to claim, a thing need not actually have all of the powers proper to a given nature in order to retain that nature, so long as other conditions remain.¹⁶⁰

The requirement regarding explication must be modified: a creature is a person just in case it is an individual with a rational nature, a mode of subsistence, and an act of existence, and would immediately have its natural powers and proper accidents were it in the right conditions. In the case above, the brain would not, upon being rejoined to a whole body, communicate itself to *another* person with its own complete nature; rather, were the rest of the body to be restored, the same person would just have gained some parts, to which the one unifying act of existence and human nature would be communicated. The person can be constituted by what was a mere part, provided the act of existence, mode of subsistence, and individual nature remain in it, and provided that it cannot be assumed by *another* person, but can just be taken up into a fuller completion of the same person, a fuller explicating of one and the same complete nature. Aquinas's theory must be

¹⁵⁹Cf. *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 12; *Quaestiones de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 11, ad 20; *ST I*, q. 77, a. 6, ad 1; Walz, "What Is a Power," 340–43.

¹⁶⁰In a sense, the blind person, the disembodied brain, and the separated soul have all the human proper accidents; this allows a partial response to the part of the *Argument from Nature* that claims that the separated soul cannot have human nature because it lacks some human proper accidents. Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, II, c. 68, n. 13, 446, explains that a thing can have proper accidents according to "first act" or "second act": in the former, a thing has them in that it has a natural aptitude to take on these accidents; in the latter, it actually expresses them. For example, one can have risibility according to first act, without actually being able to express this in laughter—that is, exercise it according to second act—because one lacks the material structures necessary to laugh. Likewise, as I shall argue, the separated soul has all the proper accidents of the human person just according to first act, insofar as it has a nature capable of giving rise to them.

amended: there are degrees of explication of a nature, and a minimal degree, so long as the whole nature is present, is sufficient for the same person being present.

It will be objected that the case of the brain does not parallel the case of the separated soul. The brain is an integral part, which has its nature following upon the nature of the whole person. It is composed of soul and matter, and thus still has the essential principles of the human person. But the soul is an essential part, explanatorily prior to the person, and, in itself, lacks the other essential part of the human person, matter. The objector can maintain that even if a person could be constituted by a brain, it would not follow that one could be constituted just by the soul.

Such an objection, which builds on the corruptionist *Argument from Nature*, can be met by the defender of the *Argument from Constitution* by showing that the separated soul still has human nature. The separated soul retains the same act of existence, or actuality of the whole human person, as was had by the composite. Every actuality that is received in a potentiality is proportioned to that potentiality. My act of existence fits my essence and is *this* act of existence because it has been received by my essence. Once it has been received by my essence, it can never be communicated to another or be the actuality of another person than me. Since actuality is prior to potentiality, I am first a being (*ens*), and only on that basis a thing (*res*), that is, what has an essence. Since the act of existence remains in the separated soul, and is the same actuality as was in the composite, and acts of existence can only be received and exercised by a thing in proportion to its essence, then the separated soul must retain the human essence, so as to retain the same act of existence. Otherwise, my human act of existence could not remain in and actualize my separated soul. It is clear that a great deal is missing from the separated soul. But the separated soul retains corporeality, vegetability, and sensitivity “in root,” that is, in its essence; it does not retain these powers in actuality, and they are not present in it as in a subject, but it retains the essence that gives rise to them, as a potential whole capable of giving rise to many powers.¹⁶¹ If it did not

¹⁶¹ *Quaestiones de quodlibet* 10, q. 3, a. 1. Cf. Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 278–80.

retain that essence, then it would be incapable of retaining my act of existence, for an act of existence is always proportioned to its proper essence. But if there is continuity of this essence, as well as of mode of subsistence and act of existence in the separated soul, then everything necessary for constituting a person is in the separated soul. And thus my separated soul, along with its mode of subsistence and its act of existence, will constitute me, an incommunicable person unassumable by another person, albeit in a defective state, that is, only imperfectly expressing my nature. The soul is like the brain in the above thought experiment; it lacks all actual human powers but the intellectual powers, yet it retains the nature that gives rise to all human powers, because only that nature is capable of receiving and exercising one's unique human act of existence. In this way, building on the Thomism's account of existence, personhood, and the separated soul, the *Argument from Constitution* can be defended.

This expansion on the *Argument from Constitution* can be given in another way, using Stein's terminology. The person is the bearer of human nature. But the person is a person, is unified, and can bear this nature in virtue of either the mode of subsistence or the act of existence or both. Having human nature renders one capable of having this mode and this act of existence, and only what has this nature is capable of so being completed and actualized. But the separated soul has the same mode and act of existence as the composite, and so the separated soul can bear this nature. Bearers of natures are suppositis, and suppositis with rational natures are persons; thus the separated soul is person. The separated soul cannot be another person besides me, because it has my mode of subsistence and act of existence, and thus it must be me.¹⁶²

In order to give a full defense of the *Argument from Constitution*, a response must be given to the *Argument from Nature*. The *Argument from Constitution* does not lead to the conclusion that a human person is always just a soul. Rather, a human person is what receives, exercises, and is actualized and unified by its act of existence. In the composite, this is both soul and matter. After death, this is the soul, and so then the

¹⁶²We can see now the sense in which Moreland and Rae's position (see note 22 above) is true: the human soul is the primary bearer of human nature and is a necessary and sufficient condition for personal identity. But their position is false in that it identifies the human person just with the soul.

person is constituted by just the soul, because by itself the soul has the formal constitutive principles of personhood. It is true that in the composite, the soul receives and exercises the act of existence in a way that is prior to and nobler than the way that it is received and exercised by the composite. This does not make the person to be constituted by just the soul then because the whole composite receives and exercises that act. The survivalist view does not turn Thomistic hylomorphism into substance dualism. There is only one substance and one nature for each human person. In the natural state, the one substance is constituted by soul and matter, though its substantiality comes from the spiritual substantiality of the soul; in the state of separation, the one substance is constituted by just the soul. The human person is incomplete without matter, since matter is needed for the complete explication of its nature; matter is substantially, not accidentally, united to the soul.

However—and this is an expansion on the Thomistic view of human nature to which the survivalist must be committed—the soul, both in the composite and when separated, has human nature; this ensures personal identity, but it is not to say that soul in the composite constitutes a person other than the composite. Rather, human nature, rational animality, belongs to the soul prior to belonging to the composite, just as the human act of existence belongs to the soul prior to belonging to the composite. Both human nature and the act of existence are communicated to the composite by the soul, which substantially unites matter to itself; human nature has, in itself, a structure unique among natures, belonging primarily to the soul, and by communication but naturally and substantially to the composite. The separated soul has human nature, but expresses it in a defective way, needing matter for the full explication of that nature. When the soul again informs a composite at the resurrection, it will not be assumed by another person, but it will just take matter to itself, and the same person that was constituted by the separated soul will resume the full explication of its nature, as a single substance.¹⁶³

¹⁶³ Cf. Stump, *Aquinas*, 409. The separated state is just a stage in the person's life wherein the person expresses its nature imperfectly; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 1, *Ars logica*, II, q. 14, a. 1, 427, contends that some stages, such as that of the embryo, express human nature "imperfectly" and so are "parts" of the human person, in that they tend to a further perfection; cf. Suárez, *In libros de anima*, vol. 3,

Since acts and existence are attributed primarily to suppositis, this response to the *Argument from Nature* provides a solution to the problems of too many thinkers and too many existing things. There is one and the same supposit or person, that is, one thinker and one existing thing, before and after death. Before death this person is constituted by soul and matter, and after death it is constituted by the soul, along with the mode and the act of existence in each case. If the separate soul did not constitute a person, then the problems would remain, because then the composite person would think and exist derivatively upon the nonpersonal soul. Such a person would be no person at all, but would lack substantial existence, unity, and thought in its own right. But since personhood is constituted by the mode of subsistence and the act of existence, then these problems are avoided: the person goes where these principles go, and the one thinking and existing person is whatever has these principles. Since these cannot be had without human nature, whatever has these also has human nature.

All this allows a response to the contention of the *Argument from Parthood* that there is nothing in the separated soul besides the soul that could constitute a person, and so it is unclear what the person is over and above the soul. Because being a person requires the mode of subsistence and the act of existence, the separated soul constitutes the person without being identical to the person; there are principles supplementing the soul. The supplementation is not by another part, but by other principles, which can constitute things differently than their essential parts constitute them.¹⁶⁴ Regardless of which principle constitutes personhood, the soul retains it, and so, with either principle, or both, constitutes a person. Although, strictly speaking, the person, not the separated soul, thinks, it is correct to say that the separated soul

d. 14, q. 9, n. 6, *resp.*; Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 89, a. 1, n. 3. By “parts” here, John seems to mean something like the contemporary notion of “temporal part,” though he is not a four-dimensionalist; he means that certain temporal stages of a substance only imperfectly express that substance’s nature, though they still have that nature.

¹⁶⁴On the importance of different kinds of composition besides the composition of parts, including composition of actuality and potentiality, and of terminating mode and terminated nature, see Billuart, *Cursus*, vol. 2, diss 4, a. 2, ad 2, 371. Cf. *Quaestiones de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 1; *De substantiis separatis*, c. 6; *De ente*, c. 2; SCG II, c. 54; ST I, q. 75, a. 5, ad 4; Hart, *Thomistic Metaphysics*, 87; Sleva, *Separated Soul*, 80–83; Oderberg, “Survivalism, Corruptionism, and Mereology,” 13–23.

thinks, since the person and the separated soul differ not as two things, but as what is complete and what is able to be completed. This is a further response to the too many thinkers problem.

On the basis of the foregoing discussion of the *Argument from Constitution*, it can be concluded that the soul with its mode and existence alone is necessary and sufficient for continuity of human nature and personhood. This does not entail that we should define the human person through these constitutive principles, because they are not parts of the essence; the definition of the human person is still “rational animal.” Seeing how this can be allows the final step in my response to the *Argument from Nature*. The soul “bears” this nature not in the sense that it somehow includes matter, but in the sense that it bears the “core” of rational animality, the essence in virtue of which the human person can receive and exercise the human act of existence, and which is the “root” from which is “explicated” all actual human powers and corporeality. Essence should be primarily understood as the potential for an act of existence, and only on that basis should it be understood in terms of its principles, such as form and matter.

On my revision of Thomistic principles, the human person can be said to be “essentially” material in the sense that this is its natural state and is necessary for the human person’s ordinary and perfected life, but not in the sense that actually having matter is necessary to be a human person. Considered in the former sense of “essential,” the soul is a part of human nature; considered in the latter sense, it contains full human nature, albeit defectively expressed. To be able to receive and exercise, in its separated state, the act of existence of an animal and of a body, the soul must have an essence capable of receiving and exercising these sorts of existence. In the separated state, it is incapable of exercising them fully, because it lacks matter. But it does exercise these sorts of existence in a sense when separated because the human act of existence is one act, and the separated soul exercises that whole act. It must have human nature such that it can exercise this act of existence, which is the act of a bodily, vegetative, animal, and intellectual supposit. Since this human nature in the soul is the nature of a spiritual substance, and we cannot in this life fully understand the natures of spiritual substances, we cannot fully understand in this life what human nature, rational animality, is, or what it means for a spiritual substance to be an animal,

that is, have an animal essence, but we can know that this must be the case.

That the human person has such a curious sort of animality follows from its place in the hierarchy of being; considering the implications of our place in this hierarchy allows a response to the claims of the *Arguments from Death and Resurrection* that the survivalist view leads to a faulty view of human mortality, death, and resurrection. The human person is the highest of the animals, but is an animal just analogously to other animals, because its animality is determined by its rationality. The human person has this rationality through its form, the lowest of the spiritual substances. The human form is only a form analogously to material forms, in that, unlike them, it is subsistent and does not depend on its composite for existence.¹⁶⁵ Since it is through this soul that the human person is an animal, we should expect human animality to be different from the animality of other animals. The human animal has spiritual existence; other animals have material existence. The human person is an animal in that it senses, but it has sensation for the sake of the fulfillment of its soul. The highest animal exists for the sake of a spiritual substance, which is also the form by which it is an animal. Animality and spirituality are united in the one human essence, which persists in the separated soul. Just as the human body, unique among material things, exists by a spiritual act of existence, so human animality, unique among animal natures, continues to exist in the spiritual substance by which it is.¹⁶⁶

Just as “form” and “animality” mean something different when applied to the human person than they do when applied to other animals, so do terms like “mortal” and “corruptible.” As in other cases, to say that the human person is “mortal” is to say that its soul and its matter are capable of coming apart, and to say that a human person “corrupts”

¹⁶⁵Cf. Gilson, *Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 197–99; Lehrberger, “Anthropology of Aquinas’s,” 838–39.

¹⁶⁶Pegis (see note 135 above) is correct that the human person’s act of existence is oriented toward the body, and that the human person is thereby oriented toward living as a “pilgrim” in history and the drama of “incarnate intelligence,” but we also transcend history and embodiment. Indeed, because we transcend these, we can subjectively enter into history and embodiment without being entirely immersed in them. Our pilgrimage traverses the embodied and separated states, before being completed in the resurrected state. Cf. Smith-Gilson, *Metaphysical Presuppositions*, 168–71.

or “dies” is to say that its soul and its matter in fact come apart. But to say that a human person corrupts is not to say that he or she has gone out of existence, for the person survives constituted by the separated soul. As even Toner admits, human death is a *sui generis* kind of substantial change: it is a substantial change, because it is a loss of a substantial principle, matter, but a substantial change of a unique sort, because it does not produce a new substance.¹⁶⁷ It is not a complete going out of existence.¹⁶⁸ Human death is just the event of the soul ceasing to communicate its existence to the composite. The human person is corruptible and mortal because it is an animal, but immortal because it can be constituted by a spiritual substance; “mortal” and “immortal” here are analogous, not univocal, with their uses in other cases. This view does not mitigate the evil of death: death is still contrary to human nature, in that it separates what is naturally joined. The resurrection is no less wonderful on this view: it rejoins what could never be rejoined naturally, but only by divine intervention. But the survivalist view gives more reason to hope for personal immortality than does the corruptionist view, and it affirms the common belief that the souls of the dead are persons. It makes sense of the possibility that the soul could remain separated forever, without a resurrection, and that this would not be an injustice to the person.¹⁶⁹

Finally, the above exploration of the Thomistic tradition allows an expansion on the *Argument from Acts* and a response to the claim of the *Argument from Weakness* that the soul’s powers are too weak to be

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Suárez, *In libros de anima*, vol. 3, d. 14, q. 1, n. 6; Toner, “St. Thomas on Death,” 593; Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 372–73. Human generation is also *sui generis*: the human person comes to be, like other material things, when its form and matter come together. Unlike other material things, human parents just dispose the matter, but the soul that forms the matter is created by God; cf. *Quaestiones de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 3, ad 12; SCG II, c. 87; ST I, q. 90, a. 2. From the joining of soul and matter in human generation a two-fold unity results, of nature and person, but I hold that both unities remain, at death, in the soul; cf. ST III, q. 2, a. 1, ad 2.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. SCG IV, c. 81: death is “quasi-accidental” to the human person: “mors quasi per accidens superveniens homini per peccatum, considerata institutione humanae naturae”; *In II Sent* d. 19, q. 1, a. 2; *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 5. Cf. Brown, *Aquinas and the Ship*, 124; Gilson, *Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 198; Toner, “St. Thomas on Death,” 593.

¹⁶⁹ Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 89, a. 1, n. 14, 373; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 3, *De anima*, q. 9, a. 1, 431.

those of a person. The separated soul can engage in acts that directly indicate its personhood, and its new mode and abilities indicate that it is not weak in the manner that would prevent it from constituting a person. The soul is “habitual self-cognition,” and this self-cognition will be fully actualized in the separated soul. My actual self-cognition arises from the same root both in the composite and in the separated state. Maritain contends that self-cognition is an awareness of one’s act of existence, in virtue of which we are aware of ourselves as selves.¹⁷⁰ In the separated state, this experience will be stronger and more certain than it was in the composite. But if this experience of the self persists in the separated soul, then if the separated soul were not the person, it would be deceived fundamentally about itself. The separated soul would be aware of itself as “I,” but would in fact be, as Toner put it, “nobody.” But to be a self, to be “somebody” with subjectivity, is to be a person. If this self-cognition is an infallible understanding of my existence as a person in the composite, then it must be likewise infallible in the separate state, since the experiences are the same and they arise from the same habitual self-cognition, which is the soul. If this experience of one’s own existence is ever to be trusted, and it is the most trustworthy of experiences, it must be able to be trusted in both cases, and the separated soul must constitute a person. Likewise, when separated souls know and love one another, they do so in virtue of the same act of existence by which they did these things in the composite state, and, because of that act of existence, it has the dignity that is a defining mark of personhood. The same basic experiences of knowing and loving another can thus be had with respect to other composite human persons and other separated souls. If we are to make sense of the relations among separated souls, then separated souls must constitute persons.¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ Maritain, *A Preface to Metaphysics* (London: Sheed and Ward), 43–48; Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 470–71; *Challenges and Renewals* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), 74–75; Clarke, *Person and Being*, 77. Cf. *De veritate*, q. 10 a. 8; Smith-Gilson, *Metaphysical Presuppositions*, 102.

¹⁷¹ Loving another involves entering into the interiority of the other, and this, like self-love and knowledge of another’s interiority, will be possible more for the separated souls than for composite persons before death. Cf. Anthony Flood, “Aquinas on Subjectivity,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 84 (2010): 69–83; *In III Sent* d. 27, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4; q. 2, a. 1; *ST I-II*, q. 28, a. 1, ad 2; q. 28, a. 2; *II-II*, q. 25, a. 4. Cf. Maritain, *Challenges*, 74–75, cited and explicated in Clarke, *Person and Being*, 77; Maritain, *Person and the Common Good*, 39.

We can thus see that the separated soul, with its mode of subsistence and its act of existence, constitutes the same person as was constituted by form and matter. Interpreted in the way presented here, this follows from a consistent application of Thomistic principles. A Thomist can (and perhaps should) hold that the separated soul constitutes the person, that we shall survive our deaths constituted by separated soul, that we can know this by purely natural and rational means here and now, and that we can take comfort in this knowledge.¹⁷² 

¹⁷² I am grateful to Lawrence Feingold, Matthews Grant, David Hershenov, Stephen Hipp, David Oderberg, Tim Pawl, Michael Rota, Eleonore Stump, Patrick Toner, and an anonymous referee for their comments on earlier drafts of this essay and for conversations that aided me a great deal.