

**THE HUMAN SOUL: FORM AND SUBSTANCE?
THOMAS AQUINAS' CRITIQUE
OF ECLECTIC ARISTOTELIANISM**

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Résumé

Dans la première de ses Questions disputées sur l'âme (1266-1267), saint Thomas dépasse critiqueusement l'aristotélisme éclectique des maîtres ès arts et en théologie qui accordaient à l'âme humaine le double statut de substance spirituelle et de forme substantielle, et propose la notion de forme substantielle subsistante, qui exprime la dépendance essentielle et l'indépendance existentielle de l'âme par rapport au corps.

Abstract

In the first of his Disputed questions on the Soul (1266-1267), St. Thomas criticizes the eclectic aristotelianism of the masters of Arts and Theology who considered the human soul to be a spiritual substance and a substantial form, and proposes his own notion of subsistent substantial form, which defines the essential dependence and existential independence of the soul with respect to the body.

Resumen

En la primera de sus Cuestiones disputadas sobre el alma (1266-1267), santo Tomás supera críticamente el aristotelismo ecléctico de los maestros de arte y de teología que asignaban al alma humana la doble naturaleza de substancia espiritual y forma substancial, y propone la noción de forma substancial subsistente, que expresa la dependencia esencial y la independencia existencial del alma respecto del cuerpo.

[mots-clés : Thomas d'Aquin, âme (statut), aristotélisme (éclectique)]

I N his *Quaestiones disputatae de anima* (*Questions on the Soul*), Thomas Aquinas reached a definitive position concerning the nature of the human soul through a process that included both an overcoming of aristotelian hylomorphism and a rigorous critique of the eclectic interpretations of this doctrine advanced by his predecessors. The doctrinal position elaborated in *Questions on the Soul* inspired and guided Thomas' subsequent texts on the theme, in which clarifications concerning its application to particular theoretical problems were elaborated.

Until recently, the most widely accepted hypothesis concerning the date of *Questions on the Soul* was 1269, when Thomas was beginning his last sojourn in Paris. This hypothesis was proposed by Pelster in 1925, reiterated by Glorieux in 1932, and accepted by Grabmann, Van Steenberghen, Weisheipl and finally J. Robb, who, in 1968, edited the text on the basis of the university manuscript tradition. New research, undertaken in establishing the critical edition of the text¹, allows us to conclude that *Questions on the Soul* were in fact disputed and published in Italy in 1266-1267, before the *Questions on Spiritual creatures* (disputed in Italy in 1267-68, but published in Paris shortly after). This conclusion is supported, among other arguments pertinent to external critique, by an analysis of the text's complete tradition (which was born of an Italian family of manuscripts, independent from the university tradition commonly preferred by previous editors); by the fact that in *Questions on the Soul*, Thomas is more comfortable with the *Vetus translatio* of Aristotle's *De anima* (after 1268, i.e. after writing his *Sententia libri De anima*, Thomas used systematically the *Nova translatio*), as well as with the *Vetus translatio* of Aristotle's *De animalibus*; by the fact that he continued attributing the treatise *De plantis* to Aristotle (after 1268 he would attribute it to Theophrastus) and by the absence of any reference to Themistius (an author that Thomas would regularly use in his interpretation of *De anima* after 1267). Other arguments, based on internal criticism, confirm the conclusion, but it would not be appropriate to present them here.

The text of *Questions on the Soul* is clearly divided into three parts, each including seven questions: (a) the soul in itself; (b) the soul united to the body, and (c) the soul separated from the body. This structure probably follows the *Summa de anima* of John of La Rochelle². In each question, the quality of the objections and counter-arguments reveals that a very sophisticated group of students contributed to the richness of the dispute with an extensive knowledge of the philosophical tradition. On some occasions the objections are based on Thomas's previous texts, which allows him to surpass himself and to adjust or

(1) *S. Thomae de Aquino Quaestiones disputatae de anima*, B. C. BAZÁN ed. (Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII P. M. edita cura et studio Fratrum Praedicatorum, XXIV-1), 1996.

(2) Cf. IOANNES DE RUPELLA, *Summa de anima*. Texte critique avec introduction, notes et tables, J. G. BOUGEROL ed. (Textes Philosophiques du Moyen Age, 19), Paris, Vrin, 1964, pars I, c. 36.

even modify some of his previously held positions (of particular interest are the questions related to the kind of knowledge that the separated soul is capable of).

The study of the sources and theoretical content of *Questions on the Soul* is particularly relevant to the reader of the *Summa Theologiae*. Research concerning the date of composition leads to the conclusion that *Questions on the Soul* were the terrain where Thomas prepared the views presented shortly after in the *Summa Theologiae* (I Pars, qq. 50, 54, 75, 76, 77 et 78).

Of the numerous and fundamental theoretical problems discussed in these *Questions on the Soul*, Question 1 is decisive in the development of Thomas' philosophical anthropology. The doctrine established in Question 1 provides the basic principles for the solution of all other 20 questions, and clearly defines Thomas' position vis-à-vis the whole philosophical tradition concerning the nature of the soul. The problem is whether the soul can simultaneously be a substantial form (*forma*) and an individual substance (*hoc aliquid*).

It will be argued in this paper that in Question 1 Thomas asserted his definitive view concerning the nature of the human soul by determining that it is *not* a substance, but a substantial form of a sort that is not found in Aristotle's philosophy. He did so after a thorough analysis of the philosophical and theological traditions. The *determinatio* of this question implies: a) a rejection of Plato's and Avicenna's spiritualistic conception of the soul; b) a rejection of different kinds of theological conceptions of the soul as spiritual substance and of their consequence, viz. anthropological dualism; c) a rejection of materialism; d) a critique of the eclectic interpretations proposed by his immediate predecessors and of all instrumentalist dualism; and e) a refinement of his already established notion of subsistent substantial *form* as the only possible answer that respects both the true intellectual nature of the human soul and the basic goal of hylomorphism (the unity of human beings) by surpassing Aristotle's principles without denying them (*Aufhebung*). If the conclusions of this paper are well grounded, they should allow us to qualify the expression 'incarnate spirit' that is sometimes used by scholars to define the nature of the soul according to Thomas Aquinas.

I. QUESTION 1 AND ITS CLASSICAL AND MEDIEVAL BACKGROUND

Question 1 raises the following problem: «Whether a human soul can be both a form *and* an entity» (*Utrum anima possit esse forma et hoc aliquid*)³. The historical background against which this question is to be understood is extremely rich from a theoretical point of view.

(3) All the English quotations of *Questions on the Soul* come from the translation by J. ROBB, *St. Thomas Aquinas. Questions on the Soul*, Milwaukee, Wisc., Marquette University Press, 1984. In Robb's edition the term 'entity' translates *hoc aliquid*; W. S. Hett and H. Tredenninck translate by 'individuality' (cf. n. 4 and n. 6). According to Thomas, all these expressions should be read, as shall be seen in what follows, as meaning 'an individual substance complete in its essence and actually existing' (cf. n. 13).

The need to clarify the relationship between the notions of *hoc aliquid* and soul (defined as *forma corporis*) arises from *De anima* II 1, 412a6-9, where Aristotle states that the substantial form is the principle «in virtue of which individuality (*hoc aliquid*) is directly attributed»⁴ to the composite. The question, then, is to determine whether the form itself can also be said to be a *hoc aliquid*, and if so, in what sense.

a) *The notion of hoc aliquid in Aristotle's philosophy*

The expression *hoc aliquid (tóde ti)* was systematically used by Aristotle to refer to primary substances, *i. e.* substances in the proper sense of the word. Substance was foremost a determined being (*hoc aliquid*)⁵. The semantic link between the notion of substance and that of *hoc aliquid* was confirmed in the *Metaphysics*. In Book VII, 1, 1028a10-13, distinguishing substance from the other categories, Aristotle states: «The term 'being' has several senses... it denotes first the 'what' of a thing and the 'individual' (*hoc quid est et hoc aliquid; tí esti kai tóde ti*); and then the quality or quantity or any other such category»⁶. In his Commentary on this passage of the *Metaphysics* Thomas emphasizes the link between substance and *hoc aliquid*: «ens significat quid est et hoc aliquid, *idest substantiam*, ut per 'quid' intelligatur essentia substantiae, per 'hoc aliquid' *suppositum*, ad quae duo omnes modi substantiae reducuntur»⁷.

Whether a substantial form can also be called a *hoc aliquid* requires some clarification. Aristotle, in fact, includes among the meanings of the word 'substance' «whatever, being immanent in such things as are not predicated of a substrate – *i. e.* primary substances –, is the cause of their being; as *e. g.*, the soul is the cause of the animal»⁸. Accordingly, in *De anima*, II 1 412a 5-9, Aristotle enlarges the notion of substance to encompass all its essential components, including matter, «which in itself is not an individual thing» (*ouk esti tóde ti*). The term of course can also be predicated of the form, «in virtue of which individuality is directly attributed» (*kath'en ede légetai tóde ti*) and of the

(4) All the English quotations of *De anima* come from the translation by W. S. HETT, *Aristotle. On the Soul, Parva Naturalia, On Breath* (The Loeb Classical Library), London-Cambridge (Mass.), Heineman Ltd.-Harvard University Press, 1957. The *Vetus translatio* (by Jacobus Venetus) reads: «Dicamus igitur genus unum quoddam eorum que sunt substantiam, huius autem aliud quidem sicut materiam, quod secundum se non est hoc aliquid, alterum autem formam et speciem secundum quam iam dicitur hoc aliquid, et tertium quod est ex hiis».

(5) ARISTOTLE, *Categ.* 5, 3b10; quoted by St. Thomas at the beginning of his *determinatio* of question 1 on the Soul.

(6) All the English quotations of *Metaphysica* come from the translation by H. TREDENNINCK, *Aristotle. The Metaphysics* (The Loeb Classical Library), London-Cambridge (Mass.), Heineman Ltd.-Harvard University Press, 1961. In this particular passage we have modified the translation (which literally reads: «the *what* of a thing, *i. e.* the individuality»). Aristotle, indeed points out to *two* meanings of 'being': the quiddity *and (kai)* the individuality.

(7) THOMAS AQUINAS, *In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Expositio*, R. SPIAZZI ed., Roma, Marietti, 1964, VII, 1 n.1247.

(8) ARISTOTLE, *Metaphysics*, V, 8, 1017b10-16.

«compound of the two». Thus, although the notion of hoc aliquid (individual and determinate being) applies properly to primary substances, the fact that substance itself can be predicated of forms allows for the notion of hoc aliquid to be predicated also, with qualifications, of the forms themselves which, being the principle of actuality and determination of primary substances, may also be called *hoc aliquid*. It is in this light that some texts of the *Metaphysics* may be understood.

For instance, in *Met.* V, 8, 1017b24-26, Aristotle writes: «substance has two senses: the ultimate subject, which cannot be further predicated of something else; and whatever has an individual and separate existence (*tóde ti ón kai khoristón*; *hoc aliquid ens et separabile*). The shape and form (*morphé kai tó eidós*; *ratio et species*) of each particular thing is of this nature». What is meant by this text is clear for Thomas in his *Commentary*: a substance is the ultimate subject of propositions, such that it is not predicated of anything else, and this is the primary substance (*substantia prima*). And this substance is what is a hoc aliquid, as subsistent per se and capable of being separate, because it is distinct from anything else and not communicable to anything else. But the form and specific nature (*forma et species*) of each thing can also be called substance because the essence and the form are that by which something is (*quo aliquid est*)⁹. It is clear that for Thomas hoc aliquid applies properly to primary substances, and in a derivative sense to the form, as principle of actuality and determination of the primary substance.

Likewise, in *Met.* VII, 3, 1029a28-30, Aristotle states that «separability and individuality (*tó khoristón kai to tóde ti*; *separabile et hoc aliquid*) belong especially to substance. Hence it would seem that the form and the combination of form and matter are more truly substance than matter is». In his *Commentary* on this passage, Thomas emphasizes that the characteristics of separability and of being a hoc aliquid distinguish substance from accidents, that the notion of hoc aliquid applies mainly to the composite, and that the form, although not having the characteristics of separability and individuality, could also be called hoc aliquid, but only insofar as it is the principle of actuality of the composite¹⁰.

(9) THOMAS AQUINAS. *In Metaph.* V, 6 (ed. Marietti n. 903-904): «substantia duobus modis dicitur: quorum unus est secundum quod substantia dicitur id quod ultimo subiicitur in propositionibus, ita quod de alio non praedicatur, sicut *substantia prima*. Et hoc est quod est *hoc aliquid*, quasi per se subsistens, et quod est *separabile*, quia est ab omnibus distinctum et non communicabile multis... sed etiam forma et species uniuscuiusque rei 'dicitur tale', idest substantia... Essentia enim et forma in hoc conveniunt quod secundum utrumque dicitur esse illud quo aliquid est».

(10) *In Metaph.*, VII, 2, ed. Marietti, n. 1291-1293: «Duo enim sunt quae maxime propria videntur esse substantiae: quorum unum est quod sit *separabile*. Accidens enim non separatur a substantia, sed substantia potest separari ab accidente. Aliud est quod substantia est *hoc aliquid demonstratum*. Alia enim genera non significant hoc aliquid. Haec autem duo, scilicet esse separabile et esse hoc aliquid non conveniunt materiae... Unde esse hoc aliquid maxime competit composito... Forma autem, *etsi non sit separabilis et hoc aliquid*, tamen per ipsam compositum fit ens actu, ut sic possit esse separabile et hoc aliquid».

Again we find that hoc aliquid is predicated of forms in a derivative way, and that its main meaning is that of a primary substance.

In *Met.* VIII, 1, 1042a27-32, Aristotle explains that the «substrate is substance; in one sense matter...; and in another the formula and the specific shape, which is an individual thing and is theoretically separable (*tóde ti on tô lógô khôristón, hoc aliquid ens, ratione separabile*), and thirdly there is the combination of the two, which alone admits of generation and destruction and is separable in an unqualified sense (*aplôs; simpliciter*) – for of substances in the sense of formula some are separable and some are not». In his *Commentary*, Thomas clarifies that substantial forms may be termed substances but only as quasi-actual beings and quasi-separable from matter, because they are separable only by reason, and not *in re*. The form indeed can be *understood* without sensible individual matter. When forms *exist* without matter, they are no longer substantial forms but, rather, 'separate forms', which are incorruptible substances in their own right (non hylomorphic composites), complete in themselves. Again, substantial forms are called hoc aliquid in a derivative sense. Only primary substances are hoc aliquid without qualification because only primary substances are subjects of generation and of corruption, and only they are separable absolutely¹¹.

It is against these clarifications that *De anima* II 1 412a20 should be read: «So the soul must be substance *in the sense of being the form* of a natural body which potentially has life, and substance *in this sense is actuality*». As Thomas explains: «per animam enim intelligimus id quo habens uitam uiuit, unde oportet quod intelligatur sicut aliquid in subiecto existens... relinquitur per locum a diuisione quod anima sit *substantia sicut forma* uel species talis corporis»¹². The scope of this explanation is understood considering that primary substance and 'hoc aliquid' are synonymous, both expressing an entity that is complete in its essence and being¹³, and considering that the notion of form does not correspond to this primary sense of hoc aliquid¹⁴.

(11) In *Metaph.*, VIII, 1, ed. Marietti, n. 1687: «Forma uero, quae et ratio nominatur, quia ex ipsa sumitur ratio speciei, dicitur substantia quasi ens aliquid actu, et quasi ens separabile secundum rationem a materia, licet non secundum rem. Compositum uero ex his dicitur esse substantia quasi 'separabile simpliciter', idest separatim per se existere potens in rerum natura; et eius solius est generatio et corruptio... Forma enim est separabile ratione quia potest intelligi sine materia sensibili individuante... Vel potest esse sensus quod 'substantiarum secundum rationem', idest formarum, quaedam sunt ratione separabiles, ut mathematicae, quaedam non, ut formae naturales. Vel iterum quod quaedam sunt formae separatae absque materia existentes, de quibus inferius determinabit».

(12) *Sententia libri De anima*. II. I. R.-A. GAUTHIER ed. (ed. Leonina. XLV-1). Roma-Paris, Commissio Leonina-Vrin, 1984, p. 70, 207-209 et 220-222.

(13) *Ibid.* p. 69, 101-104: «substantia uero composita est que est hoc aliquid. Dicitur enim esse hoc aliquid aliquid demonstratum quod est completum in esse et specie, et hoc competit soli substantie compositae».

(14) *Ibid.*, p. 68-69, 70-83: «substantia autem est quid completum in suo esse et in sua specie... *nulla forma est quid completum in specie, set complementum speciei competit*

It is clear that when Thomas asks «*utrum anima sit forma et hoc aliquid*», he is not examining the compatibility of the notion of form with the derivative sense of *hoc aliquid* (he is aware of their compatibility). On the contrary, he is examining the views of those who consider that the notion of substantial form is compatible with the principal sense of *hoc aliquid*. Thomas' purpose is not to reconcile Plato (who considered the soul to be a complete substance in itself) and Aristotle (who considered the soul to be a substantial form), but to criticize the theoretically unacceptable reconciliation reached by his predecessors on the basis of an inadequate understanding of the notions, and to propose a new approach that goes beyond the aristotelian notion of substantial form without falling into the platonic alternative.

b) The patristic tradition

The incompatibility of the platonic and aristotelian understandings of the soul – as a substance and as a form, respectively – was observed by some of the early christian thinkers who were known to Thomas, and it was the platonic notion that prevailed among them.

In his *De natura hominis*, Nemesius (ca. 400) writes that the true nature of the soul is to be an incorporeal substance¹⁵. Consequently he affirms that it is impossible for such a perfect incorporeal substance to be a substantial form: «*Non potest igitur anima secundum ullum modum entelechia corporis esse, sed substantia autoteles (id est perfecta) incorporea*»¹⁶. He also ridicules Eunomius for attempting to reconcile Plato and Aristotle and for not understanding that their conceptions of the soul are incompatible: «*Igitur substantiam quidem incorpoream a Platone suscepit, in corpore vero creatam ab Aristotelis doctrina, non intelligens, etsi acutus fuerit, quoniam congregare in idem temptat ea quae sunt non contingentia*»¹⁷.

St. Augustine embraced the platonic conception of the soul, but not its negative implications for the body, which resulted in anthropological dualism. For Plato the human being was only the soul (spiritualistic monism), and the body was simply an undesirable and temporary addition whose level of reality

substantie composite. Vnde, cum anima sit forma, oportet quod in diffinitione ipsius ponatur materia siue subiectum eius».

(15) NEMESIUS, *De natura hominis*, traduction de Burgundio de Pise, G. VERBEKE et J.R. MONCHO ed. (Corpus Latinorum Commentariorum in Aristotelem Graecorum, suppl. 1), Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1975, c. 2, p. 49, 81-84: «*si autem animam demonstravimus neque corpus esse neque harmoniam neque crasim neque aliam quandam qualitatem (such as a form), manifestum est ex his quod substantia quaedam incorporea est anima*». The *De natura hominis* was often attributed by mediaeval masters to Gregory of Nyssa. Not surprisingly, a clearly dualistic anthropology, which has great difficulty accounting for the union of soul and body, is also found in Gregory's *De hominis opificio*. The solution was a kind of instrumentalist dualism: «*the union of the soul with its body is that of a created, living and intellectual being, with the bodily organs which it uses as its instruments*», E. GILSON, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, New York, Random House, 1955, p. 58.

(16) NEMESIUS, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

(17) NEMESIUS, *ibid.*, p. 40-41.

was limited to the world of mere appearances. For St. Augustine, however, humans were both soul and body, each being a complete substance in itself (dualism), united by the will of God (positive instrumentalism). St. Augustine was aware of the theoretical complications of such a dualistic conception, and he asked himself whether the soul or the body was the true reality of the human being¹⁸. For the bishop of Hippo the answer was that the soul was a complete substance in itself, designed to rule the body: «videtur esse substantia quaedam rationis particeps, regendo corpori accommodata»¹⁹. Although St. Augustine acknowledged the difficulty in explaining how such a substance was united to the body and how it operated in it²⁰, he never used aristotelian hylomorphism to solve the mystery. The soul for St. Augustine was a substance (a hoc aliquid), but not a form in the aristotelian sense of the word.

The same conception of the soul as a complete substance, related to the body only as its instrument, is found in John Damascene: «Anima igitur est substantia vivens, simplex et incorporea... immortalis, rationalis et intellectualis... organico utens corpore»²¹. Although John Damascene states, contrary to Origen's doctrine, that soul and body begin to exist simultaneously («simul... plasmata sunt»), and that the soul confers life on the body («huic vitae... tributiva»), he never considered the soul to be united to the body as form is united to matter.

Arguably, in early christian anthropology there was no attempt to reconcile Plato and Aristotle, and Plato's conception of the soul as substance generally

(18) S. AUGUSTINUS, *De moribus Ecclesiae*, I, 4, 6: «ex anima et corpore nos esse compositos, quid est ipse homo, utrumque horum quae nominavi. an corpus tantummodo, an tantummodo anima?... Quid ergo hominem dicimus? animam et corpus tanquam bigas vel centaurum; an corpus tantum, quod sit in usu animae se regentis?... an nihil aliud hominem quam animam dicimus, sed propter corpus quod regit, veluti equitem non simul equum et hominem, sed hominem solum, ex eo tamen quod regendo equo sit accomodatus, vocamus? Difficile est istam controversiam diiudicare...».

(19) S. AUGUSTINUS, *De quantitate animae*, 13, 22. It should be noted that this definition of the soul is almost identical to the definition of man proposed in *De moribus Ecclesiae*, I, 27, 52: «Homo igitur ut homini apparet, anima rationalis est mortali atque terreno utens corpore». Cf. E. GILSON, *Introduction à l'étude de saint Augustin*, Paris, Vrin, 1949³, p. 58, n. 2.

(20) S. AUGUSTINUS, *De anima et eius origine*, IV, 5, 6: «anima vero nulli sciunt quomodo haec et unde agat in corpore».

(21) IOANNES DAMASCENUS, *De fide orthodoxa*. Versions of Burgundio and Cebanus, E. M. BUYTAERT ed. (Franciscan Institute Publications, Text Series n. 8), St. Bonaventure, N. Y.-Louvain-Paderborn, The Franciscan Institute-E. Nauwelaerts-F. Schoning, 1955, c. 26, 6, p. 115. Origen's *De principiis*, a text well known to St. Thomas, proposed a theory of creation which also implied a substantialistic conception of the soul and a negative dualism. Man is a spirit, equal to other created spirits, but suffers existential modifications as a consequence of his free choice. The state of union with a body during its earthly existence, which is a consequence of a bad choice and is contrary to his essence, does not affect his true nature of spiritual substance. Cf. J. J. PRADO, *Voluntad y Naturaleza. La antropología filosófica de Máximo el Confesor*, Río Cuarto (Argentina), 1974, pp. 50-51; E. GILSON, *History of Christian Philosophy*, p. 42; S. THOMAS, *Quaestiones disputatae de anima*, q. 7 (ed. Leonina, XXIV-1, p. 57, adn. 157 and 161-162). Nothing in Origen's writings suggests that the soul is a substance and a form.

prevailed. Thus, the source of Thomas' Question I on the Soul (which requires a context in which the conception of the soul as form *and hoc aliquid* is theoretically acceptable) cannot be traced back to this period of clear opposition to such a theoretical compromise.

c) *The arabic tradition*

Two arabic philosophers had a more decisive influence on scholastic thinkers: Avicenna and Averroes. Significantly, both were familiar with Aristotle's *De anima* and, consequently, their choices between the substantialistic conception of the soul and hylomorphism were lucid.

Avicenna's anthropology was clearly neoplatonic, characterized by the strong affirmation of the substantial nature of the soul and by anthropological dualism. Yet he could not disregard what Aristotle had said concerning the soul as form of the body. Thus Avicenna distinguished between the study of the soul in itself from the study of the soul as principle of animation. In itself, the soul is a spiritual substance, independent from the body for its existence and for its definition: the soul is *substantia solitaria, id est per se*²². Its ontological self-sufficiency is confirmed by the fact that it can be known without reference to the body²³. In fact, the human soul is the lowest of the separate intelligences and because of this ontological weakness it requires the human body to acquire individuation and to perform its activities²⁴. But animation is nothing but a role or a function of the soul, not its very nature²⁵. The essence of the soul is to be a substance and the animating function it performs vis-à-vis the body is accidental to its nature. Accordingly, Avicenna systematically uses the term 'perfectio' or 'motor' to describe the soul, rather than the more aristotelian term 'form',

(22) AVICENNA, *Liber de anima seu sextus de naturalibus*, S. VAN RIET ed. (Avicenna Latinus). Louvain-Leiden. Ed. orientalistes-E. J. Brill. 1968. V. 1. p. 80. 59-60.

(23) *Ibid.* p. 36-37, 54-68: «Deinde videat si affirmat esse suae essentiae: non enim dubitabit affirmare se esse, nec tamen affirmabit exteriora suorum membrorum, nec occulta suorum interiorum nec animum nec cerebrum, nec aliquid aliud extrinsecus, sed affirmabit se esse...Tu autem scis quod id quod affirmatur, aliud est ab eo quod non affirmatur, et concessum aliud est ab eo quod non conceditur. Et, quoniam essentia quam affirmat esse est propria illi, eo quod illa est ipsemet, et est praeter corpus eius et membra eius quae non affirmat, ideo expergefactus habet viam evigilandi ad sciendum quod esse animae aliud est quam esse corporis; immo non eget corpore ad hoc ut sciat animam et percipiat eam; si autem fuerit stupidus, opus habet converti ad viam». Cf. etiam AVICENNA, *Liber de anima*, V, 7, p. 162-163, 51 sqq.

(24) *Ibid.*, V, 3, p. 104, 22-24; 105, 40-44; 106, 50-53.

(25) *Ibid.*, I, 1, p. 15, 79: «hoc nomen (anima) est nomen huius rei non ex eius essentia»; cf. p. 26-27, 27-32: «Hoc enim nomen anima non est inditum ei ex sua substantia, sed ex hoc quod regit corpora et refertur ad illa, et idcirco recipitur corpus in sui definitione, exempli gratia, sicut opus accipitur in definitione opificis, quamvis non accipiatur in definitione eius secundum quod est homo». As the animating role of the soul is merely a function which does not express its nature, it would be a serious mistake, according to Avicenna, to try to safeguard its substantial nature by saying that the soul is a substance *in the sense* of being a substantial form: «Erravit igitur qui putavit hoc sufficere ad eam esse substantiam sicut ad esse formam» (p. 26, 22-23).

because the latter has connotations that are not compatible with the essential nature of the soul as substance²⁶. Avicenna's dualism is instrumentalist and for him the relationship between soul and body ceases to have any meaning after death: once the goals that were sought with the union are achieved, the soul continues to live its substantial, self-sufficient existence in the company of the superior intelligences that are its true realm. This spiritual substance is the real self of a human being: we are our soul²⁷. For Avicenna the soul is indeed an «incarnate spirit». The study of the soul while united to the body is part of natural philosophy, but «to describe the soul as entelechy is not to say anything about the nature of the soul taken in itself»²⁸. Only metaphysics, the science that deals with separate substances, can determine the soul's true nature as a self-sufficient spiritual substance. Dualistic and neoplatonic, Avicenna's anthropology contains elements of an eclectic approach that had considerable impact on medieval Latin thinkers and, consequently, provides a better, though insufficient understanding of the background to Thomas' Question 1 on the Soul. It is insufficient because, in spite of his eclecticism, Avicenna did not consider that the soul's nature was to be a form *and* a *hoc aliquid*. In itself, the soul was a substance, but burdened by the temporary function of being *perfectio* of the body.

Averroes, in turn, tried to clarify and solve Aristotle's *aporiae* concerning the nature of the intellect within the principles of hylomorphism. Whatever his position on the separate nature of the Intellect was (it is not relevant for our present purposes), Averroes accepted and refined the notion of soul as substantial form of the body: the soul is substance insofar as it is a form and as such it is the «perfection» of the natural body which potentially has life²⁹. The use of the term *perfectio* (which comes from Michael Scot's translation of Aristotle's *De anima*) should not be cause for concern: in spite of its imprecision and Avicenna's inadequate interpretation, Averroes understood that *perfectio* meant first principle of actuality: «this perfection precedes all others in the order of being, that is why it should be added to the definition that the soul is the

(26) *Ibid.*, I, 1, p. 20, 31-33: «ipsa certe non est forma materiae nec in materia: forma etenim quae est in materia, est forma impressa in illa et existens per illam»; cf. 45-47 et p. 22, 64-71.

(27) *Ibid.*, V, 7, p. 165, 90-91: «cognosco quod aut ipsa verissime est ego, aut quod ipsa est ego regens hoc corpus».

(28) R. RAHMAN, *Avicenna's Psychology*. An English translation of *Kitab al-Najat*, II, Oxford, 1952, p. 9. Cf. G. VERBEKE, Introduction to *Avicenna Latinus, Liber de anima* (1968), p. 29*: «l'âme humaine n'est pas imprimée dans le corps comme une forme dans la matière et elle n'existe pas par le corps, en d'autres termes, son existence ne dépend pas de son union au corps; elle est donc spirituelle».

(29) AVERROIS CORDUBENSIS *Commentarium magnum in Aristotelis De anima libros*, F. Stuart CRAWFORD ed. (Corpus Commentariorum Averrois in Aristotelem VI-1), Cambridge (Mass.), The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1953, II, 5, p. 134-135, 9-17: «anima est substantia secundum formam... quia substantia que est secundum formam est perfectio corporis habentis formam... necesse est ut anima sit perfectio talis corporis, idest perfectio corporis naturalis habentis vitam in potentia, secundum quod perficitur per animam».

first perfection of the natural body which potentially has life»³⁰. This definition of the soul as form of the body is *analogical*³¹; it allows for only an imperfect understanding of the different kinds of soul (*diminute facit cognoscere*)³², and, consequently, requires specific adjustments for each level of life, vegetative, sensitive and human. In the case of human beings, the soul that is the first principle of actuality and that is related to the body as form to matter is a highly sophisticated sensitive soul which has among its operational faculties the imagination and the cogitative faculty, which Averroes identifies as the corruptible *intellectus passibilis* (*noûs pathetikós*) of *De anima* 430a20-25³³. Human beings are, therefore, hylomorphic composites, subject to generation and corruption and their substantial form is the most perfect of sensitive souls³⁴. What then is the nature of the Intellect, or rather of the Agent Intellect and the Material Intellects? They are separate substances, and consequently, even if the definition of the soul can be predicated *analogically* of the different souls which are united to a body, it can be predicated of the Intellects only *equivocally*³⁵, because they do not have an ontological relationship to the body, but only an operational one. The Intellect *non est anima neque pars anime*³⁶. But although both the Agent and the Material intellects are spiritual and eternal substances in the full sense of the word, Averroes does not call them *hoc aliquid*, because for

(30) *Ibid.*, II, 5, p. 137, 11-14: «ista perfectio preedit in esse secundam perfectionem, et propter hoc debet adiungi in diffinitione quod anima est prima perfectio corporis naturalis habentis vitam in potentia».

(31) *Ibid.*, II, 30, p. 173-174, 13-49: «inceptit declarare cuiusmodi sit genus acceptum in diffinitione anime, et dixit quia neque est equivocum neque univocum... Et hoc exemplum est valde simile diffinitioni anime; non est enim ex diffinitionibus equivocorum nominum... ista diffinitio non est univoca... possibile est ut iste virtutes diverse habeant unam diffinitionem universalem convenientem omnibus, sicut diffinitio figure convenit omnibus figuris et nulli appropriatur». That is why, after the universal definition of the soul is established, there is still need to pursue the research in order to determine the specificity of each kind of soul, cf. p. 176, 20-38.

(32) *Ibid.*, II, 13, p. 152, 9.

(33) *Ibid.*, III, 20, p. 449, 173-175: «Et intendebat hic per *intellectum passibilem* formas ymaginationis secundum quod in eas agit virtus cogitativa propria homini»; cf. also III, 20, p. 451, 237-240: «quia intellectus materialis nichil intelligit sine intellectu passibili, licet agens sit et recipiens sit, sicut comprehendere colorem non est, licet lux sit et visus sit, nisi coloratum sit».

(34) *Ibid.*, III, 20, p. 454, 313-316: «Et per istum intellectum quem vocavit Aristoteles *passibilem* diversantur homines... Et per istum intellectum differt homo ab aliis animalibus»; cf. also III, 33, p. 476, 79-80: «Et homo est generabilis et corruptibilis per hanc virtutem». Cf. B. Carlos BAZÁN, «La noética de Averroes», *Philosophia* (Mendoza), 38 (1972), p. 34-35 et 46.

(35) *Ibid.*, II, 7, p. 138, 18-19: «Perfectio enim in anima rationali et in aliis virtutibus anime fere dicitur pura equivocatione»; cf. also II, 21, p. 160, 6-27: «Cum dixit quod querendum est in unoquoque istorum principiorum utrum sit anima aut non, inceptit declarare virtutem que non videtur esse anima, sed manifestius est de ea ut sit non anima... Idest, sed tamen melius est dicere, et magis videtur esse verum post perscrutationem, ut istud (i. e. intellectus et virtus speculativa) sit aliud genus anime, et si dicatur anima, erit secundum equivocationem».

(36) *Ibid.*, II, 32, p. 178, 33-35.

him this notion applies only to *material* substances: «if we state that the 'material' intellect is multiplied according to the multiplication of individual human beings, it would follow that it will be a 'aliquid hoc', namely a body or a power of a body»³⁷. In conclusion, Averroes does not provide the background to Thomas' Question 1: the human soul is only a form and not a substance; the Intellect is a substance but not a form (except equivocally), and its substantiality is not that of a hoc aliquid (a term that Averroes reserves for material substances). To understand the origin and background of the question *utrum anima sit forma et hoc aliquid* we must turn elsewhere.

d) *The teaching of the masters of Arts*

Avicenna's eclectic approach was adopted and developed by the masters of Arts at the University of Paris during the first half of the 13th century. By 1225, the anonymous author of *De anima et potentiis eius*, after stating that the soul is the substantial form of the body, does not hesitate to say that the rational soul is also a substance: «Anima uero rationalis dicitur substancia quia potest esse per se, id est separata»³⁸. The anonymous author of *Philosophica disciplina* (ca. 1245) proposes a view quite similar to Avicenna's: the soul can be considered as related to the body, and as such it is a subject of natural philosophy as exposed by Aristotle in *De anima*; or it can be considered in itself, absolutely, as a separate spiritual substance, and as such it is a subject of metaphysics: «de anima absolute determinare in quantum est aliquid in se non est naturalis philosophi, set potius metaphisici, cuius est considerare substantias spirituales separatas»³⁹. It is obvious that, for this anonymous author, the soul can be both a form and a substance in its own right. The same idea, expressed in even clearer terms, is found in the Commentary attributed to Peter of Spain: «intellectus quo intelligit homo sive anima intellectiva, non solum est forma sed hoc aliquid; sed omne tale causatum habet duo in se, scilicet, unum materiale et reliquum formale; ergo intellectus noster habet formam; ergo non est solum in potentia»⁴⁰.

(37) *Ibid.*, III, 5, p.402, 432-434: «Si enim posuerimus quod iste intellectus materialis est numeratus per numerationem individuorum hominum, continget ut sit aliquid hoc, aut corpus aut virtus in corpore».

(38) Cf. R.-A. GAUTHIER, «Le traité 'De anima et potentiis eius' d'un maître ès arts (vers 1225): Introduction et texte critique», *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 66 (1982), p. 32, 127-128; cf. also p. 27, 3-6.

(39) Anon., *Philosophica disciplina*, C. LAFLEUR ed., *Quatre introductions à la philosophie au XIII^e siècle. Texte critique et étude historique* (Publications de l'Institut d'Etudes médiévales, 23), Montréal-Paris, Université de Montréal-Vrin, 1988, p. 164, 139-141.

(40) PS. PETRUS HISPANUS, *Expositio libri De anima*, in *Pedro Hispano. Obras filosóficas* III, M. ALONSO ed., Madrid, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1952, p. 325. Cf. also p. 327-328: «Cum igitur hec intelligentia creata habet duo in se, scilicet, materiale et formale, ratione sue forme est quod habet omnia intelligibilia. Igitur quod non habet hec, erit ratione sui materialis; ergo quod est formale in ipsa est intellectus agens». Two remarks: a) it is because the intellective soul is considered to be a substance that it needs a sort of composition (*materiale et formale*); b) the notion of receptive intellect (*intellectus possibilis*) seems to be linked to the union of the soul to the body, while the agent intellect is presented as a

Peter of Spain, in his *Scientia de anima* clearly states that the soul is a particular kind of entity that performs the role of substantial form, though being in itself a substance in its own right, a *hoc aliquid*⁴¹. In fact, the soul is a «*forma dans vitam, completa in esse, ut substantia que est hoc aliquid*»⁴². But if it is a substance, the role of form could not be the expression of its very nature, but of a function⁴³. Accordingly, Peter's definition of the soul expresses an instrumentalist dualism, similar to the doctrine proposed by St. Augustine and Avicenna: «*Est substantia incorporea vivens intellectiva corpori organico copulata ei vitam et opera intellectiva in discretionem et mora consistentia administrans*»⁴⁴. But Peter tries to solve the problem of the unity of man with his notion of a «*composite essence*»⁴⁵, which includes both substances, the soul and the body. By being a part of this composite essence, the soul does not lose its substantial nature and it can always be considered a substance in itself, separately from the body: «*Ipsa enim in sua natura absque respectu corporis est substantia simplex spiritualis*»⁴⁶. The notion of composite essence is possible because the soul can also be united to the body as its perfection, but the ontological weakness of this composite essence becomes apparent in the examples that Peter gives of such a union⁴⁷. Peter's eclectic anthropology is a perfect example of the

faculty proper to the soul as a spiritual substance. The same distinction is presented by other masters of Arts, cf. infra n. 48. M. Alonso not only attributed the *Expositio* to Peter of Spain, he also stated that the text had been written before 1245, making it the first commentary on the *Vetus*. These conclusions have been questioned by R.-A. GAUTHIER, Preface, *S. Thomae Aquinatis Sententia libri De anima* (ed. Leonina, XLV-1, 1984), p.236*-238*.

(41) PETRUS HISPANUS, *Scientia libri De anima*, in *Pedro Hispano. Obras filosóficas I*, M. ALONSO ed., Barcelona, 1961², tr. I, c. 2, p. 17, 18-31: «*Distinguitur autem duplex (sic) forma: quedam que tantum forma dicitur, et alia que est completa et hoc aliquid (aliud ed.), set anima substantia completa que est hoc aliquid (aliud ed.), de sui natura esse censetur. Nam soli forme que est substantia completa et hoc aliquid (aliud ed.), ei competunt motus sufficiens et eius perfectio citra suum subiectum, distantia a mobili secundum essentiam que similis est distantie naute a navi... Anima igitur substantia forma que est hoc aliquid (aliud ed.) in sua essentia esse iure censetur*». Cf. also p.21, 1-5.

(42) *Ibid.*, I, 3, p. 25, 15-16. The expression *hoc aliquid* is clearly spelled in this text and justifies the corrections introduced in previous quotations.

(43) *Ibid.*, IX, 2, p. 304, 17-18: «*Set cum sit substantia, non omnino forma, set hoc aliquid (aliud ed.) est censenda, ex sua subsistentia hoc monstratur...*». Cf. IX, 8, p. 331, 12-14: «*ipsa assimilatur substantie separate cui per sui presentiam datur officium perfectionis et regiminis corporis*».

(44) *Ibid.*, IX, 2, p. 305, 14-15.

(45) *Ibid.*, IX, 5, p. 318, 24-27: «*cum essentia hominis unitatem participans naturalem ex ipsa et corpore constet, ipsa cum corpore unam constituit essentiam compositam cuius unitas in principiorum consistit mutua et indivisibili unione*».

(46) *Ibid.*, IX, 6, p. 325, 1-3.

(47) *Ibid.*, IX, 6, p. 325, 18-24: «*Cum autem corporis sit perfectio ei vitam tribuens atque regimen, ei tota essentia copulatur. Huic autem rei multe similitudines adaptantur: comparatur enim eius existentia in corpore intelligentie alicui corpus regenti et naute regenti navem et lucerne modio velate et corpori fixo vestimento induto et homini in domo collocato et rei spirituali fixe corpus regenti...*».

theoretical difficulties arising from the simultaneous affirmation that the soul is a *hoc aliquid* and a form.

Roger Bacon, who was master of Arts between 1240 and 1247 (?), considers that the soul is both form and substance, and that it can be called 'hoc aliquid' because it is not only the act of the body but also its mover. From the substantial character of the soul it follows that the soul must itself be composite of matter and form as all finite beings are: «Dicitur tamen *hoc aliquid* quia est motor preter hoc quod est actus; sola intellectiva composita est ex materia et forma, quia vera»⁴⁸. The anonymous master of Arts, author of the *Lectiones super II et III De anima* (Oxford, Bodleian, Lat. misc. c. 70, f. 20va, ca. 1246/47), is even clearer: «Anima enim intellectiva et est *hoc aliquid* et est forma: in quantum est forma, sic unitur corpori, <et> ex unione ipsius cum corpore contrahit intellectum possibilem... in quantum autem anima est *hoc aliquid*, sic et motor corporis et sic debetur sibi intellectus agens»⁴⁹. The anonymous author of the *Lectura in librum De anima* (ca. 1246-1247) presents the doctrine in unequivocal terms: «*forma substancialis* que est anima habet esse per se, est *hoc aliquid*, et est aliquid ens in actu antequam perficiat materiam; set alie forme substanciales non dicuntur esse nisi in materia quam perficiunt, unde sunt forme tantum et non *forma et hoc aliquid*»⁵⁰. With great lucidity he explains that the property of being a *hoc aliquid* and existing apart from matter belongs only to the rational soul, which can exist separate from matter; but once it achieves separation it ceases to be a soul and remains only a spiritual substance: «est enim anima nomen officii, sicut angelus»⁵¹. The same double consideration of the soul

(48) ROGERUS BACON, *Opera hactenus inedita*, R. STEELE ed., X, Oxonii, Clarendon, 1932, p. 269, cit. by T. CROWLEY, *Roger Bacon. The Problem of the Soul in his philosophical Commentaries*, Louvain-Dublin, Institut supérieur de philosophie-J. Duffy, 1950, p. 121 n. 9; cf. also E. GILSON, *History of Christian Philosophy*, 1954, p. 302: «the intellectual soul is an individual substance in the full sense of the term: a *hoc aliquid*».

(49) The doctrine according to which the receptive aspect of the soul is linked to its temporary role as form of the body, while the agent intellect is a faculty linked to the permanent status of the soul as a spiritual substance, is presented in these terms by the anonymous master: «Item, nota quod intellectus agens et possibilis idem sunt secundum substantiam, differunt tamen quia intellectus possibilis debetur anime a parte sue unionis cum corpore, et ideo, separata anima a corpore, corrumpitur huiusmodi intellectus possibilis in quantum possibilis est, tamen secundum sui substantiam non corrumpitur, sicut intellectus agens et separabilis est, anima separata» (f. 20va). We prepare the critical edition of this *Lectiones super II et III De anima*, that we expect to publish shortly. A description of the manuscript and of its content can be found in R.-A. GAUTHIER, Preface, *S. Thomae de Aquino Sententia libri De anima* (ed. Leonina, XLV-1, 1984), pp. 242*-244*.

(50) Anonymi magistri Artium *Lectura in librum De anima a quodam discipulo reportata* (ms. Roma, Naz., V. E. 828), R.-A. GAUTHIER ed., Roma, Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 1985, p. 145, 290-293.

(51) *Ibid.*, p. 146, 331-334. The idea that the term 'soul' denotes just a function and not the very essence of this spiritual substance probably comes from TERTULLIANUS, *De anima*, c. 12 (ed. J. H. WASZINK, Amsterdam, 1947): «Nos autem animum ita dicimus animae concretum, non ut substantia alium, sed ut substantiae officium», cit. by J. M. DA CRUZ PONTES, *Pedro Hispano Portugalense e as controvérsias doutrinais do século XIII*, Universidade de Coimbra, 1964, p. 90, n. 1.

as form and substance is found in the anonymous author of *Questiones de anima* edited by J. Vennebusch. For this master of Arts, the definition of the soul as form of the body «non debet exprimere eius quidditatem absolute, secundum quod est res alicuius generis, sed magis eius causalitatem»⁵². That is why he concludes that Aristotle speaks of the soul only «ut est actus corporis, non ut est substantia in se existens»⁵³. Finally, the anonymous master, author of *Questiones super librum De anima* (ms. Siena, Bibl. Com. L III. 21), declares that the soul can be studied from two different points of view, depending on whether the soul is considered as a substance in itself or as form of the body⁵⁴. The faculty that is proper to the soul as spiritual substance is the agent intellect, while the receptive ('material') intellect is proper to the soul insofar as it is united to the body⁵⁵. The intellectual soul is a substance that can be properly called *hoc aliquid* because its formal role as actuality of the body does not reflect its true essence; the sensitive soul, on the contrary, being only a form, cannot be called a *hoc aliquid*⁵⁶.

It can be concluded from this analysis that one of the backgrounds of Thomas' Question 1 on the Soul is the teaching of the masters of Arts who considered it possible to assign to the soul the double ontological status of form and spiritual substance: «forma et hoc aliquid».

(52) *Ein anonymen Aristoteleskommentar des XIII. Jahrhunderts: Questiones in tres libros de anima*, J. VENNEBUSCH ed., Paderborn, Schöningh, 1963, II, q. 29, p. 163, 57-59. The problems arising from this double consideration of the soul as spiritual substance and as a perfection lead the master to some sophisticated explanations, which include a variant of the notion of 'composite essence', cf. *ibid.*, II, q. 32, p. 176, 120-126: «intellectiva est substantia quedam penitus separata que advenit sensitive sicut forma materie, cum solum sit in potencia receptiva respectu intellective, considerando substantias huiusmodi animarum, sensitiva et intellectiva nunquam sunt eadem essentia: ex istis duabus tamen habet fieri una anima per essentiam composita ut ex materiali et formali». The thesis that the receptive intellect is a dimension of the soul that results from its union with the body is also adopted by this master, cf. *ibid.*, III, q. 64, p. 276, 102-103.

(53) *Ibid.*, III, q. 70, p. 312, 240-241.

(54) I, q. 2, f. 136vb: «Dicendum quod de anima contingit loqui dupliciter: aut ut est substantia in se, et <sic> est alterius considerationis a scientia de corpore: pertinet enim ad metaphysicum; aut potest considerari ut est actus et forma corporis, et sic, cum unum sit esse utriusque, una debet esse scientia utriusque». The source of this double consideration is declared by the master, I, q. 3 (f. 136vb in fine): «Dicendum quod de anima duplex est scientia, sicut dicit Avicenna»; cf. also II, q. 2, f. 154vb.

(55) *Ibid.*, I, q. 16, f. 147ra: «Dicendum quod contingit loqui de intellectu dupliciter: aut prout est quedam substantia spiritualis habens exemplaria rerum sibi concreata, et que cognoscit et intelligit; et sub hac ratione <non> copulatur nobis, sicut dicit Averrois quod intellectus operatio propria est preter corpus, que est intelligere exemplaria, uel per intuitionem in exemplari diuino uel per presentiam alterius substantie spiritualis; uel contingit loqui de intellectu ut nobis copulatur, et dicitur iste intellectus materialis, ut dicit Averrois».

(56) *Ibid.*, II, q. 45, f. 172va: «Dicendum quod sensitiva, cum non sit *hoc aliquid completum habens quo est et quod est sicut intellectus, set forma pura...*». A description of the manuscript and of its content can be found in R.-A. GAUTHIER, Preface, *S. Thomae de Aquino Sententia libri De anima* (ed. Leonina, XLV-1, 1984), pp. 253*-256*.

e) *The masters of Theology*

In this respect, the teaching of the masters of Theology did not differ much from that of the masters of Arts. William of Auvergne states, echoing the teaching of Avicenna, that the soul is a substance in itself and that the definition given by Aristotle indicates only the role of perfection that the soul-substance plays vis-à-vis the body⁵⁷. William's anthropology is an instrumentalist dualism⁵⁸ that emphasizes the conception of the soul as incorporeal substance: «spiritualem verissime substantiam eam esse»⁵⁹. The soul is the true subject of operations and it can know itself without reference to the body (William gives the same example as Avicenna)⁶⁰. And although he conceives the soul as being *essentialiter* a spiritual substance, he has no difficulty in asserting that it is also the form of the body⁶¹. Of course, this eclectic position can be sustained only on the basis of an inadequate understanding of hylomorphism: when it is said that soul and body are united as form and matter, what is meant is a merely accidental union similar to the one that exists between a man and his clothes or a knight and his horse⁶². Philip the Chancellor gave four definitions of the soul, each of them emphasizing its substantial nature. But he was more consistent than William and the masters of Arts in the sense that he acknowledged that between such a spiritual substance and the body there could be only a minimal unity (*minima unitas*)⁶³. His dualism is, therefore, more platonic than eclectic. In the *Summa Duacensis*, however, it is accepted that the soul is both *forma et hoc aliquid*: «revera substantia est in se et corporis perfectio»⁶⁴.

(57) GUILLELMUS DE ALVERNIA, *Tractatus de anima* (Opera omnia, II/2), Aureliae, apud F. Hott, 1674, p. 118a: «Jam igitur feci te scire per haec omnia animam humanam esse substantiam et partem praecipuam hominis... Cum enim dicat iuxta sermonem Aristotelis animam actum esse ejus potentiae, qua corpus dicitur vitam habens in ratione seu definitione animae... *actus autem ibi non intelligitur nisi perfectio*».

(58) *Ibid.*, p. 68a: «cum manifestum sit totum corpus humanum ad modum ministrantis se habere sive servientis ad huiusmodi imperantem sive dominantem, immo quod minus est ut instrumentum ad operantem, et per illud manifestum est motorem huiusmodi hos motus imperantem longe nobiliorem esse ipso corpore humano, et propter hoc esse substantiam, cum accidit omne sua substantia longe ignobilius esse necesse sit».

(59) *Ibid.*, p. 81b.

(60) *Ibid.*, p. 84b: «Cum igitur possibile sit animae humanae *intelligere se esse* substantiam incorpoream spiritualem... manifestum est animam humanam *essentialiter* substantiam incorpoream et spiritualem *esse*».

(61) *Ibid.*, p. 196b: «Qualiter autem conveniat dici eam esse in corpore jam apparere tibi potest evidenter ex sermonibus Aristotelis, et in eis quos hic audivisti. Sermo namque Aristotelis in libro suo de anima est, corpus quidem materia, anima vero forma».

(62) *Ibid.*, p. 101-102. For a more detailed exposé on William's anthropology, cf. B. C. BAZÁN, «Pluralisme de formes ou dualisme de substances», *Revue philosophique de Louvain*, 67 (1969), pp. 45-48.

(63) PHILIPPUS CANCELLARIUS, *Summa de bono*, N. WICKI ed., (Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi: Opera philosophica Mediae Aetatis selecta, II, 1-2), Berne, Francke, 1985, p. 156, 19 - 157, 38.

(64) P. GLORIEUX ed., *La 'Summa Duacensis' (Douai 434)*, (Textes Philosophiques du Moyen Age, 2), Paris, Vrin, 1955, p. 31. Cf. also p. 59: «anima vero sic est quoniam

The Franciscan masters proposed a similar view. In the *Summa fratris Alexandri* the soul is called substance not only in its derivative meaning, as substantial form, but in its own right, as a being in itself. Consequently the soul should be considered an 'aliquid' and a substance *simpliciter*: «Quod autem (anima) sit substantia, non tantum ut forma substantialis, sed ut quid ens in se, praeter hoc quod est actus corporis, ostenditur... Restat ergo, cum anima per se moveat corpus, quod erit *aliquid praeter hoc quod est forma*, sive actus corporis; ergo est substantia *simpliciter*»⁶⁵. The same doctrine is found in John of La Rochelle, for whom the soul is a *hoc aliquid* as a substance, not only as part of a substance, and also the form of the body⁶⁶. Bonaventure closes the list with his clear statement about the nature of the soul: *non tantum forma est, verum etiam hoc aliquid*⁶⁷. It is precisely because the soul is a *hoc aliquid* (namely a substance) that it must be a composite of matter and form⁶⁸.

The Dominican masters showed the same eclectic approach. Of great importance for the present investigation is the thought of Albert the Great, because, together with the masters of Arts, he is probably one of the main sources of the dispute that took place in Thomas' Question 1 on the Soul. Albert's eclecticism is best illustrated in his *Summa theologiae*: «If we consider the soul in itself, we must agree with Plato; if we consider it in the animating role that it plays vis-à-vis the body, we agree with Aristotle»⁶⁹. According to Albert, the soul can be defined in two different ways, depending on whether we consider it as a soul, in which case it is the actuality and the mover of the body, or as a substance, in which case it belongs to the category of substance by itself: «anima dupliciter potest diffiniri, scilicet secundum quod est anima, id est actus corporis et motor, et secundum quod est substantia quaedam contenta secundum seipsam in praedicamento substantiae»⁷⁰. Albert seemed comfortable with the double

quantum est in se, substantia simplex et in esse suo perfecta; et est iterum perfectio sive forma alterius».

(65) ALEXANDER DE HALES, *Summa theologica seu sic ab origine dicta 'Summa fratris Alexandri'*, studio et cura PP. Collegii S. Bonaventurae, Ad Claras Aquas <Quaracchi>, 1924-1948, II-1, n. 321, p. 385.

(66) IOHANNES DE RUPELLA, *Summa de anima*, I, 22, p. 80-81: «ostendendum, scilicet, quod anima sit substantia ut *hoc aliquid*, non solum ut pars substantiae... non est substantia ut materia, nec ut substancialis forma tantum, set ut unum quid, fixum in sua natura». Cf. supra n. 2.

(67) S. BONAVENTURA, *Breviloquium* (in *Opuscula varia theologica, Opera omnia*, studio et cura PP. Collegii S. Bonaventurae, Ad Claras Aquas <Quaracchi>, 1891), II, 9, p. 226a-227a.

(68) S. BONAVENTURA, *Commentaria in quatuor libros Sententiarum magistri Petri Lombardi* (Opera omnia, Ad Claras Aquas <Quaracchi>, 1882, 1889), II, d. 17, a. 1, q. 2 resp.: «anima rationalis, cum sit *hoc aliquid* et per se nata subsistere et agere et pati, movere et moveri... habet intra se fundamentum suae existientiae et principium materiale a quo habet existere, et formale a quo habet esse».

(69) ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *Summa theologiae*, A. BORGNET ed. (Opera omnia, 33, Paris, Vivès, 1895), pars II, tr. 12, q. 69, a. 2.

(70) ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *Summa de creaturis*, pars II (*De homine*), BORGNET ed. (Opera omnia, 35, 1896), tr. I, q. 4, a. 1 sol., p. 34a.

ontological status of the soul as substance *and* form, but he hesitated to call the soul a *hoc aliquid* (probably following Averroes in his reticence) because this notion was predicated mainly of material substances, and the soul was a spiritual one: «quod anima sit hoc aliquid, hoc dictum est a magistris, sed non a philosophis, nec a sanctis, et puto quod sit dictum falsum»⁷¹. But by the time Albert wrote his commentary *Super Dionysium De diuinis nominibus*, his terminological doubts no longer existed: the soul has a double being, as form *and* as *hoc aliquid* («esse actum est esse eius... sed habet *etiam* aliud esse, secundum quod est hoc aliquid»)⁷².

At the beginning of his career, Thomas also held that the human soul was form *and* substance: «anima rationalis praeter alias formas dicitur esse *substantia*, et *hoc aliquid*, secundum quod habet esse absolutum, et quod distinguitur; quia anima potest dupliciter considerari, scilicet *secundum quod est substantia*, et *secundum quod est forma*»⁷³. The notion of *hoc aliquid* in this text is still imprecise and when Thomas discusses its meaning he points out other theoretical implications of the notion (universal hylomorphism and individuation)⁷⁴. At this stage of development of his philosophical anthropology, Thomas has not yet reached the level of precision that will be found later in his *Questions on the soul*⁷⁵.

(71) ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *Commentarii in II Sententiarum*, BORGNET ed. (Opera omnia, 27, 1894), II, d. 17 C, a. 2 ad 2, p. 299b. The reason for the reticence and its link with the view expressed by Averroes becomes apparent in this text: «hoc aliquid enim est forma contracta per materiam» (*Summa de creaturis*, pars I, tr. 1, q. 2 ad diff. 3 ad 1, ed. BORGNET, 34, 1895, p. 325a). On the inconsistent use of 'hoc aliquid' in Albert's writings, A. PEGIS, *St. Thomas and the Problem of the Soul in the thirteenth Century*, Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1934, p. 117, n. 82.

(72) ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *Super Dionysium De diuinis nominibus*, P. SIMON ed. (ed. Coloniensis, XXXVII-1, Münster i. W., Aschendorff, 1972), c. 4, p. 137. This text is the source of objection 13bis in Thomas' question 1 on the soul (cf. *Quaestio disputata de anima*, ed. Leonina, XXIV-1, p. 6, adn. 134-137). As Thomas did not provide an answer to this objection, the university tradition of manuscripts eliminated the text.

(73) THOMAS AQUINAS, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, II, d. 19, q. 1, a. 1 ad 4m, P. MANDONNET ed., Paris, Lethielleux, 1929, t. 2, p. 483-484.

(74) *Ibid.*, II, d. 17, q. 1, a. 2 ad 1m: «hoc aliquid in natura potest dici ex duobus. Aut ex eo quod habet esse subsistens in natura, et sic anima rationalis est hoc aliquid. Sed ex hoc non sequitur quod ex materia componatur: hoc enim subsistenti accidit, scilicet ex materia componi. Alio modo potest dici hoc aliquid per hoc quod aliquid quod est pars essentiae suae, individuatur: et sic anima non est hoc aliquid; principium enim individuationis animarum est ex parte corporis, et tamen etiam post separationem corporis remanent individuatae et distinctae». It is typically a concern that comes from Avicenna. Cf. also *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 5, a. 2 ad 6m.

(75) Thomas places the rational soul in the genus 'substance' as one of its species, following Avicenna's teaching. *In II Sent.*, d. 3, q. 1, a. 6 sol. He uses a terminology that seems to place angels and rational souls in the same genus, *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 5, a. 2 sol. But in other texts he denies that the soul is a 'person', i. e. a rational substance, *In III Sent.*, d. 5, q. 3, a. 2. It would be impossible to present here the evolution of Thomas' anthropology in order to show how he reached step by step the degree of precision found in *Questions on the soul*. The purpose of the last quotations from his *Commentary on the Sentences* is merely to illustrate that the double consideration of the soul as form *and* substance prevailed in the first part of the 13th century, and that even Thomas seems to have embraced it, at least at the very

f) *Conclusion concerning the background of Question 1*

Both Plato and Aristotle have coherent anthropologies. For Plato the soul is a spiritual substance, not the form of a body. For Aristotle, the soul is the form of the body and can be called substance only in a derivative sense, as principle of actuality and determination of the substance (the main sense of 'hoc aliquid' remains that of primary substance). Neither Nemesius, nor St. Augustine nor John Damascene could have provided the background for the double consideration of the soul as form and hoc aliquid. They were all consistently dualists. Averroes, in spite of the undesirable consequences of his anthropology, had a view that was consistent with hylomorphism and with Aristotle's theory of separate forms: the human soul is only a substantial form, while the Intellect is a separate substance that is neither a form (except equivocally), nor a hoc aliquid (insofar as this notion applies only to material substances). The source of the debate that takes place in Question 1 must be sought in the eclectic anthropologies of Avicenna and of the masters of Arts and Theology of the first half of the 13th century. As Theodore Crowley wrote almost fifty years ago: «For these men the soul was no less essentially form than it was substance... The metaphysical problems arising out of this combination, may not have been clearly perceived»⁷⁶. What Thomas attempts in Question 1 is not to reconcile Plato and Aristotle but to reach a precise understanding of the notions at play, in order to define the nature of the soul *within Aristotle's principles* and to surpass hylomorphism where the analysis of the operations of the soul permits such *Aufhebung*. This conclusion regarding the immediate background of Question 1 is of great importance because it defines the true scope and significance of Thomas' *determinatio* by identifying the theoretical problems that he was trying to solve and the precise theses he was attempting to overcome.

II. THOMAS' *DETERMINATIO*

Thomas's *determinatio* proceeds in three steps. First, he clarifies the notion of hoc aliquid. Second, he determines whether this notion can be applied to the human intellectual soul and defines the nature of this soul. Finally, he explains that an analysis of the intellectual operation justifies the particular ontological status of the human soul. The last step is not addressed in this paper.

beginning of his career. A study of Thomas' evolution will follow this paper. It is interesting to note that the eclectic doctrine considering the soul both as a form and a hoc aliquid – which is criticized by Thomas in his *Questions on the Soul* – comes back as a main doctrine of one of Thomas's most outspoken adversaries, ROBERT KILWARDBY, *Littera ad Petrum de Conflans* (ed. F. EHRLE, p. 628): «Et ideo creata est potentia intellectiva tanquam *hoc aliquid*, potens quasi personaliter subsistere post corporis separationem; aliae autem potentiae non sic», cit. by R. ZAVALLONI, *Richard de Mediavilla et la controverse sur la pluralité des formes* (Philosophes Médiévaux II), Louvain, 1951, p. 320, n. 3.

(76) T. CROWLEY, *Roger Bacon* (1950), p. 122.

a) *What is a 'hoc aliquid'?*

Thomas' first recalls the primary sense of the aristotelian notion of hoc aliquid. The term 'hoc aliquid' designates an individual in the genus of substance. Such an entity has two ontological features: a) it subsists *per se*, and b) it has a complete essence in a given species and genus of substance. Hoc aliquid is a term that properly (*proprie*) applies to primary substances (*primae substantie*), as Aristotle has taught in the *Categories*⁷⁷.

The notion excludes three kinds of realities: accidents, universals and the parts of primary substances. The exclusion of the latter kind of reality is significant. Although at the beginning of the *determinatio* Thomas mentions only material parts (hands, feet and the like), it later becomes apparent that ontological principles – matter and form, which are mutually related as co-principles of the substance – are excluded as well, because both material parts and ontological principles are said to belong to a genus or a species of substance only by reduction (*per reductionem*)⁷⁸.

b) *Does this notion apply to the human soul?*

The answer to this question assumes many methodological, epistemological and metaphysical principles mentioned only briefly here, but which are necessary in order to understand the theoretical background of Thomas' *determinatio*. From a methodological point of view, Thomas applies the principle proposed by Aristotle in *De anima* I, 1 403a1-20, according to which, in order to determine the nature of the soul, it is necessary to examine its operations. Aristotelian epistemology provides another principle which, together with the first one, constitutes the basis for a clarification of the soul's nature. In its intellectual operation the soul proceeds by abstraction. Accordingly, it is able to surpass the determinations of matter, but it can only do so by using material (sensible) data. Aristotle's metaphysics provides the fundamental theory of the priority of act over potency. Finally, Thomas' metaphysics provides the ultimate foundation of his anthropology, namely, the real distinction between *esse* and *essentia* and the philosophical theory of creation as causation of the finite act of being (*esse*) by an Infinite Being (*Esse subsistens*).

(77) THOMAS AQUINAS, *Quaestiones disputatae de anima*, q. 1 sol. (ed. Leonina, XXIV-1, p. 7, 191-194): «Dicendum quod hoc aliquid proprie dicitur indiuiduum in genere substantie. Dicit enim Philosophus in Predicamentis quod prime substantie indubitanter hoc aliquid significant».

(78) *Ibid.*, p. 7, 200-207: «Vnde Philosophus in Predicamentis manus, pedes et huiusmodi nominat partes substantiarum magis quam substantias primas uel secundas, quia licet non sint in alio sicut in subiecto, quod proprium substantie est, non tamen participant complete naturam alicuius speciei. Vnde non sunt in aliqua specie neque in aliquo genere nisi per reductionem». Compare with the response to the 13th objection, *ibid.*, p. 12, 439-441: «neque anima neque corpus sunt in specie uel genere nisi per reductionem, sicut partes reducuntur ad speciem uel genus totius»; cf. also q. 9 ad 18m, p. 86, 524-526: «anima et corpus non sunt distantia sicut res diuersorum generum uel specierum, cum neutrum eorum sit in genere uel specie»; q. 11 ad 14m, p. 103, 359-361.

Thomas' examination of whether the notion of hoc aliquid, in its proper sense, applies to the human soul is a process of elimination. The first unacceptable theory is the materialistic conception of the form as a mere effect or result of the organization of matter. According to this theory, advanced by Empedocles and Galen (Alexander could also be added), the soul has neither of the two ontological characteristics of a hoc aliquid. Although not mentioned in Question 1, the principle that supports Thomas' criticism is based on a teleological (and truly aristotelian) understanding of hylomorphism according to which matter is for the sake of the form (*materia est propter formam*) and not vice-versa. This principle, based on Aristotle's *Physics* II 194a15-b15 and given its standard formula in Averroes' commentaries on *De anima* (II, 36) and on *Physics* (II, 26), is the strongest rebuttal of materialism in terms of aristotelian hylomorphism⁷⁹.

The teleological conception of hylomorphism, which gives form ontological priority over matter, permits Thomas to state that any form (except that of the four elements) transcends the operational qualities of matter (*transcendit; se extendit ultra materiam*). This is true even at the lowest level of substances and becomes apparent at the level of living substances. The transcendence of form over matter reaches its peak with the rational soul, which abstracts forms from matter and does not need a bodily organ for this operation. But if the rational soul is able to operate *per se*, independently from matter, it must also be able to exist *per se* (*agere sequitur esse*). The human soul, therefore, must possess at least the first of the ontological characteristics of a hoc aliquid, namely, subsistence. The soul has an independent act of being (*esse per se absolutum, non dependens a corpore*)⁸⁰.

Having proved that the human soul meets one of the ontological requirements of a hoc aliquid, Thomas proceeds to determine whether it also meets the second one by analyzing the spiritualistic conception of the soul proposed by Plato. This part of the text is decisive because it also echoes what St. Augustine, Avicenna and the Christian masters had taught about the human soul having the status of substance in its own right, complete in its essence (although their different kinds of anthropological dualism allow for different ways of justifying the union between soul and body).

First, Thomas reduces anthropological dualism to spiritual monism. According to Plato the human being is indeed only the soul, and no ontological relationship can be established between the soul-substance and the body. The consequence is clear: the composite of soul and body is not *a being*, but an accidental conglomerate. Thomas then criticizes this position on the basis of fundamental aristotelian principles. By definition, a soul (*anima*) is the principle of life in animated beings; life is, for them, their way of being (*uiuere uiuentibus est esse*); consequently, the soul is their principle of being (*esse*). But to be the

(79) *Ibid.*, q. 8 sol., p. 66, 177-178 and *Apparatus fontium*.

(80) *Ibid.*, q. 1 sol., p. 8, 217-250. On the hierarchy of forms and the progressive overcoming of the limitations of matter, cf. 291 sqq. and note 291-292 in *Apparatus fontium*.

principle of actual being is proper to substantial form. Therefore, the soul is a substantial form. To deny this conclusion would have three philosophically unacceptable consequences. First, if the soul were not the substantial form of a body, the body would retain its ontological nature after the separation of the soul, which is obviously not the case, because a cadaver is called a body only equivocally. Second, if the soul were not the substantial form, human beings would be accidental composites. Finally, if the soul were not the substantial form, there would not be, properly speaking, substantial corruption when the soul separates. The conclusion is, therefore, that the rational soul is, by its very essence, a substantial form, namely an essentially co-relative part of the substance⁸¹.

Thomas has proven that the soul is self-subsistent and that it meets one of the two ontological requirements of a *hoc aliquid*. But he has also proven that the soul is a substantial form, an ontological correlate of matter which, as such, is only a part of substance and does not have a complete essence by itself (only the composite has a complete essence). Consequently, the soul does not meet the second requirement of a *hoc aliquid* and cannot be considered *a substance* in the proper sense of the word. It can be called substance only in a derivative way (*per reductionem*), as Aristotle had already explained, because it is the principle of actuality and determination of the hylomorphic composite. Thomas' text: «*Et sic est forma et hoc aliquid*» (l. 290) is almost parallel to Aristotle's «*ousían eínai ós eidos*», «substance in the sense of being a form» (412a20). The emphasis could not be clearer: the very essence of the human soul is to be a substantial form which has self-subsistence because of its operational independence from matter. But self-subsistence is not sufficient to make for a complete substance; it is only sufficient to make for the highest of the substantial forms found in nature.

This conclusion is confirmed by many other passages in Question 1. In his reply to the third objection, Thomas explains that the human soul is a *hoc aliquid* not in the sense of being a «complete substance which possesses its specific nature, but rather in the sense of being a part of a being which has a complete specific nature»⁸². That the soul is only a part of the substance is again emphasized in the reply to the 9th objection, where Thomas states that the soul

(81) *Ibid.*, q. 1, sol., p. 9, 269-289, conclusion in l. 286-289: «*anima est hoc aliquid ut per se potens subsistere, non quasi habens in se completam speciem, set quasi perficiens speciem humanam ut est forma corporis*». The restoration of the authentic meaning of substantial form is as important as the clarifications of the notion of *hoc aliquid*. Both theoretical adjustments mark the difference between Thomas and his predecessors and provide the framework within which Thomas' position should be understood. The eclectic approach adopted by previous masters included not only a substantialistic conception of the soul (*hoc aliquid*), but also an inadequate understanding of the notion of substantial form (*perfectio, motor, officium*). By restoring the authentic meaning of substantial form and clarifying that of *hoc aliquid*, Thomas brought to full light their differences and the real terms of the theoretical choice that should be made.

(82) *Ibid.*, q. 1, ad 3m, p. 11, 361-363: «*anima humana non est hoc aliquid sicut substantia completam speciem habens, set sicut pars habentis speciem completam*».

exists in another as one of its parts, which does not preclude it from being called a hoc aliquid (and this should be understood in a derivative way, namely insofar as it is subsistent)⁸³. Although the soul has self-subsistence, it still does not have a complete specific nature and, consequently, it cannot even be considered to be a distinct grade of being (*unum gradum entium*) without its ontological correlate⁸⁴, but only the self-subsistent principle of actuality of a being (the human composite). Thus, in this respect, the soul can be compared to the material parts of the substance, because, as is the case with those material parts, it is placed in the genus of substance only by reduction⁸⁵. This is so because only the human composite (the soul united to the body, which is its ontological complement) belongs in the genus of substance. The human soul «cannot however exist in the fullness of its nature apart from the body»⁸⁶.

Through the analysis of the dual characteristic of hoc aliquid, Thomas is able to determine that the notion can be predicated of the soul only in a derivative way, because the soul, whose true nature is to be a substantial form, lacks completeness at the level of essence. This doctrine is a strong critique of pre-thomistic anthropologies, based on an eclectic way of thinking according to which the soul was both a hoc aliquid in the fullest sense of the word *and* a form, despite the inconsistencies of such a position. It must be added, however, that for Thomas the soul is a substantial form of a kind unknown to Aristotle. Instead of leaving the noetic problem in a state of indetermination, as did Aristotle's texts, Thomas proposed an interpretation of those texts that overcame the *aporiae* and allowed him to attribute intellection to the individual human soul. The analysis of the intellectual operation led him to establish that the soul has operational independence, at least at that level, and consequently, that it must also have existential independence vis-à-vis the body. The human soul is a subsistent substantial form, a form of matter but not a material form. This new kind of substantial form is not found in Aristotle's philosophy, but it was established through a process of philosophical analysis that was perfectly consistent with aristotelian principles.

c) Lowest of the spiritual substances or highest of the substantial forms ?

It has become habitual among some commentators of Thomas' anthropology to consider the human soul as the lowest of the spiritual substances. It cannot be denied that there is plenty of textual evidence to support such a statement. The problem is to determine what sense should be attributed to the term 'substance', taking into consideration the whole context of Thomas' clarification of the

(83) *Ibid.*, q. 1, ad 9m, p. 12, 413-415: «Esse autem in alio sicut partem, quomodo anima est in homine, non omnino excludit quin id quod est in alio possit hoc aliquid dici».

(84) *Ibid.*, q. 1, ad 4m, p. 11, 365-369: «licet anima humana per se possit subsistere, non tamen per se habet speciem completam. Vnde non posset esse quod anime separate constituerent unum gradum entium».

(85) Cf. supra, n. 77.

(86) *Ibid.*, q. 1, ad 16m, p. 12, 464-466: «Licet igitur anima possit per se esse, non tamen potest in complemento sue speciei esse sine corpore».

meaning of *hoc aliquid* as developed in *Questions on the Soul*. In his Introduction to the English translation of this text, after explaining that Thomas recognizes the platonic view that the soul is a subsistent, intellectual *substance*, and the aristotelian view that the soul is the highest of the natural substantial forms, J. Robb asks: «Are the lowest of spiritual substances and the highest of bodily forms two distinct realities? Or do these names point to two complementary characteristics of a single being, the human soul?»⁸⁷.

The answer lies in the emphasis placed on the precise understanding of what Thomas meant by 'hoc aliquid'. It has already been established that this expression properly means an entity which has two ontological characteristics: self subsistence *and* complete essence⁸⁸. It also has been established that *hoc aliquid* and primary substance are equivalent. Aristotle has shown that there are two kinds of primary substances: those subject to generation and corruption and consequently composed of matter and form, and those which are incorruptible spiritual substances and consequently pure forms. The celestial bodies, which are mobile but not corruptible substances, are still hylomorphic composites. Thomas accepted this classification of substances, just as he accepted the aristotelian view that the 'parts' of hylomorphic substances could be called *hoc aliquid* by reduction. In the *determinatio* of Question 1, Thomas went as far as he could within aristotelian principles to grant special status to the human soul *as substantial form*. He accepted that this form was the subject of the act of being (*esse*), because it was compatible with the notion of form as principle of actual being, but he did not accept that the soul had a complete essence (*essentia*), because it was not compatible with the notion of form as the correlative principle of matter⁸⁹. Had he assigned the latter ontological characteristic to the soul, he would have made it a real substance in the primary sense of the word, but he would have made it impossible to consider the soul as the substantial form of humans. Inevitably, the consequence of such a position would have been that humans are not true beings (because they would lack ontological unity)⁹⁰. In

(87) J. ROBB, *St. Thomas Aquinas. Questions on the Soul*, 1984, p. 20. The expression «*anima est infima in ordine substantiarum separatarum*» (or «*anima est substantia spiritualis*») can be found in numerous texts, beginning with the *Commentary on Sentences*. The expression is also found in *Questions on the Soul* (q. 15, sol., p. 136, 368-369) and subsequent writings. If some doubt remains as to its meaning and scope in early writings, the explanations that Thomas provided in *Questions on the Soul* about the meaning of *hoc aliquid* and about the limited sense in which the soul can be called substance leave no doubts that the expression, in these *Questions* and in subsequent writings, no longer means that the soul is a spiritual substance in the proper sense of the word.

(88) The definition given by J. ROBB, *op. cit.*, p. 51, n. 1 («a particular thing which subsists of itself»), is incomplete and ambiguous. It would require at least an explanation of the word 'thing'.

(89) *Quaestio de anima*, q. 1, sol., ed. Leonina, XXIV-1, p. 8-9, 260-269: «Set ulterius posuit Plato quod anima non solum per se subsisteret, set quod etiam haberet in se completam naturam speciei... Set hec positio stare non potest...».

(90) *Ibid.*, q. 1, sol., p. 7, 181-183: «si anima esset in corpore sicut nauta in nauis, sequeretur quod unio anime et corporis esset accidentalis».

short, Thomas did not consider the soul to be a spiritual substance, in the proper sense of the word. The soul cannot be classified under any genus of substance accepted by Aristotle or Thomas simply because, as Thomas repeatedly states, the soul does not belong to a genus or a species⁹¹.

Although the nuances of Thomas' position are well known, thomists sometimes indulge in a terminology that is ambiguous. J. Robb, for instance, states that Thomas is unwilling to go as far as Plato «in the direction of complete self-subsistence» of the soul⁹². Still, he presents Thomas' doctrine in terms that leave the reader with a feeling of unease: «the rational soul, which is a human being's only *substantial form*, is an *entity*, a *concrete individual*, that is, it is a subsistent being *in its own right*»⁹³. Although this terminology could be interpreted in a manner consistent with Thomas' principles, the context leads the reader to a substantialistic conception of the soul. This is confirmed by other equally ambiguous expressions, which reflect an almost neoplatonic approach. For instance, Robb states that the soul is «an individual substance which from its very substantiality... strives to achieve the perfection of the human species... in another, namely in the human composite of which it is the form»⁹⁴. This gives the unavoidable impression that Thomas has not surpassed instrumentalist dualism. It should be added that if the soul is a substantial form, as Thomas affirms, it has no need to «strive» to achieve the specific perfection of the composite because it does so by its very nature, as substantial form; and if the soul is a substance, without qualification, as Robb states, it would be impossible to explain how it could be the substantial form of a composite which is also a substance. Finally, the absence of terminological precision in Robb's text gives the impression that Thomas has fallen precisely in the doctrinal position that he was trying to refute in Question 1: «The human soul is at one and at the same

(91) *Ibid.*, sol., p. 9, 286-289: «anima est hoc aliquid ut per se potens subsistere, non quasi habens in se completam speciem, set quasi perficiens speciem humanam ut est forma corporis»; *ibid.*, ad 13m, p. 12, 439-441: «neque anima neque corpus sunt in specie uel genere nisi per reductionem, sicut partes reducuntur ad speciem uel genus totius»; cf. q. 2, ad 10m, p. 20, 436-440: «Vnde cum anima intellectiva sit forma hominis, non est in alio genere quam corpus; set utrumque est in genere animalis et in specie hominis per reductionem»; q. 6, ad 15m, p. 53, 363-364: «anima proprie non est in genere quasi species, set sicut pars speciei humane»; q. 7, ad 15m, p. 62, 460-461: «anima est pars speciei»; q. 9, ad 18m, p. 86, 524-526: «anima et corpus non sunt distantia sicut res diuersorum generum uel specierum, cum neutrum sit in genere uel specie»; q. 11, ad 14m, p. 103, 363-364: «illud quod est in genere uel specie proprie est compositum»; q. 14, ad 2m, p. 128, 275-276: «anima non est in genere sicut species, set sicut pars speciei», etc.

(92) J. ROBB, *Questions on the Soul*, 1984, p. 25. It is interesting to point out that Thomas did not question Plato's position concerning the self-subsistence of the soul (as subject of the act of being). What he denied is that the self-subsistent soul had a complete essence.

(93) J. ROBB, *op. cit.*, p. 27 (emphasis mine). The ambiguity of the terms used by Robb becomes apparent if one considers that he translates hoc aliquid by 'entity', and that 'concrete individual' can also be taken as a proper translation of hoc aliquid. When he says, in this context, that the soul is a subsistent being in its own right, Robb proposes a view that is in fact exactly the opposite of what Thomas is willing to establish.

(94) *Ibid.*, p. 28.

time, and in its totality of being, *both* the lowest of intellectual beings and the highest of material forms»⁹⁵. It comes as no surprise when Robb defines the human being as an *incarnate spirit*. Nothing could be more neoplatonic. Nothing, however, is more foreign to the spirit of Question 1, where Thomas tries to overcome precisely the neoplatonic eclecticism of his predecessors.

Thomas is careful when he uses the neoplatonic emanative scheme to determine the nature of the soul because the soul is not, *strictly* speaking, the lowest of the spiritual substances and cannot be such an entity simply because it is not a substance (except *per reductionem*). Angels are separate substances, souls are not⁹⁶. Thomas knew that Avicenna and Averroes, in spite of their differences, had something in common: for both of them the principle of human intellection was a spiritual substance of the lowest kind, which needed a relationship with the body because of its ontological weakness. The only difference was that for Avicenna this principle of intellection was multiple and for Averroes it was unique. The former had to conclude that the real self of a human being was this spiritual substance – a temporarily incarnate spirit; while the latter concluded that this principle was not human – man being only a highly sophisticated hylomorphic composite whose real substantial form was the most perfect of sensitive souls and whose relationship with the separate substance was only operational. But both were consistent in denying that such an intellectual substance was the substantial form of the body (except equivocally). That is why Thomas carefully presents the emanative scheme *together* with the aristotelian scheme of progressive transcendence of forms over the limitations of matter, which serves as a corrective⁹⁷. Or he invokes⁹⁸ the neoplatonic scheme to show that the soul, though deserving to be called an intellectual substance in the derivative meaning of the term, understands only imperfectly using intelligible species which are adequate for separate substances in the proper sense of the word. And Thomas concludes that this is why it is essentially necessary for the soul to be united to the body (which would not be said of a true separate substance). Something similar can be said about q. 18, 314 sqq., where Thomas

(95) *Ibid.*, p. 29.

(96) THOMAS AQUINAS, *Quaestio de anima* (ed. Leonina, XXIV-1), q. 7, ad 13m, p. 62, 445-447: « Angelus enim est substantia incorporea, et quia non est corpus et quia non est corpori unita; quod de anima dici non potest ». Cf. ad 15m, p. 62, 460-461: « anima est pars speciei ». The text « in eis (substantiis immaterialibus) tenet (anima) ultimum gradum... non habens in se speciem completam » (*ibid.*, sol., p. 60, 309-320) must then be understood with the proper nuances.

(97) Cf. q. 7, sol. First (p. 59, 248-277) St. Thomas explains the order of material substances following the aristotelian doctrine according to which forms progressively overcome the limitations of matter: in this scheme, *man* is the highest level of material substances – and here the term ‘substance’ is used in its strict sense. Then (p. 60, 293-321) he uses the neoplatonic doctrine to explain the order of spiritual substances: in this scheme, the *soul* occupies the lowest level – and here the term ‘substance’, when predicated of the soul, has a restrictive meaning, because (318-321) « ex ipsa conditione sue nature competit ei (the soul) quod corpori uniatur, et quod sit pars speciei humane, non habens in se speciem completam ».

(98) Cf. q. 15, sol., p. 136, 367-397.

prefers a strictly aristotelian scheme to clarify the nature of the soul. This scheme, instead of focusing on the descending process by which intellectual substances proceed from the One, emphasizes the progressive *emergence* of substantial forms from the limitations imposed by matter. The theory of *emergence and hierarchy of substantial forms* is used many times in the text (q. 1, 291 sqq.; q. 7, 251 sqq.; q. 8, 249 sqq.; q. 9, 254-256) as well as in other of Thomas' writings⁹⁹. This theory is based on the essential capability of the substantial form, as principle of actuality, to overcome potency. The process by which act overcomes the limitations of potency begins at the lowest level of nature and reaches its peak with the rational soul which, having overcome matter to the point of being able to exercise one operation without a bodily organ, is the most perfect of all substantial forms of matter (q. 9, 275), a substantial form that has achieved self-subsistence (the composite subsists by the act of being of the soul itself, while previous, lower forms subsist by the act of being of the composite). Undoubtedly, for Thomas the self-subsistence of the soul does not mean that the soul is a spiritual substance in the strict aristotelian sense of the word accepted by Thomas himself. On the contrary, the very essence of the soul is *to be the substantial form* of the human composite¹⁰⁰. As such, the soul is only a part of a substance (q. 7, ad 15m; q. 14, ad 20m) and cannot be placed in the genus of substance. Consequently, its essence includes an ontological co-relation with matter: «*quod quid erat esse anime includit habitudinem ad corpus*»¹⁰¹, which means that the soul needs the relationship with matter to achieve the perfection of its essence¹⁰². The soul needs the body not only to operate, but *to be* in accordance with its essence (which could not be said if the soul were a spiritual substance)¹⁰³. Accordingly, the human soul is not a form *and* a spirit or separate substance: there is no room for such a hybrid in the ontological scale of entities established by Thomas. The soul is a subsistent substantial form, a form of matter but not a material form, and it must be acknowledged that there is no such form in the ontological scale of entities established by Aristotle. For Thomas, the only reality that qualifies for the status of substance in the strict sense of the word is the human composite, which is simultaneously a living, sensitive and

(99) For references, cf. *Quaestio de anima* (ed. Leonina, XXIV-1), q. 1, *Apparatus fontium*, p. 9, adn. 291-292 and p. 11, adn. 374-375.

(100) Q. 10, sol., p. 91, 244-245: «*anima secundum essentiam est forma corporis*»; q. 10, ad 17m: «*dat esse in quantum est forma*»; q. 14, ad 10m, p. 128, 319: «*per suam essentiam est forma*».

(101) Q. 3, ad 20m, p. 30, 462-463.

(102) Q. 17, ad 1m, p. 50, 150-151: «*anima unita corpori est quodammodo perfectior quam separata, scilicet quantum ad naturam speciei*». The reason for this is stated in q. 1, sol., p. 10, 334-335: «*Non enim aliquid completum est in specie nisi habeat ea que requiruntur ad propriam operationem speciei*».

(103) Q. 1, ad 7m, p. 11, 394-399: «*anime unitur corpus et propter bonum quod est perfectio substantialis, ut scilicet compleatur species humana, et propter bonum quod est perfectio accidentalis, ut scilicet perficiatur in cognitione intellectiva, quam anima acquirit ex sensibus*»; cf. q. 1, ad 12m, p. 12, 431-432; q. 1, ad 16m, p. 12, 465-466; q. 3, ad 20m (supra n. 101).

intellectual being. That is why the substantial form of the human composite is not only the source of the intellectual faculties, but also of all inferior faculties¹⁰⁴. And that is also why the human being is the highest of all hylomorphic composites, not an incarnate spirit.

There are many instances where Thomas states that the soul is the lowest of intellectual substances (q. 8, 180-185 et ad 1m; q. 15, 368; q. 18, 314). But in those passages the term substance should be interpreted as having its derivative meaning according to which even parts of substances can be called substance by reduction, not as having its strict meaning of an entity that is complete in its being and essence¹⁰⁵. Or it could be said that Thomas uses an already established terminology, borrowed from the authors that he wants to criticize, but which does not reflect his thought with desirable precision. This is not unusual in the history of philosophy. Aristotle used the terms 'soul' and 'body', a platonic terminology which did not reflect his own doctrine with desirable precision. And Thomas in some contexts used 'intellectus possibilis' as a synonym for 'soul' when refuting Averroes, not because he had given up his theory of the distinction between the soul and its faculties, but because the polemic context and the need to relate to the adversary justified the terminology.

d) Conclusion on Thomas' determinatio

Within a scheme of increasing overcoming of the limitations of matter by form, one substantial form – the human soul – overcomes the limitations of matter at the operational level, which implies that this form has existential, but not essential, independence from matter. The human soul is self-subsistent, but it is not complete in its species, because it remains essentially correlated to matter

(104) Q. 11, sol., p.100, 257: « ipsa est in homine et uegetabilis et sensibilis et rationalis »; *ibid.*, ad 11m, p. 102, 343-346: « anima sensibilis... idem in substantia cum anima rationali »; also q. 14, ad 12m, p. 128, 332-334: « anima sensibilis... eadem in substantia cum anima rationali ».

(105) The formula « anima est infima in genere substantiarum spiritualium », or equivalent ones, could also be interpreted in light of the double meaning of 'genus': « genus et differentia possunt accipi dupliciter. Vno modo secundum considerationem realem... et sic oportet quod genus et differentia super diuersas naturas fundentur... Alio modo secundum considerationem logicam: et sic genus et differentia non oportet quod fundentur super diuersas naturas, set supra unam naturam in qua consideratur aliquid proprium et aliquid commune » (q. 7, ad 17m, p. 62, 475-487). Logically speaking, the soul and the separate substances can be grasped together in a single view of the mind by isolating their intellective capability and the fact that they are the subject of the act of being. But this does not mean that they can be put together in the same genus « secundum considerationem realem », because, as has been shown, the soul does not belong in a real genus, except by reduction. A reverse example of this conclusion, based on the distinction between the logical and real consideration of 'genus', can be found in q. 14, ad 2m, p. 127-128, 267-276: « si anima humana et anima iumentorum per se collocarentur in genere, sequeretur quod diuersorum generum essent secundum naturalem considerationem... Nunc autem anima non est in genere sicut species, set sicut pars speciei ». That is why to use (as J. Robb does, *op. cit.*, p. 35) Thomas' treatise *De substantiis separatis* – which deals with angels, i. e. with spiritual substances in the proper sense of the word – to explain the nature of the soul could be misleading.

as a substantial form. This double ontological status of the human soul is proven by the analysis of the same operation: intellectual abstractive knowledge requires both the existential independence of the soul (*esse suum est supra corpus eleuatum*) and its essential dependence on the body (*complementum sue speciei esse non potest absque corporis unione*). Only primary substances are completely self-sufficient at the level of *esse* and at the level of *essentia*. The soul is not. Its proper ontological status is to be the highest of substantial forms. It is only as the most perfect of substantial forms¹⁰⁶ that the soul is at the borderline between bodily and separate substances, not as the lowest of spiritual substances (except if we use the term substance in a derivative way, *per reductionem*). Man is not an incarnate spirit, but a hylomorphic composite of a kind unknown to Aristotle.

III. THE COROLLARIES OF THE *DETERMINATIO*

a) *The unity of the human being*

The truly existing human substance is the composite of matter and subsistent substantial form. Although its principle of actuality is self-subsistent, the other ontological component, namely matter, does not have an act of being of its own, but shares in the same act of being which is proper to form (without reaching its perfection). The ultimate foundation of the unity of the human composite is the unity of the act of being (*esse*)¹⁰⁷. This unity is confirmed by another no less fundamental doctrine: the unity of the substantial form. This is a well-known doctrine which does not have to be discussed in detail here, but which has a consequence that is often underestimated. If the soul is the only principle of substantial determinations, and if the human composite is a bodily substance, corporeality is a substantial determination that is granted to matter by the soul: the body is what it is because of its soul¹⁰⁸. As it has been shown elsewhere¹⁰⁹, 'corporeality' (as substantial determination) is granted to man by his soul because the soul gives not only the act of being to the composite, but also all the specific substantial determinations of the whole and of each of its parts¹¹⁰. This

(106) Cf. q. 8, ad 1m, p. 69, 315: «subtilissima formarum»; q. 9, sol., p. 82, 275-276: «perfectissima formarum materialium».

(107) Q. 1, ad 1m, p. 10, 345-346: «illud idem esse quod est anime communicatur corpori ut sit unum esse totius compositi»; ad 13m, p. 12, 435-437: «necesse est, si anima est forma corporis, quod anime et corporis sit unum esse commune quod est esse compositi»; ad 17m, 471: «corpus esse anime participat, set non ita nobiliter sicut anima»; q. 10, ad 16m, p. 94, 396-399; q. 14, ad 11m, p. 128, 325-329.

(108) Q. 1, ad 15m, p. 12, 460-461: «anima facit ipsum esse corpus organicum»; q. 9, ad 7m, p. 84, 433-437: «corpus physicum organicum comparatur ad animam sicut materia ad formam; non quod sit tale per aliquam aliam formam, set quia hoc ipsum habet per animam».

(109) B. C. BAZÁN, «La corporalité selon saint Thomas», *Revue philosophique de Louvain*, 81 (1983), p. 402.

(110) Q. 10, ad 16m, p. 94, 396-398: «anima autem est forma substantialis corporis dans esse et speciem toti et partibus».

proves, once again, that the soul is not a spiritual substance, but a subsistent substantial form: «*licet anima per suam essentiam sit forma, tamen aliquid potest ei competere in quantum est talis forma, scilicet forma subsistens*»¹¹¹.

b) The problem of individuation

To an objection based on the principle that material forms are individuated by matter, Thomas responds with a new principle that has important consequences for the debate concerning individuation. According to Thomas, the same principle accounts for actual being and for individuation: «*unumquodque secundum idem habet esse et indiuiduationem*»¹¹². If the soul exists *per se*, it must be individuated *per se*. The cause of its self-subsistence is the same as the cause of its individuation. If its existence does not depend on matter, its individuation does not depend on matter either¹¹³. This leads to the next corollary.

c) The origin of the human soul

Material forms are educed from the potency of matter by the action of natural agents. That is why it is the composite that possesses the act of being, while the co-principles exist only by the act of being of the composite. If the rational soul were produced through such a process, it could not be self-subsistent. For this reason Thomas says that the soul «*habet materiam in qua, non ex qua*»¹¹⁴. Accordingly, the kind of substantial form that the human soul requires a higher efficient principle, one capable of giving the act of being independently of matter and the potency of matter: «*esse anime est a Deo sicut a principio actiuo*»¹¹⁵. Only creative causality can account for the special ontological status of the human soul. But if the human soul receives its act of being by an act of creation, its individuation is also based on this act of creation (*secundum idem habet esse et indiuiduationem*). Thus, creation is the key to understanding Thomas anthropology¹¹⁶.

d) The metaphysical contingency of the human soul

Although the soul is a self-subsistent principle of actuality vis-à-vis matter, the soul is in potency vis-à-vis the act of being that it receives from the creative cause. The soul is, therefore, a composite of act (*esse*) and potency (the determination that it imposes on the act of being by its finite reality of substantial

(111) Q. 14, ad 10m, p. 128, 318-321.

(112) Q.1, ad 2m, p. 10, 350-351.

(113) This is absolutely clear in this statement: «*in hoc differt anima humana ab aliis formis, quod esse suum non dependet a corpore; unde nec esse indiuiduatum eius a corpore dependet*» (q. 3, sol., p. 28, 313-316).

(114) Q. 3, ad 12m, p. 29, 418-420: «*substantia anime... habet materiam determinatam, non ex qua sit, set in qua sit*».

(115) Q. 1, ad 2m, p. 10, 355.

(116) Q. 2, ad 12m, p. 20, 450-452: «*anima... non potest educi in actum de potentia materie per aliquem motum uel mutationem*»; q. 6, ad 10m, p. 52, 339-342; q. 11, ad 1m, p. 102, 314-315 et ad 10m, p. 103, 340-341.

form). The act of being and its determination are ontologically distinct principles. The soul subsists by an act of being which is finite (*esse participatum*) and this is the reason for its metaphysical contingency¹¹⁷.

e) The incorruptibility of the soul

Corruption occurs to hylomorphic composites through separation of form from matter. The material substantial form, which is the cause of existence, cannot exercise its causality except by actuating matter. This is so because the real subject of the act of being is the composite. But if there were a substantial form which is self-subsistent (*i. e.* which itself is the subject of the act of being), corruption through separation could not occur. The form itself is in this case what exists (what exercises the act of being) and its causation of being does not depend upon its relationship with matter. For such a form, ceasing to exist would require that it be separated from itself (the principle of actual being). As this separation is inconceivable, corruption of a subsistent form is equally inconceivable. The human soul is therefore incorruptible: «non enim separatur esse ab aliquo habente esse nisi per hoc quod separatur forma ab eo. Vnde si id quod habet esse sit ipsa forma, impossibile est quod esse separetur ab eo»¹¹⁸.

Thus, for Thomas, the incorruptibility of the soul is a philosophically established conclusion. But what remains incorrupt is essentially a substantial form that needs matter to operate and to exist in conformity with its essence. When death arrives, the form keeps its act of being, but is separated from its ontological correlate. Consequently, it cannot perform the activities which are proper to its nature. But to perform those activities is for the soul *to live*. A soul without its ontological correlate cannot operate, and consequently does not *live*. Philosophy is unable to provide a philosophical foundation for the soul's *immortality*¹¹⁹. Thomas' arguments concerning the activity of the soul after separation from matter are theological in nature, although throughout his exposé he is consistent with the philosophical principles that condition the theological discourse. This consistency reaches its highest expression in Thomas' discussion of beatitude or perfect happiness: a separated soul, even in the presence of God, cannot be perfectly happy, not because of any deficiency on the part of the object of happiness, but because nobody can be perfectly happy if he or she does not live in conformity with his or her nature¹²⁰. The separated soul is essentially an incomplete being: «although a soul is able to exist *per se*, it cannot however exist

(117) Q. 1, ad 6m, p. 11, 384-388: «anima humana, cum sit subsistens, composita est ex potentia et actu, nam ipsa substantia anime non est suum esse, set quod comparatur ad ipsum ut potentia ad actum».

(118) Q. 14, sol., p. 126, 181-185.

(119) J. OWENS, «Aquinas on the Inseparability of Soul from Existence», *The New Scholasticism*, LXI, n. 3 (1987), pp. 268-269. It might also be added that for Thomas the separated soul is not a person.

(120) B. C. BAZÁN, «The highest encomium of human body», in *Littera, Sensus, Sententia. Studi in onore del Prof. Clemente J. Vansteenkiste*, Milano, Studia Universitatis S. Thomae in Urbe, 1991, p. 113-114.

in the fullness of its nature apart from its body »¹²¹. The soul subsists, but it still needs matter to have its essence as a substantial form accomplished. Even after separation the soul «does not lose that essential feature by which it is appropriate to the soul to be a form »¹²². For the human soul, to be a form is not a function (*officium*), but its very nature.

Therefore, it is not as an incarnate spirit that the human being is on the boundary between corporeal and separate substances, but as the most perfect of hylomorphic composites, that composite whose substantial form, though able to overcome the limitations of matter and to subsist by itself, would not subsist separated from matter without craving to be reinstated in its material existence in order to live according to its true nature and, consequently, to enjoy happiness perfectly.

(121) Q. 1, ad 16m, p. 12, 464-466, cf. supra n. 86.

(122) Q. 1, ad 10m, p. 12, 417-419: «corrupto corpore non perit ab anima natura secundum quam competit ei ut sit forma».