

QUESTION 75

The Essence of the Human Soul

Now that we have considered the spiritual creature and the corporeal creature, we must consider man, who is composed of a spiritual and a corporeal substance (*ex spirituali et corporali substantia componitur*). We will consider first the nature of man (questions 75-89) and then the production of man (questions 90-102).

Now the theologian's role is to consider man's nature with respect to the soul and not the body, except insofar as the body is related to the soul. And so the first part of our consideration will have to do with the soul. Since, according to Dionysius, *De Caelesti Hierarchia*, chap. 11, there are three aspects of spiritual substances, viz., their essence, their power, and their operation, we will consider, first, that which has to do with the essence of the soul (questions 75-76); second, that which has to do with the soul's powers or capacities (*virtutem vel potentias*) (questions 77-83); and, third, that which has to do with the soul's operations (questions 84-89).

On the first point there are two things to consider. The first is the soul itself in its own right (question 75), and the second is the union of the soul with the body (question 76).

On the first topic there are seven questions: (1) Is a soul a body? (2) Is the human soul something subsistent? (3) Are the souls of brute animals subsistent? (4) Is the soul a man or is a man instead something composed of a soul and a body? (5) Is the soul composed of form and matter? (6) Is the human soul incorruptible? (7) Is the soul the same in species as an angel?

Article 1

Is a soul a body?

It seems that a soul is a body:

Objection 1: A soul is a mover of a body. But it does not give motion without being moved, both because (a) it seems that nothing can be a mover unless it is moved, since nothing gives to another what it itself does not have—e.g., something that is not itself hot does not give heat—and because (b) if something is an unmoved mover, then, as *Physics* 8 shows, it is a cause of a motion that is everlasting (*sempiternum*) and uniform (*eodem modo se habentem*)—which does not appear to be the case with the motion of an animal, which is from the soul. Therefore, a soul is a mover that is moved. But every mover that is moved is a body. Therefore, a soul is a body.

Objection 2: Every cognition is effected by means of some sort of likeness. But a body cannot bear a likeness to an incorporeal thing. Therefore, if a soul were not a body, it would not be able to have any cognition of corporeal things.

Objection 3: A mover must have some contact with the thing moved. But only bodies have contact. Therefore, since a soul moves a body, it seems that a soul is a body.

But contrary to this: In *De Trinitate* 6 Augustine says that a soul “is simple in comparison to a body, since it is not spread out with its mass (*mole*) through a region in space (*per spatium loci*).”

I respond: In order to inquire into the nature of a soul, one must take for granted that what is called a ‘soul’ (*anima*) is a first principle of life in those things around us that are alive; for we say that living things are ‘ensouled’ (*animata*) and that things which lack life are ‘not ensouled’ (*inanimata*).

There are two operations by which life is especially made manifest, viz., cognition and movement. The ancient philosophers, unable to transcend the imagination, posited bodies as the principle of these operations, and they claimed that bodies alone are entities and that what is not a body is nothing. Accordingly, they claimed that a soul is a certain sort of body.

Even though the falsity of this view can be shown in many ways, we will make use of just the one way in virtue of which it is most surely and most generally clear that a soul is not a body:

It is evident that not every principle of a vital operation is a soul, since otherwise an eye would be a soul, given that it is a principle of seeing; and the same thing would have to be said of others among the soul's instruments. Instead, we are claiming that a soul is the *first* principle of life. For even though a body can in some sense be a principle of life, in the way that the heart is a principle of life in an animal, nonetheless, a body cannot be the *first* principle of life. For it is clear that *being a principle of life*, or *being alive* (*vivens*), cannot belong to a body by reason of its being a body; otherwise, each body would be alive or would be a principle of life. Therefore, the fact that a body is alive—or is even a principle of life—is something that belongs to it by virtue of the fact that it is a body of a given sort (*tale corpus*). But the fact that a body is actually of a given sort (*actu tale*) is due to a principle that is called its act (*eius actus*). Therefore, a soul, i.e., a first principle of life, is the *act of a body* and not itself a body—just as heat, i.e., a principle of heating, is a certain act of a body and not itself a body.

Reply to objection 1: Since everything that is moved is moved by another, and since this cannot go on *ad infinitum*, one must admit that not every mover is moved. For since to be moved is to go from potentiality to actuality, a mover gives what it has to the moveable thing insofar as it makes that thing to be actually such-and-such (*esse in actu*).

Now as is shown in *Physics* 8, there is a sort of mover that is completely unmoveable and that is moved neither *per se* nor *per accidens*; and this sort of mover can effect a motion that is always uniform (*semper uniformem*). On the other hand, there is another sort of mover that is moved *per accidens* and not *per se*, and because of this it does not effect a motion that is always uniform; a soul is a mover of this sort. Finally, there is a sort of mover that is moved *per se*, viz., a body.

Since the ancient natural philosophers believed that only bodies exist, they claimed that (a) every mover is itself moved and that (b) a soul is moved *per se* and is a body.

Reply to objection 2: It is not necessary that a likeness of the thing of which there is a cognition should exist *in actuality* in the *nature* of that which has the cognition. Instead, if something is such that it has cognition first in potentiality and afterwards in actuality, then a likeness of the thing of which there is cognition exists only *in potentiality*, and not in actuality, in the *nature* of the thing having the cognition—just as a color exists in the pupil only in potentiality and not in actuality. Hence, it is not necessary for there to be an actual likeness of corporeal entities in the nature of a soul; rather, it is necessary only that likenesses of this sort should exist in a soul in potentiality.

However, since the ancient natural philosophers were ignorant of the distinction between actuality and potentiality, they claimed that a soul is a body in order that it might have cognition of bodies; and they claimed that it is composed of the principles of all bodies in order that it might have cognition of all bodies.

Reply to objection 3: There are two sorts of contact, contact of *quantity* and contact of *power* (*contactus quantitatis et virtutis*). In the case of the first sort of contact, a body is touched only by a body. In the case of the second sort of contact, a body can be touched by an incorporeal entity that moves the body.

Article 2

Is a human soul something subsistent?

It seems that a human soul is not something subsistent:

Objection 1: That which is subsistent is said to be a *this-something* (*hoc aliquid*). Yet it is not the

soul that is a *this-something*, but rather that which is composed of a soul and a body. Therefore, a soul is not something subsistent.

Objection 2: Anything that is subsistent can be said to operate. But a soul is not said to operate, since, as *De Anima* 1 puts it, “To say that a soul senses or understands is like saying that a soul weaves or builds.” Therefore, a soul is not something subsistent.

Objection 3: If a soul were something subsistent, then it would have an operation without a body (*operatio sine corpore*). But none of its operations occurs without a body (*nulla est sine corpore*)—not even the act of intellectual understanding, since the soul cannot have an act of understanding without phantasms, and phantasms cannot exist without a body. Therefore, a human soul is not something subsistent.

But contrary to this: In *De Trinitate* 10 Augustine says, “If anyone discerns the nature of the mind and sees that it is a substance, but not a corporeal substance, he will see that those who think it is a corporeal substance make this mistake because they attach to the soul those things, viz., the images of bodies, without which they cannot think of any nature.” Therefore, the nature of a human mind is not only incorporeal but also a substance, i.e., something subsistent.

I respond: One must claim that the principle of intellectual operations, which we call a man’s soul, is an incorporeal and subsistent principle. For it is clear that by means of his intellect a man is able to have cognition of the natures of all bodies. But that which is able to have cognition of given things must be such that it has nothing of those things in its own nature, since what exists in it naturally would in that case impede the cognition of those other things. For instance, we see that a sick tongue infected with bilious and bitter humors (*infecta cholericis et amaris humoribus*) is unable to perceive anything sweet; instead, everything seems bitter to it. Therefore, if an intellectual principle had within itself the nature of any sort of body, it would be unable to have cognition of all bodies. But each body has some determinate nature. Therefore, it is impossible that this intellectual principle should be a body. And, similarly, it is impossible that it should have intellectual understanding through a bodily organ, since the determinate nature of that bodily organ would likewise prevent its having cognition of all bodies—in just the same way that if some determinate color exists not only in the pupil but also in the glass vase, then a liquid poured into that vase seems to be of that same color.

Therefore, the intellectual principle itself, which is called the *mind* or the *intellect*, has an operation on its own (*habet operationem per se*) in which the body does not share. But nothing can operate on its own unless it subsists on its own (*nihil potest per se operari nisi quod per se subsistit*). For to operate belongs to a being that is actualized, and so a thing operates in the way in which it exists. It is for this reason that we say that it is the hot thing (*calidum*), rather than the heat (*calor*), that gives warmth. It follows, then, that the human soul, which is called the intellect or mind, is something incorporeal and subsistent.

Reply to objection 1: The term ‘*this-something*’ can be taken in two senses. In the first sense it is taken for any subsistent thing, whereas in the second sense it is taken for a subsistent thing that is complete in the nature of some species. The first sense excludes inherence of the sort that belongs to an accident or material form; the second sense excludes in addition the incompleteness that belongs to a part. Hence, a hand could be called a *this-something* in the first sense, but not in the second sense.

So, then, since the human soul is a part of the human species, it can be called a *this-something*, i.e., subsistent, in the first sense, but not in the second sense. For in the second sense what is called a *this-something* is that which is composed of a soul and a body.

Reply to objection 2: Aristotle is making this assertion (*verba illa dicit*) not to express his own opinion, but rather to express the opinion of those who were claiming that to have intellectual understanding is to be moved. This is clear from what he says just before the cited passage.

An alternative reply is that to act on its own (*per se agere*) befits something that exists on its own (*per se existenti*). But the phrase ‘exists on its own’ (*per se existens*) can sometimes be predicated of a thing as long as it is not inherent like an accident or a material form, even if it is a part. On the other hand, what is said to subsist properly and *per se* is such that it is neither inherent in the aforementioned ways nor a part. In this sense, neither an eye nor a hand could be said to subsist on its own, and so neither could it be said to operate on its own. Hence, the operations of the parts are attributed to the whole *by means of* the parts (*per partes*). For we say that a man sees by means of his eye, and that he touches by means of his hand. This is different from saying that a hot thing gives warmth by means of its heat (*per calorem*), since there is no sense in which the heat gives warmth, properly speaking. Therefore, one can claim that a soul understands in the same sense in which an eye sees, but that it is more proper to say that the man understands by means of his soul.

Reply to objection 3: The body is not required for the intellect’s action as an organ by means of which that action is exercised; rather, the body is required for the sake of the action’s object (*ratione obiecti*). For a phantasm is related to intellectual understanding in the way that a color is related to seeing. But needing the body in this sense does not rule out the intellect’s being subsistent; otherwise, it would be the case that because it needs external sensible things in order to have sensation, an animal is not something subsistent.

Article 3

Are the souls of brute animals subsistent?

It seems that the souls of brute animals are subsistent:

Objection 1: Man agrees with the other animals in genus. But as has been shown (a. 2), man’s soul is subsistent. Therefore, the souls of the other animals are likewise subsistent.

Objection 2: Something sentient is related to what is sensible in the same way that something intellectual is related to what is intelligible. But the intellect understands intelligible things without the body. Therefore, the senses apprehend sensible things without the body. But the souls of brute animals are sentient. Therefore, they are subsistent, for the same reason that the human soul, which is intellectual, is subsistent.

Objection 3: A brute animal’s soul moves its body. But a body is moved and does not effect movement. Therefore, a brute animal’s soul has an operation without its body.

But contrary to this: In *De Ecclesiasticis Dogmatibus* it says, “We believe that man alone has a soul that is a substance (*anima substantiva*), whereas the souls of animals are not substances.”

I respond: The ancient philosophers did not draw a distinction between sensation and intellectual understanding, and they attributed both of them to a corporeal principle, as has already been explained (a. 1).

Now Plato did distinguish intellectual understanding from sensation, but he attributed both of them to an incorporeal principle, arguing that just as intellectual understanding belongs to the soul in its own right, so too does sensing. And from this it followed that even the souls of brute animals are subsistent.

Aristotle, on the other hand, claimed that, among the works of the soul, only intellectual understanding is exercised without a corporeal organ. By contrast, sensing and the resulting operations of the sentient soul clearly occur with bodily changes; for instance, in the act of seeing the pupil is changed by the species of color, and the same thing is clear with the other senses.

And so it is clear that the sentient soul does not have any proper operation of its own (*non habet*

aliquam operationem propriam per seipsam); instead, every operation of the sentient soul belongs to the conjoined entity (*est coniuncti*). From this it follows that since the souls of brute animals do not operate on their own (*per se*), they are not subsistent; for each thing has its *esse* in the same way that it has its operation (*similiter unumquodque habet esse et operationem*).

Reply to objection 1: Even though man agrees with the other animals in genus, he nonetheless differs from them in species, and a difference in species is accompanied by a difference in form. Nor does it have to be the case that every difference of form makes for a diversity of genera.

Reply to objection 2: There is a sense in which the sentient part of the soul (*sensitivum*) is related to sensible things in the way that the intellective part (*intellectivum*) is related to intelligible things, viz., each is in potentiality with respect to its objects.

However, there is another sense in which they are related in different ways to their objects; for the sentient part is acted upon by the sensible object via a corporeal change, and hence an excessiveness in the sensible objects harms the sensory power (*excellencia sensibilium corrumpit sensum*). This does not occur in the case of the intellect, for an intellect that is having an intellective understanding of the most intelligible objects is more able afterwards to understand lesser objects. What's more, even though the body gets tired out in intellective understanding, this is incidental (*per accidens*), given that the intellect needs the operation of the sentient powers to prepare phantasms for it.

Reply to objection 3: There are two sorts of moving powers.

There is one which *commands* movement (*imperat motum*), viz., the appetitive power. And its operation in the sentient soul does not occur without the body. Rather, anger and joy and all passions of this sort exist along with some change in the body.

The second sort of moving power is one which *executes* movement (*exequetur motum*) and through which the members of the body are rendered capable of obeying the appetite. This power's act is to be moved and not to effect motion.

Hence, it is clear that to effect movement is not an act that the sentient soul has without the body.

Article 4

Is the [human] soul the man?

It seems that the [human] soul is the man:

Objection 1: 2 Corinthians 4:16 says, "Though our outward man is corrupted, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." But what is 'inward' in a man is the soul. Therefore, the soul is the interior man.

Objection 2: The human soul is a certain substance. But it is not a universal substance. Therefore, it is a particular substance. Therefore, it is a hypostasis or person. But it is not a person unless it is a human person. Therefore, the soul is the man, since a human person is a man.

But contrary to this: In *De Civitate Dei* 19 Augustine commends Varro for thinking that "a man is neither the soul alone nor the body alone, but the soul and the body together."

I respond: There are two ways to understand the claim that the soul is the man.

In the first way, it is understood to mean that (a) *man* is a soul and yet that (b) *this* man, e.g., Socrates, is not a soul but is instead composed of a soul and a body. I bring this position up because some have claimed that the form alone belongs to the nature of the species, whereas the matter is part of the individual and not of the species.

However, this cannot be true. For what pertains to the nature of the species is what is signified by

the definition. But in the case of natural things the definition signifies both the form and the matter—and not just the form. Hence, the matter is part of the species in the case of natural things—not, to be sure, *designated* matter (*materia signata*), which is a principle of individuation, but rather *common* matter (*materia communis*). For just as it is of the nature of *this* man to be composed of *this* soul and *this* flesh and *these* bones, so it is of the nature of *man* to be composed of a soul and flesh and bones, since whatever belongs to the substance of the species must belong in a general way (*communiter*) to the substance of all the individuals contained under that species.

In the second way, the claim that the soul is the man is understood to mean that *this* soul is *this* man. To be sure, this claim could be sustained if one asserted that the sentient soul's operations are its own without the body, since in that case all the operations attributed to the man would belong to the soul alone. But it is the entity that performs the entity's operations. Hence, it is the man that performs the man's operations. But it has been shown (a. 3) that an act of sensing is not an operation belonging only to the soul. Therefore, since sensing is one of the man's operations, even if not his proper operation, it is clear that a man is something composed of a soul and a body and is not the soul alone.

However, Plato, who claimed that sensing is proper to the soul, was able to hold that a man is a soul making use of a body.

Reply to objection 1: According to the Philosopher in *Ethics* 9, each thing seems to be mainly what is principal in it, in the way that a city is said to do what the mayor of the city (*rector civitatis*) does. It is in this sense that what is principal in a man is something called the man. In some cases this is the intellective part of man, which is indeed principal and is called the 'interior' man, and in other cases it is the sentient part along with the body, which is principal in the opinion of those who are engaged only with sensible things. And the latter is called the 'exterior' man.

Reply to objection 2: Not every particular substance is a hypostasis or person; rather, a hypostasis or person is a particular substance that has the *complete* nature of a species. Hence, a hand or foot cannot be called a hypostasis or a person. And, likewise, neither can a soul, since it is a part of a human nature (*pars speciei humanae*).

Article 5

Is a [human] soul composed of matter and form?

It seems that a [human] soul is composed of matter and form:

Objection 1: Potentiality (*potentia*) is contrasted with actuality (*actus*). But everything that exists in actuality participates in the *First Actuality* (*primus actus*), who is God and through participation in whom all things exist and are good and are alive—as is clear from Dionysius's teaching in *De Divinis Nominibus*. Therefore, everything that exists in potentiality participates in the *first potentiality* (*prima potentia*). But the first potentiality is primary matter (*materia prima*). Therefore, since a human soul in some sense exists in potentiality, which is clear from the fact that a man is sometimes engaged in intellective understanding [only] in potentiality, it seems that a human soul participates in primary matter as one of its parts.

Objection 2: Anything in which the properties of matter are found is such that matter is found in it. But the properties of matter are found in a soul. These properties are *to be a subject* (*subiici*) and *to undergo change* (*transmutari*). For a soul is the subject of knowledge and of virtue, and it undergoes a change from ignorance to knowledge and from vice to virtue. Therefore, there is matter in the soul.

Objection 3: As *Metaphysics* 8 says, anything that does not have matter does not have a cause of

its *esse*. But a soul has a cause of its *esse*, since it is created by God. Therefore, a soul has matter.

Objection 4: Anything that is just a form and does not have matter is pure and infinite actuality (*actus purus et infinitus*). But this belongs to God alone. Therefore, a soul has matter.

But contrary to this: In *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 7 Augustine shows that a soul is made neither from corporeal matter nor from spiritual matter.

I respond: A soul does not have matter. This can be seen in two ways.

The first way stems from *the nature of a soul in general*. For it belongs to the nature of a soul to be the form of a body. Therefore, either it is (a) a form as regards the whole of itself or (b) a form as regards some part of itself. If it is a form as regards the whole of itself, then it is impossible that a part of it should be matter—given that ‘matter’ means a being that exists only in potentiality. For a form *qua* form is an actuality, whereas what exists just in potentiality cannot be part of an actuality. For potentiality is incompatible with actuality, since it is divided off against actuality. On the other hand, if a soul is a form as regards some part of itself, then we will call that part ‘the soul’, and we will call the matter of which it is primarily the actuality ‘the first animated thing’.

The second way stems from *the specific nature of a human soul insofar as it is intellective*. For it is clear that whatever is received in a thing is received in it according to the mode of the receiver. So each thing is such that there is cognition of it insofar as its form exists in the one who has cognition of it. But an intellective soul has cognition of an entity in that entity’s nature taken absolutely (*in sua natura absolute*); for instance, it has cognition of a rock insofar as the rock is a rock taken absolutely. Therefore, the form of a rock taken absolutely, i.e., according to its proper formal notion (*secundum propriam rationem formalem*), exists in the intellective soul. Thus, an intellective soul is an absolute form and not something composed of matter and form. For if an intellective soul were composed of matter and form, then the forms of the things would be received in it as individuals, and so the soul would know them only as singulars, just as happens in the case of the sentient powers, which receive the forms of things in a corporeal organ. For matter is a principle of individuation for forms.

Therefore, it follows that an intellective soul, along with every intellectual substance that has cognition of forms taken absolutely, lacks a composition of form and matter.

Reply to objection 1: The First Actuality is the universal source of all actualities (*universale principium omnium actuum*), since it is infinite and has “everything virtually within itself to begin with,” as Dionysius puts it. Hence, things participate in it not as parts, but rather according to the diffusion of its procession (*secundum diffusionem processionis ipsius*). Now since potentiality is receptive of actuality, it must be proportioned to the actuality. But the received actualities that proceed from the infinite First Actuality and are participations in it are diverse. Hence, there cannot be a single potentiality that receives all the actualities, in the way that there is a single actuality that flows into (*influens*) all the participated actualities; otherwise, the receptive potentiality would equal the active power of the First Actuality.

However, the receptive potentiality that exists in an intellective soul is different from the receptive potentiality of primary matter, as is clear from the differences in what is received. For primary matter receives individual forms, whereas the intellect receives absolute forms. Hence, a potentiality of the sort that exists in the intellective soul does not indicate that the soul is composed of matter and form.

Reply to objection 2: To be a subject (*subiici*) and to undergo change (*transmutari*) belong to matter insofar as it is in potentiality. Therefore, just as an intellect’s potentiality is different from primary matter’s potentiality, so the notions of *being a subject of* and *undergoing change* are different in the two cases. For it is insofar as it is in potentiality with respect to intelligible species that the intellect is the subject of knowledge and undergoes a change from ignorance to knowledge.

Reply to objection 3: The form is a cause of the matter’s *esse*, along with the agent. Hence,

insofar as the agent brings the matter to the actuality of the form by transforming it, it is a cause of *esse* for it. But if something is a subsistent form, it does not have *esse* through any formal principle; nor does it have a cause that changes it from potentiality to actuality. Hence, after the cited passage, the Philosopher concludes that in the case of things composed of matter and form “the cause is none other than that which moves the thing from potentiality to actuality, whereas things that do not have matter are all simply beings that are truly something.”

Reply to objection 4: Everything that is participated in is related to what participates in it as its actuality. But if a created form is posited as subsisting *per se*, then it must participate in *esse*, since “its very life,” or whatever else is said of it, “participates in *esse* itself,” as Dionysius puts it in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 5. Now participated *esse* is limited to the capacity of that which participates. Hence, God alone, who is His own *esse* itself, is pure and infinite actuality (*actus purus et infinitus*). On the other hand, in intellectual substances there is a composition of actuality and potentiality—not, to be sure, a composition of form and matter, but rather a composition of form and participated *esse*. Hence, an intellectual substance is said by some to be composed of *that by which* it exists and *that which* exists (*componi ex quo est et quod est*). For *esse* itself is *that by which* something exists.

Article 6

Is the human soul corruptible?

It seems that the human soul is corruptible:

Objection 1: Things whose principles and processes are similar seem to have similar ends as well. But the principle of generation for men is similar to the principle of generation for beasts, since they are made from the earth. Again, the processes of life are similar in both cases, since “all things breathe alike, and man has no more than the beast,” as Ecclesiastes 3:19 puts it. Therefore, as Ecclesiastes 3 concludes, “Death (*interitus*) for a man and a beast is one, and the condition of both is equal.” But the souls of brute animals are corruptible. Therefore, the human soul is likewise corruptible.

Objection 2: Everything that is made *ex nihilo* is reducible to nothingness, since the end must correspond to the beginning. But as Wisdom 2:2 says, “We are born from nothing”—which is true not only with respect to the body but also with respect to the soul. Therefore, as that same passage concludes, “After this we shall be as if we had never existed”—even with respect to the soul.

Objection 3: No entity exists without its proper operation. But the soul’s proper operation, which is to understand intellectually in conjunction with a phantasm (*intelligere cum phantasmate*), cannot exist without a body, since the soul understands nothing without a phantasm and, as *De Anima* says, “there is no phantasm without the body.” Therefore, the soul does not remain after the body has been destroyed.

But contrary to this: In *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 4, Dionysius says that out of God’s goodness human souls are such that they are “intellectual” and have “an incorruptible substantial life.”

I respond: One must claim that the human soul, which we call the intellectual principle, is incorruptible.

For a thing is corrupted in one of two ways, either (a) *per se* or (b) *per accidens*.

But it is impossible for anything subsistent to be generated or corrupted *per accidens*, i.e., generated or corrupted because something else is generated or corrupted. For *being generated* and *being corrupted* belong to a thing in the same way as does its *esse*, which is acquired through generation and lost through corruption. Hence, that which has *esse per se* can be generated or corrupted only *per se*, whereas things that do not subsist, such as accidents and material forms, are said to be made and

corrupted through the generation and corruption of composite things. Now it was shown above (a. 3) that only human souls, and not the souls of brute animals, are subsistent *per se*. Hence, the souls of brute animals are corrupted when their bodies are corrupted, whereas the human soul could not be corrupted unless it were corrupted *per se*.

However, this is wholly impossible—not only in the case of the human soul, but in the case of any subsistent thing that is just a form. For it is clear that what belongs to a thing because of its very self (*secundum se*) is inseparable from that thing. But *esse* belongs *per se* to form, i.e., to actuality. This is why matter acquires *esse* in actuality to the extent that it acquires form, whereas corruption occurs in it to the extent that form is separated from it. But it is impossible for a form to be separated from itself. Hence, it is impossible that a subsistent form should cease to exist.

Even if one conceded that the soul is, as some claim, composed of form and matter, he would still have to claim that it is incorruptible. For there is corruption only where there is contrariety, since instances of generation and corruption are from contraries into contraries; hence, the celestial bodies are incorruptible because they do not have a matter that is subject to contrariety. But there cannot be any contrariety within the intellective soul. For it receives *esse* in its own mode, and the things that are received in it exist without contrariety. For within the intellect the concepts of contraries (*rationes contrariorum*) are not themselves contraries; rather, there is a single science of the contraries. Therefore, it is impossible for the intellective soul to be corruptible.

Again, an indication of this can also be found in the fact that each thing naturally desires *esse* in its own mode. But in things with cognition, desire follows upon cognition. Now the senses have cognition of *esse* only in the here and now, whereas the intellect apprehends *esse* absolutely speaking and with respect to all of time. Hence, everything that has an intellect naturally desires to exist always. But a natural desire cannot be in vain. Therefore, every intellectual substance is incorruptible.

Reply to objection 1: As is made clear in Wisdom 2, Solomon introduces this argument on behalf of the foolish. Thus, the claim that man and the other beasts have a similar principle of generation is true with respect to the body; for all animals are alike in being made from the earth. However, it is not true with respect to the soul; for the soul of brute animals is produced by a corporeal power, whereas the human soul is produced by God. In order to indicate this, Genesis says of the other animals, “Let the earth bring forth the living soul” (1:24), whereas of man it says, “He breathed into his face the breath of life” (2:7). And so Ecclesiastes 12:7 concludes, “The dust returns to the earth, from where it came, and the spirit returns to God, who made it.”

Likewise, the process of life is similar with respect to the body; on this score Ecclesiastes 3:19 says, “All things breathe alike,” and Wisdom 2:2 says, “The breath in our nostrils is smoke” But the process is not similar with respect to the soul. For a man has intellective understanding, whereas brute animals do not.

Hence, the claim that man has nothing more than the beast is false. And so death is similar with respect to the body, but not with respect to the soul.

Reply to objection 2: Just as a thing is said to be able to be created not through any passive potentiality (*per potentiam passivam*) but only through the active power (*per potentiam activam*) of the creator, who is able to produce something *ex nihilo*, so too when a thing is said to be able to be reduced to nothingness, this does not imply a potentiality for *non-esse* within the *creature*, but instead implies within the *creator* a power not to communicate *esse* (*in creatore potentia ad hoc quod esse non influat*). By contrast, a thing is said to be able to be corrupted because there exists *within it* a potentiality for *non-esse*.

Reply to objection 3: To understand intellectually in conjunction with a phantasm is the proper operation of the soul insofar as it is united to the body. However, when it is separated from the body, it will have another mode of understanding like that of other substances that are separated from a body.

This will be explained more fully below (q. 89, a. 1).

Article 7

Does a [human] soul belong to the same species as an angel?

It seems that a [human] soul belongs to the same species as an angel (*anima et angelus sint unius speciei*):

Objection 1: Each thing is ordered to its proper end by the nature of its species, through which it has an inclination toward that end. But the soul's end is the same as an angel's, viz., eternal beatitude. Therefore, they belong to the same species.

Objection 2: The ultimate specific difference is the most noble, since it brings the nature of the species to completion. But in an angel and in a soul there is nothing more noble than intellectual *esse*. Therefore, an angel and a soul agree in their ultimate specific difference. Therefore, they belong to the same species.

Objection 3: A soul seems to differ from an angel only in being united to a body. But since the body lies outside the soul's essence, it does not seem relevant to its species. Therefore, an angel and a soul belong to the same species.

But contrary to this: Things that have diverse natural operations differ in species. But an angel and a soul have diverse natural operations. For as Dionysius says in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 7, "Angelic minds have simple and beatific acts of intellectual understanding (*simplices et beatos intellectus*), not inferring (*non congregantes*) their knowledge of God from visible things"—whereas a little later he says the opposite about the soul. Therefore, a soul and an angel do not belong to the same species.

I respond: Origen claimed that all angels and human souls belong to the same species. As was explained above (q. 47, a. 2), he said this because he held that the different grades found among such substances were incidental, stemming from free choice.

But this cannot be the case, since among incorporeal substances there is no numerical diversity without a diversity of species and without natural inequality.

For if incorporeal substances are not composed of matter and form but are instead subsistent forms, then it will clearly be necessary for there to be a diversity of species among them. For it is unintelligible that there should be a separated form that is not the only one of its species (*una unius speciei*)—just as, if whiteness were separated, then there could be only one whiteness, since *this* whiteness differs from *that* whiteness only because it is the whiteness of *this* thing or the whiteness of *that* thing. Now diversity in species is always accompanied by a natural diversity; for instance, among the species of color one is more perfect than another, and likewise for the other species. This is because the differences that divide the genus are contraries. But contraries are related to one other as the perfect and the imperfect, since the sources of contrariety are, as *Metaphysics* 10 says, the disposition and [corresponding] privation.

The same thing would follow even if substances of the sort in question were composed of matter and form. For if the matter of *this* thing is distinct from the matter of *that* thing, then it must be the case either that (a) the form is the source (*principium*) of the distinction between the matters, in the sense that the matters are diverse because of their relation to diverse forms, in which case it still follows that there is a difference in species and a natural inequality, or that (b) the matter is the source of the distinctness of the forms, in which case *this* matter can be said to be distinct from *that* matter only because of a distinction in quantity (*secundum divisionem quantitativam*)—something that has no place in the case of

incorporeal substances such as an angel or a soul.

Hence, it is impossible for an angel and a soul to belong to the same species.

Now we will show below (q. 76, a. 2) how it is that many souls belong to the same species.

Reply to objection 1: This argument goes through in the case of an end that is proximate and natural. However, eternal beatitude is an end that is ultimate and supernatural.

Reply to objection 2: The ultimate specific difference is the most noble because it is maximally determinate, in the way in which an actuality is more noble than the corresponding potentiality. However, in this sense *intellectual (intellectuale)* is not the most noble, because it is indeterminate and common with respect to the many grades of intellectuality, just as *sentient (sensibile)* is indeterminate and common with respect to the many grades within sentient *esse*. Hence, just as it is not the case that all sentient beings belong to the same species, so neither is it the case that all intellectual beings belong to the same species.

Reply to objection 3: Even though the body does not belong to the essence of the soul, the soul is by the nature of its essence such that it can be united to the body (*sit corpori unibilis*). Hence, it is not the soul, but rather the composite, that properly speaking belongs to a species. And the very fact that the soul needs the body in a certain way for its operation shows that the soul has a lower grade of intellectuality than does an angel, who is not united to a body.