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“THE FIRST PRINCIPLE OF LIFE:”
THOMISTIC DUALISM AND CURRENT ISSUES
IN THE MIND-BODY DEBATE

By

David Alan Reed

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Divinity

Asbury Theological Seminary
May 1998

Approved by: Jerry L. Walls Date: May 6, 1998

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Dedicated to
Beulah Virginia Morrison,
with love, gratitude, and respect.

To seek the nature of the soul, we must lay down first that the soul is defined as the first principle of life in those things which in our judgment live.

Saint Thomas Aquinas
Summa Theologiae I, 75, 1.

Among all human pursuits, the pursuit of wisdom is . . . more noble. It is more noble because through this pursuit man especially approaches to a likeness to God Who “made all things in wisdom” (Ps. 103:24). And since likeness is the cause of love, the pursuit of wisdom especially joins man to God in friendship.

Saint Thomas Aquinas
Summa Contra Gentiles 1, 2, 1.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

One of the most enduring and enigmatic issues in the history of philosophy and theology is the mind-body problem. The attempt to answer the question concerning the existence and nature of the human soul has been a dominant element of many of the main philosophical and theological systems in history. Consequently, the mind-body problem has generated much debate, and the latter half of the twentieth century is not exempt. The modern mind-body problem may be defined as the attempt to understand “the relation between a man’s conscious life of thought and sensation, and the physical events in and around his body.”¹ This thesis will attempt to critically interact with some of the primary and secondary literature on the modern mind-body problem focusing on three key issues, and offer an evaluation of the positions found in the literature in light of the composite dualism of Thomas Aquinas.

Most of the attempts at solving the mind-body problem in history may be divided into two categories: materialism and dualism. The first category, materialism, may be separated into two positions – hard materialism and soft materialism. Hard materialism maintains that the only types of substances to exist are physical substances. Both

¹ Richard Swinburne, *The Evolution of the Soul*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 7. As stated, Richard Swinburne’s definition of the mind-body debate seems to be self-referential, in that it implies a dualistic conception of human nature. In contrast, *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* elects to approach the subject in a more cautious manner, defining the modern mind-body problem as the question of “whether mental phenomena are physical phenomena and, if not, how they relate to physical phenomena” (597).

philosophers and scientists, such as Bertrand Russell and Francis Crick have championed this position. According to hard materialism, all mental events that occur to a person are caused by and are reducible to physical events. Bertrand Russell wrote that mankind “is a part of nature, not something contrasted with nature. His thoughts and his bodily movements follow the same laws that describe the motions of stars and atoms.”² Hence, since Russell believed that “mental phenomena seem to be bound up with material structure”,³ he concluded that all “that constitutes a person is a series of experiences connected by memory and by certain similarities of the sort we call habit.”⁴ This type of metaphysical materialism or physicalism is often referred to as the Identity Theory, which “claims that types of sensations are identical with types of brain processes.”⁵ In other words, all mental events are to be understood as brain events.

Soft materialism agrees with the hard materialist position that only physical substances exist. However, there is a major distinction between hard materialism and soft materialism that needs to be addressed. While the hard materialist maintains that all mental events may be reduced to and described by physical events (i.e. brain events), the soft materialist asserts that some physical entities also have mental properties, such as sensing physical pain or observing an object of a certain color and shape. However, it is important to note that the soft materialist insists on the reality of mental events, though

² Bertrand Russell, Why I am Not A Christian: And Other Essays on Religion and Related Subjects, (New York: Touchstone, 1957), 48.

³ Ibid., 50.

⁴ Ibid., 89.

⁵ Robert Audi, general editor, The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 600.

they it would not assert that mental events transcend the physical components of the brain.

Dualism, the second major position in the modern mind-body debate, proposes that the human person is comprised of two distinct substances, a physical substance, which is the body, and an immaterial substance, which is the mind or soul. These two substances coincide with the body and the mind, or soul. This type of dualism, most often referred to as substance dualism, was the position of the seventeenth century philosopher René Descartes. The main tenet of Cartesian dualism is that the essential nature of the human person is not the body, but the mind or soul. Descartes outlines this position in his Meditations on First Philosophy.

My essence consists solely in the fact that I am a thinking thing. It is true that I may have (or, to anticipate, that I certainly have) a body that is very closely joined to me. But nevertheless, on the one hand I have a clear and distinct idea of myself, in so far as I am simply a thinking, non-extended thing; and on the other I have a clear and distinct idea of body, in so far as this is simply an extended non-thinking thing. And accordingly, it is certain that I am really distinct from my body and can exist without it.⁶

However, the position of Thomas Aquinas on what constitutes a human being is different from those recorded above. Rather, Aquinas takes an intermediary position, based largely on Aristotle's anthropology, between the extremes of Platonic and Cartesian dualism, and the metaphysical materialism of Russell, Searle, and Crick. Davies writes that Aquinas "denies that people are essentially incorporeal. So he is not a Dualist. But neither does he think that people are nothing but collections of physical

⁶ René Descartes, The Philosophical Writings of Descartes, 2 vols., Trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 2:54.

processes. So he is not a Physicalist either. For him, people are composite individuals.”⁷ Therefore, it is accurate to assert that Aquinas held to a type of dualistic understanding of the human person. However, it must also be asserted that Aquinas denied the notion that he read in Plato, and which was eventually to become Descartes’ position, that the soul or mind alone constitutes the essence of an individual. The type of composite dualism (or Thomistic dualism) for which Aquinas argued, and that this thesis will defend, has two major elements. First, Thomistic dualism states that the two substances (body and soul) interact in an elemental manner to the extent that events which affect the body also effect the soul, and conversely. Second, Thomistic dualism asserts that both the body and the soul are essential for a human being to be complete. Aquinas held “that we are mental/physical units, where ‘mental’ and ‘physical’ are not simply reducible to each other.”⁸ In this manner, one major consequence of Aquinas’s position is also shared by Cartesian substance dualism: that despite the destruction of the body, the soul is not destroyed.

Statement of the Problem

What relevance does Thomistic dualism have for the modern mind-body debate currently being discussed in the fields of philosophy and theology? Specifically, to what extent, can Aquinas’s explanation of the mind-body problem inform this debate in regards to three primary issues concerning human nature: human consciousness, human freedom, and human destiny.

⁷ Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 209. That is, Aquinas is not a dualist under the Cartesian conception of substance dualism.

⁸ Ibid.

Review of Related Literature

The amount of resource material available on the mind-body problem is extensive. The proposed solutions to the primary issue surrounding the mind-body problem seem to equal the number of scholars who have written on the subject. Most large-scale philosophical and theological systems dedicate a portion to this issue, or refer to it throughout. Despite this wealth of literature, little attention in recent years has been given to Aquinas's proposed solution to the mind-body problem, and how his theory may serve to illuminate specific issues in the debate.

While a wealth of secondary literature exists on the mind-body problem in general, relatively few works have attempted to interpret Aquinas's position in light of the issues of human nature, human consciousness, human freedom, and human destiny. Therefore, the primary and secondary literature that relates to the focus of this thesis has been divided into three categories. The first category consists of expositions of Aquinas's philosophy and theology that define and illustrate his proposed solution to the mind-body problem. The second category contains various proposed materialistic solutions to the mind-body debate, often referred to under the terminology of hard and soft materialism. The final category is comprised of several proposed dualistic, or immaterial, solutions to the mind-body debate, which differ significantly enough from Aquinas's substance dualism to merit being placed in a different category.

Primary Literature on Aquinas

Aquinas wrote within a number of disciplines, and there is a considerable amount of literature that interprets his work. However, for a proper understanding of his

proposed composite-dualism solution to the mind-body problem, this study will focus primary attention on Aquinas's anthropology, epistemology, and psychology, as found in his *magnum opus* of philosophy and theology, the Summa Theologiae and, when applicable, the Summa Contra Gentiles. An annotated version of Aquinas's Summa Theologiae by Peter J. Kreeft, entitled The Summa of the Summa, will also be utilized. Other minor philosophical texts will be referred to as needed. These will be the primary materials from which Aquinas's composite dualism will be outlined and explained.

Secondary Literature on Aquinas

As noted above, there exists a large amount of secondary material that expounds Aquinas's philosophical and theological positions. These materials will be consulted and relied upon as attempts to reconcile Aquinas's medieval position with more modern engagements of the mind-body problem. Primary among these are Brian Davies' The Thought of Thomas Aquinas, Francis Selman's Thomas Aquinas: Teacher of Truth, Peter J. Kreeft's A Summa of the Summa, F. C. Copleston's Aquinas, and Etienne Gilson's The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Primary Literature on the Mind-Body Debate

Several works in recent years have warranted considerable attention from philosophers and theologians interested in the mind-body debate. Among these have been several proposed materialistic and monistic solutions offered by members of the philosophical and scientific communities. For the materialistic position in the philosophical community John R. Searle's monograph and article writings will be often

consulted. Chief among these is his monograph Minds, Brains and Science. His informative article “The Mystery of Consciousness” in The New York Review will also be consulted. Searle maintains that a materialistic interpretation of the mind-body problem is not inconsistent with the evidence that both mental and physical phenomena exist. He writes, “[n]aive mentalism and naive physicalism are perfectly consistent with each other. Indeed, as far as we know anything about how the world works, they are not only consistent, they are both true.”⁹ Searle’s work on this subject is well written and cogently argued. In light of the implications for human consciousness, freedom and destiny that result from Searle’s position, his work will receive a large amount of serious consideration in this thesis.

For the materialistic position from the scientific community recent works of mathematician Roger Penrose and Biochemist Francis Crick will be examined. Penrose’s works Shadows of the Mind and The Large, the Small and the Human Mind will be valuable resources for this study. Penrose proposes that Quantum Mechanics may serve as the theory which will finally explain the seemingly contradictory division between brain events, the physical and electro-chemical processes that occur in the brain, and the mental events that seem to dualists to be separate and distinct from brain events.

Francis Crick’s recent book, The Astonishing Hypothesis, will also be examined. Crick proposes a simple and strong biological and mechanical understanding of the phenomena usually philosophically described as the “mind.” For Crick the mental life of an individual human being exists within and is completely explainable by the physical processes that exist within the human brain. Crick’s bold “hypothesis” deserves considerable attention in light of the three issues that will be explored by this thesis. For,

⁹ John R. Searle, Minds, Brains and Science, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 27.

if true, Crick's position would have serious consequences for the Christian understanding of two of the issues being considered in this study, human freedom and human destiny.

Behavioral psychologist B. F. Skinner's Beyond Freedom and Dignity will be examined in Chapter 4 because his view of the nature of humanity has particular relevance to the issue of the problem of human freedom. His views are important as to how one understands the role of morality and experience in relation to the mind-body problem.

For the substance dualistic position in the philosophical community, Richard Swinburne's The Evolution of the Soul will be considered. As a substance dualist, Swinburne concludes that though the soul is an immaterial substance and separate from the body, "no justified general account of the nature of the soul" can exist.¹⁰ Indeed, "all that we can say is that under normal mundane conditions the functioning of the soul requires the functioning of the body."¹¹ This position is significantly different than that of Aquinas, who maintained that, because the soul is the form of the body, the soul is by nature immortal. Swinburne's work will be one of those utilized in order to determine if the natural immortality of the soul, which Swinburne states is problematic under the Thomistic model, is a plausible alternative to those of substance dualism and metaphysical materialism.

Theoretical Framework and Definitions for the Study

Much of the scholarly work on the mind-body problem has gone into properly

¹⁰ Swinburne, 10.

¹¹ Ibid.

defining the terms and ideas that make up the debate. This thesis will not dispute the terminology around which the mind-body problem has been argued. The definitions of such key terms as “hard materialism,” “soft materialism,” and “substance dualism” have been provided above. For the purposes of this study, the following definitions will be used for words and concepts such as “mind,” “mental event,” “brain event,” and “soul.”

Clearly, not all of those involved in the modern mind-body debate agree on how these key terms are to be defined. For a materialist, “mind” may be defined as the phenomena of “the sequence of thoughts, feelings, and experiences, whether conscious or unconscious, that go to make up our mental life.”¹² Hence, mental events are to be understood as “events which involve the instantiation of mental properties” (e.g. Peter experiencing pain yesterday at noon).¹³ “Brain event,” on the other hand, is defined as the physical process that occurs in the brain of an individual when that individual experiences certain thoughts, sensations or feelings. A dualist, on the other hand, defines mind as a substance which is capable of and engages in these activities, not just merely the activities themselves. It will be argued in Chapter 2 that, for Thomistic dualism, the term “soul” is synonymous with the term mind, and is understood as the immaterial substance which, along with the material body, comprises a human individual. “Substance dualism” was defined above, but will be repeated here. Briefly, substance dualism maintains that a human being is comprised of two distinct substances, the physical substance of the body, and the immaterial substance of the soul. One crucial

¹² Searle, 11.

¹³ Swinburne, 7.

aspect of substance dualism is that the soul is the essential aspect of a person, despite the condition of the physical body.

Methodology of the Study

In regards to the approach that this thesis will use to study the relevance of Thomistic dualism for the modern mind-body debate, it is important to briefly explain the methodology to be used for this thesis. Overall, this thesis will explore Thomistic dualism, and its influence on the modern mind-body debate, from a philosophical standpoint, and critically engage other interpretations of the mind-body problem. When applicable, the discipline of philosophical theology, and perhaps systematic theology, will also be used. The reason for this is because of the philosophical and theological nature of the modern mind-body debate itself, and the three issues identified for particular attention by this thesis.¹⁴

Organization of the Study

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 has introduced the problem to which this thesis is dedicated, defined the key terms relevant to this study, and has briefly categorized the relevant primary and secondary literature on the mind-body problem. Chapter 2 will examine Thomas Aquinas's approach to the mind-body issue, and will present an exposition of the philosophical and theological foundations for his composite-

¹⁴ A word should be given regarding the writing and stylistic techniques used by this thesis. Due to the time, language, and spelling differences between many of the primary and secondary source material, gender-inclusive language, spelling variances and other related distinctions within quotations will remain undisturbed. The reason for this is twofold. First, it is in the best interest of scholarship to allow the authors to write candidly and in a manner in which they are, or were, accustomed. Second, this is the most likely method in which to avoid confusion in particularly technical areas and discussions.

dualistic understanding of humanity. The following three chapters will examine how Thomistic composite-dualism informs the three current issues in the modern mind-body debate identified by this thesis: human consciousness, human freedom, and human destiny.

Justification for the Study

There are four primary justifications for this thesis. First, many recent studies regarding the mind-body problem have been dominated by a dogmatic materialistic interpretation. Members of the scientific community who have begun investigating the brain and how it functions have written a large portion of this material. The most prominent of these have been Roger Penrose and Francis Crick. Whereas Penrose wishes to argue philosophically that quantum theory solves the mind-body problem, the predominant assumption that Crick makes is that the philosophical notion of ‘mind’ should be understood entirely by the physical processes in the various nervous systems and brain. Consequently, Crick has completely ignored and abandoned the possibility of a dualistic understanding of the relationship between someone’s ‘mind’ and physical body.¹⁵ Characteristic of this bias against philosophy’s ability to add to the discussion concerning the mind-body problem is a recent statement by Christof Koch. Attempting to illustrate his contempt for philosophical inquiry into the mind-body problem, Koch quoted Ludwig Wittgenstein: “‘Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.’”¹⁶

¹⁵ “Whatever the answer, the only sensible way to arrive at it is through detailed scientific research. All other approaches are little more than whistling to keep our courage up.” Francis Crick, The Astonishing Hypothesis: The Scientific Search for the Soul, (New York: Scribner’s, 1994), 263.

¹⁶ John Horgan, “Can Science Explain Consciousness?,” Scientific American 271 no. 1 (July 1994), 94.

Crick also comments, “[p]hilosophers have had such a poor record over the last two thousand years that they would do better to show a certain modesty rather than the lofty superiority that they usually display.”¹⁷ One of the goals of this thesis is to illustrate that Thomistic dualism is a more coherent and justifiable position than the substance dualist and materialistic ones that are being currently espoused by the scientific and philosophical communities.

Second, through their endorsement of the position currently popular in the scientific community, many modern philosophers apparently seem quite satisfied with a materialistic understanding of human life. This has often resulted in an unwillingness to acknowledge that dualism is a philosophically rational, coherent, and plausible option. As alluded to above, this has resulted in a certain level of contempt for those who would propose an immaterial solution to the mind-body problem. As Richard Swinburne has perceived, “[t]hese days one gets a far more sympathetic hearing for arguments to the existence of God than for arguments to the existence of the soul.”¹⁸

However, this is not always the case. Many in modern culture have become dissatisfied with a solely materialistic conception of the world outside and inside, despite the continuous inroads of modern science's apparent ability to provide a purely physical explanation of the world. Consequently, many people are returning to a more spiritual understanding of reality and human nature and experimenting with several so called “New Age” religions or philosophies. Clearly, there is a large disagreement in modern

¹⁷ Crick, 258. Commenting on such attitudes, John Searle remarks that “the price of having contempt for philosophy is that you make philosophical mistakes.” “The Mystery of Consciousness,” The New York Review, 2 Nov., 1995, 62.

¹⁸ Swinburne, ix.

society on what constitutes humanity. For these reasons, this study hopes to demonstrate that the “soul” is an essential component of humanity. And, being a necessary aspect of human existence, the soul must be properly understood in order for life to be fully enjoyed and have sufficient meaning.

Third, even within the philosophical community, there appears to be a lack of interest in Thomistic dualism in the current literature on the mind-body debate.¹⁹ In a recent issue of Faith and Philosophy dedicated to current trends in the mind-body problem, Lynne Rudder Baker considers Aquinas’s position difficult to “pin down.”²⁰ Richard Swinburne, in The Evolution of the Soul, refers to Aquinas only on six occasions, with all but one of these located in footnotes or appendixes. It is not being argued that Thomistic dualism should dominate the modern debate. However, in light of Aquinas’s importance in other areas of philosophical and theological thought, it is reasonable to argue that Aquinas’s position and approach to the mind-body problem in reference to the three primary issues provided above needs to be analyzed. In this way, the position of this thesis echoes the sentiment of Jacques Maritain when he remarked that “Thomism is not a museum piece.”²¹ With the advances in biology, medicine, physics, and astronomy, it is often believed that large scale advances, the kind that

¹⁹ One extreme example of this modern trend of ignoring the significance of Aquinas is found in Will Durant’s The Story of Philosophy. His only analysis and summarization of the work of Thomas Aquinas is found in the following passage. “In the thirteenth century all Christendom was startled and stimulated by Arabic and Jewish translations of Aristotle; but the power of the Church was still adequate to secure, through Thomas Aquinas and others, the transmogrification of Aristotle into a medieval theologian. The result was subtlety, but not wisdom.” Will Durant, The Story of Philosophy: The Lives and Opinions of the Greater Philosophers, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961), 82.

²⁰ Lynne Rudder Baker, “Need a Christian be a Mind/Body Dualist?” Faith and Philosophy 12 no. 4 (Oct. 1995), 503.

²¹ Jacques Maritain, A Preface to Metaphysics, (Salem, New Hampshire: Ayer, 1987), 9.

dethrone previously held systems, are universal in nature and extend to all areas of rational inquiry. On the contrary, this study hopes to demonstrate that there exists “a living Thomism,”²² and that Thomism, properly understood, “answers modern problems, both theoretical and practical.”²³ Therefore, despite many attempts to minimize the importance of the philosophy and theology of Thomas Aquinas and consider its study valid only in a purely historical context, this thesis will endeavor to illustrate that “truth cannot be subjected to a chronological test.”²⁴

Finally, the three issues chosen by this thesis – human consciousness, human freedom, and human destiny – are not important only to Thomistic dualism or the current mind-body debate, but also to the Christian theological message as well. As such, the study of the mind-body issue within a Thomistic context seems both valid and important. It is valid for the reasons detailed above. It is important because such study will help identify and clarify the content of the Christian faith, and provide valid philosophical justifications to those who hold to what the Christian faith maintains about persons.

²² Maritain, 10.

²³ *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

CHAPTER 2

THE COMPOSITE DUALISM OF THOMAS AQUINAS

A proper understanding of the human person was a primary and necessary aspect of the philosophical and theological enterprise of Thomas Aquinas. One reason for this was because of the diversity of opinions on this subject in the intellectual history of humanity. Indeed, the intellectual history of humanity contains a plethora of viewpoints on the essence of the human person. A cursory reading of the major thinkers from the ancient world to the present would present various conceptions of human consciousness, human freedom, and human destiny. Thomas Aquinas's understanding of the human person is radically different from that of many positions found in the ancient and the modern world. One of the most significant differences is Aquinas's conception of the human soul. Indeed, the uncommon composite dualism of Aquinas has specific and profound implications for the proper understanding of human consciousness, human freedom, and human destiny – issues vigorously debated in the current literature involving the mind-body problem.

This chapter will examine Aquinas's philosophical understanding of the dualistic nature of the human person, which is that a human being is comprised of both a body and a soul. This will be accomplished by providing an exposition of Aquinas's position, which will also identify the type of dualism Aquinas argues for, and how it is different from other dualistic accounts. This will be followed by reflecting in a preliminary way

on how Aquinas's position has implications for the philosophical and theological understanding of human consciousness, human freedom and human destiny.

Since many of Aquinas's convictions concerning human consciousness, human freedom, and human destiny directly pertain to his understanding of the human soul, a systematic and philosophical overview of his composite dualism is necessary. In order to facilitate an understanding of how Thomistic dualism is pertinent to the three issues in the mind-body debate selected for this thesis, this chapter will focus primarily on Aquinas's conception of the human soul. The first portion of this chapter will endeavor to identify and clarify the main elements of Aquinas's conception of the human soul and its relation to the human body. First, Aquinas's definition of the human soul will be examined and outlined. Second, two key properties attributed by Aquinas to the human soul will be investigated. Third, two specific powers which Aquinas assigns to the human soul will be explored.

Prior to a discussion concerning the properties and powers of the human soul, Aquinas's definition and classification of the soul in general, and the human soul in particular, is required. This will illustrate the special nature of the human soul and the distinction between the human soul and other types of souls.

The Soul in General

Aquinas provides three key concepts that characterize his notion of the soul in general. The first concept involves a necessary distinction to be made in order to understand properly Aquinas's understanding of the nature and powers of the human soul. To begin, Aquinas follows the tradition of Aristotle and defines the soul into three

categories. These are the *vegetative* soul, the *sensitive* soul, and the *rational* soul.¹ These distinctions represent the predominant view held in the ancient and medieval world until the seventeenth century when Descartes argued that only human beings have souls and animals were unconscious automata.²

The first type, the vegetative soul, Aquinas contends, is common to all beings that have life, since “every animate thing, in some way, moves itself.”³ According to Aquinas, the second type, the sensitive soul, is evidenced by the operations performed through corporeal sense organs.⁴ Thomistic dualism would identify the sensitive soul as the type belonging to animals. Aquinas argues that the third type, the rational soul, is unique and contains the qualities and properties of both the vegetative and sensitive souls. However, Aquinas is careful to add that in a human being the sensitive soul, the rational soul, and the vegetative soul “are numerically one soul.”⁵ This point will be given a fuller explanation in the next section. Further, Aquinas argues, the rational soul exceeds the corporeal nature of the being. This is because, for Aquinas, the rational soul is necessarily incorporeal and subsistent – that is, the soul is not to be equated with the body, and the soul has its own separate existence from the body.⁶ “We must conclude,” Aquinas writes, “that the human soul, which is called the intellect or the mind, is

¹ Cf. *De Anima* II, 2, 4.

² Richard Swinburne, *The Evolution of the Soul*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 183.

³ ST I, 78, 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ ST I, 76, 3.

⁶ ST I, 75, 2.

something incorporeal and subsistent.”⁷ Consequently, under Aquinas’s composite dualism, due to the rational soul’s nature as a separate substance, it is possible for the human (rational) soul to exist apart from the human body.

Aquinas maintains that this classification of the soul in general into three kinds or types is justified by the actions of each living being that exists on earth. For Aquinas, all living things have souls, though not necessarily the same type. This is because, for Aquinas, a soul is observed and defined through its actions. The reason for this is simple. If the body of a being was all that was necessary for life, then “every body would be a living thing.”⁸ Therefore, according to Aquinas, since not all things are alive, the body alone cannot be a sufficient for life. Of course, this is not to say that a soul is all that is necessary for a human body to have life. Certainly, a body must not be damaged, through illness or injury, to such an extent that the body cannot function as a living organism.

The second concept concerns Aquinas’s definition of the soul in general as “the first principle of life in those things which in our judgment live.”⁹ Aquinas identifies two actions by which life may be sufficiently demonstrated: knowledge and movement. It is interesting to note that Aquinas responds to this notion by stating that the pre-Socratic philosophers considered the principle of these actions – knowledge and movement – to be something corporeal. Hence, Aquinas would consider modern materialistic concepts of the mind-body issue to be “a reversion to a very primitive philosophy.”¹⁰ In order to

⁷ ST I, 75, 2.

⁸ ST I, 75, 1.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Peter J. Kreeft, ed., Summa of the Summa, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 244.

demonstrate the validity (strength) of Aquinas's position, each of these actions will be briefly examined.

In regards to knowledge, Aquinas understands it as an operation of the soul. For humans, like the lower animals, all knowledge is mediated through the senses, but is made intelligible to a human individual by the soul, which has the power of cognitive understanding. Aquinas calls this power the active intellect.¹¹ In regards to movement, Aquinas describes the principle of action as the soul. However, Aquinas does not consider every principle of vital action to be a soul. Aquinas provides two reasons for this assertion. First, if every principle of vital action were a soul, then the eye, which is the principle of vision, would be a soul. Second, if every principle of vital action were a soul, Aquinas adds, all material bodies would be living things.¹² But observation shows that not all material bodies provide evidence of knowledge and movement. Hence, "the soul, which is the first principle of life, is not a body, but the act of a body."¹³ Therefore, "it is the *first* principle of life which we call the soul."¹⁴

The final concept is Aquinas's understanding of the soul as the form of the body which it animates. It is important to note that Aquinas makes an explicit distinction between the Platonic dualistic notion of the soul as the motor of the body,¹⁵ which was popular in his day because of the influence of Augustinian theology and is popular today because of the influence of Cartesian philosophy of the mind, and his dualistic position.

¹¹ ST I, 79, 4.

¹² ST, I 75, 1.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ In Phaedo 81 Plato describes the soul as being imprisoned or entombed within the body.

Aquinas follows Aristotle's conviction that the soul is the form of the body. This concept is closely related to the second. For Aquinas, the difference between animate (living) bodies and inanimate (dead) bodies was not based on the disposition of a corporeal organ, or the status of any other material thing. Rather, it was the presence of the soul that provided the being its life and animated it. For Aquinas, therefore, the soul, being the form of the body, is the very life of the body.

The Human Soul in Particular

In moving from Aquinas's concept of the soul in general to the human soul in particular, it should be noted that these three concepts might also be utilized to characterize the human soul. Aquinas's characterization of the human soul in particular may be explained by examining three points.

First, as stated above, the human soul is an example of the highest class of the three types of souls – the rational soul – and also contains the properties of the vegetative and sensitive soul. Once again, it is important to note that Aquinas did not believe that the human soul is a composite of three souls. Etienne Gilson, commenting on this important aspect of Thomistic dualism, stated that

the intellectual soul contains virtually the sensitive soul, since it has all that the sensitive soul possesses and more besides; but it does not contain the sensitive soul in the sense that we can distinguish in it two different souls.¹⁶

Accordingly, Aquinas maintains that the rational soul provides the person “nourishment, sensation, and local movement; and likewise our understanding.”¹⁷ Therefore, Aquinas

¹⁶ Etienne Gilson, The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, (New York: Arno Press, 1979), 214-215.

¹⁷ ST I, 76, 1.

asserts, in contrast to Plato's position,¹⁸ "we must conclude that in man the sensitive soul, the intellectual soul, and the nutritive soul are numerically one soul."¹⁹

Second, as the first living principle of life of the human person, the rational soul provides man his uniquely intellectual character. In other words, for Aquinas, the uniqueness of the human soul is that it is rational. According to Aquinas, this alone accounts for a person's intellectual principle.²⁰ As Gilson writes, "[t]he act proper to an intellectual soul is evidently intellectual knowledge."²¹

Third, the idea of the rational soul being the form of the human body was intended by Aquinas to preserve the idea of the unity of the human individual. For if the soul were simply that which caused the body to move, as Platonic dualism asserts, then, Aquinas writes,

it would necessarily follow that in man there is another substantial form, by which the body is established in its being as movable by the soul. If, however, the intellectual soul be united to the body as its substantial form . . . it is impossible for another substantial form besides the intellectual soul to be found in man.²²

To substantiate this Aquinas points to the idea that the substantial form "gives being absolutely."²³ Since, in contrast to the substantial form, an accidental form of a thing is made and not generated absolutely, an accidental form cannot "make a thing to be absolutely."²⁴

¹⁸ Cf. Plato's Timaeus 69.

¹⁹ ST I, 76, 3.

²⁰ ST I, 76, 1.

²¹ Gilson, 208.

²² ST I, 76, 4.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

Therefore, if besides the intellectual soul there pre-existed in matter another substantial form by which the subject of the soul were made an actual being, it would follow that the soul does not give being absolutely, and consequently that it is not the substantial form; and so at the advent of the soul there would not be absolute but only relative generation, nor at its removal absolute corruption, all of which is clearly false.²⁵

Because of this, Aquinas asserts, “it is impossible for there to be in man another substantial form besides the intellectual soul.”²⁶ As a result, Aquinas concludes that the human body and the human or rational soul together make one substance. Aquinas’s explanation of this deserves to be quoted in full.

It may also be understood in this sense, that this soul is this man; and this could be held if it were supposed that the operation of the sensitive soul were proper to it without the body, because in that case all the operations which are attributed to man would belong to the soul only; and whatever performs the operations proper to a thing is that thing; therefore that which performs the operations of a man is man. But it has been shown above that sensation is not the operation of the soul only. Since, then, sensation is an operation of man, though not proper to him, it is clear that man is not a soul only, but something composed of soul and body.²⁷

Consequently, Aquinas maintains that one aspect of the nature of a human or rational soul is that it is to be united to a human body. Aquinas observes that since nature cannot fail in regards to necessary things

therefore, the intellectual soul had to be endowed not only with the power of understanding, but also with the power of feeling. Now the action of the senses is not performed without a corporeal instrument. Therefore the intellectual soul had to be united to a body which could be an adequate organ of sense.²⁸

By providing and defending these three concepts, Aquinas characterized the human soul in three primary ways. First, the human soul is to be understood under the

²⁵ ST I, 76, 4.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ ST I, 76, 5.

Aristotelian category of a rational soul. Second, the human soul is the first rational and intellectual principle of life for the individual. Third, the human soul is not to be confused with the body, but is to be understood as the form of the body. Aquinas encapsulates these three concepts by writing that “the difference which constitutes man is *rational*, which is applied to man on account of his intellectual principle. Therefore, the intellectual principle is the form of man.”²⁹

Operating with this characterization of the human soul, it is now possible to investigate several of the main properties of the soul as maintained by Thomistic dualism. So far, this chapter has demonstrated two key points. First, that Aquinas argued for the identification of the human soul as a rational soul. Second, that this conviction was based primarily on the properties that constitute the human soul and the specific powers which the human soul exhibits. The following portion of this chapter will analyze these two areas of Aquinas’s understanding of the human soul.

The Properties of the Human Soul

Coupled with his characterization of the human soul, Aquinas also identifies several of its properties. For the purposes of this thesis, two key properties of the human soul will be considered. The first property is that the human soul is immaterial. Throughout the section on Anthropology in the Summa Theologiae, Aquinas asserts that the soul “has no matter.”³⁰ Aquinas provides two main reasons to defend this belief. First, the soul is immaterial because the soul is the form of the body.

²⁹ ST I, 76, 1.

³⁰ ST I, 75, 5.

Now, though a body may be a principle of life, as the heart is a principle of life in an animal, yet nothing corporeal can be the first principle of life. For it is clear that to be a principle of life, or to be a living thing, does not belong to a body as such; since, if that were the case, every body would be a living thing, or a principle of life.³¹

In other words, as it was argued above, if the living principle of life were based on a material substance, than all material substances would be living. Hence, the soul cannot be composed of material. Consequently, Aquinas asserts that the human soul must be immaterial. McNerny writes that the conclusion that “the soul is immaterial follows from the fact that it is a form, and in that sense all substantial forms are immaterial.”³² Second, the process by which man acquires knowledge leads to the conclusion that the human soul is immaterial. Aquinas writes, “the intellectual principle . . . has an operation *per se* apart from the body.”³³ That is, if the intellectual principle were a body, then it would be impossible for it to gain knowledge of all other corporeal objects. Aquinas uses as an illustration a particular liquid – say, water – in a glass vase of a certain color. The true color of the liquid is blocked from the senses because of the color of the vase is “in the pupil of the eye” and does not allow the color of the liquid to be seen.³⁴ Copleston comments that Aquinas’s ground for the assertion of the immateriality of the human soul is based “on the contention that man exercises psychical activities which are not intrinsically dependent on a corporeal organ.”³⁵ Aquinas further contends that “[i]f the

³¹ ST I, 75, 1.

³² Ralph McNerny, A First Glance at St. Thomas Aquinas: A Handbook for Peeping Thomists, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 117.

³³ ST I, 75, 2.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ F. C. Copleston, Aquinas: An Introduction to the Life and Work of the Great Medieval Thinker, (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 170.

intellectual soul were composed of matter and form, the forms of things would be received into it as individuals, and so it would only know the individual.”³⁶ What Aquinas is alleging is that since the human soul has knowledge of universals, and not just particulars, the human soul could not be composed of a material substance. Hence, “it is clear that the immateriality of a thing is the reason why it is cognitive.”³⁷ Therefore, Aquinas concludes, “the intellectual soul, and every intellectual substance which has knowledge of forms absolutely, is exempt from composition of matter.”³⁸

The second property of the human soul is that it is immortal. Aquinas provides three principle reasons for this assertion. To begin, Aquinas makes a distinction between two types of corruption – *per se* (by itself) and accidental. In regards to corruption by itself, a substance that has existence by itself cannot be corrupted except by itself. Hence, “it is impossible for a form to be separated from itself; and therefore it is impossible for a subsistent form to cease to exist.”³⁹ The idea that a subsistent form cannot pass from being to nonbeing is the first reason why Aquinas considered the human soul to be immortal. Francis Selman explains this in further detail when he writes, “something no longer exists when it loses its form but a form cannot lose itself, so what is in itself a subsistent form cannot be destroyed.”⁴⁰ Therefore, since it has already been established that Aquinas considers the human soul to be a subsistent form, it cannot cease to exist. The second reason for Aquinas’s belief in the immortality of the human soul is based on

³⁶ ST I, 75, 5.

³⁷ ST I, 14, 1.

³⁸ ST I, 75, 5.

³⁹ ST I, 75, 6.

⁴⁰ Francis Selman, Thomas Aquinas: Teacher of Truth, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 43.

his belief in its immateriality. For Aquinas, since the human soul is not based on any material principle, it can survive the death of the body. Aquinas defends this idea on the basis of the primary source of the human soul – God. Aquinas rejected the argument that since the souls of brute animals are corruptible – that is, subject to dissolution – it follows that the souls of humans are corruptible. Rather, Aquinas argues that since the human soul is a special creation of God it follows that the human soul should be immortal.⁴¹

“For the souls of brutes are produced by some power of the body; whereas the human soul is produced by God.”⁴² The third reason for Aquinas’s belief in the immortality of the soul is based on its character of cognitive thought. McInerny writes that, according to Aquinas, “[t]he nature of thinking lifts the human soul, although it is the substantial form of a living body, free from the confining and restricting consequences of matter.”⁴³

Aquinas specifies several other properties of the human soul in the Summa Theologiae, such as its simplicity and its uniqueness. However, the immateriality and natural immortality of the human soul have been chosen for examination because of the significant implications they have for three key issues in the contemporary mind-body debate: human consciousness, human freedom, and human destiny. These implications will be investigated further at the close of this chapter. Attention will now be given to Aquinas’s understanding of the powers of the human soul.

⁴¹ Aquinas bases this argument on the text from Genesis 2:7, “Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”

⁴² ST I, 75, 6.

⁴³ McInerny, 129.

The Powers of the Human Soul

Aquinas identifies, following Aristotle's system, five specific powers of the soul - the *vegetative*, the *sensitive*, the *appetitive*, the *locomotive*, and the *intellectual*.⁴⁴ Due to the focus of this thesis, special consideration will be given to two of the cardinal powers of the human soul – the intellectual and the appetitive powers. The reason for this limitation is Aquinas's assertion that “the other powers of the soul do not come directly under the consideration of the theologian.”⁴⁵

Aquinas classifies a human's intellectual power, or the human intellect, as one of the primary powers of the human soul. This is because the human soul is able to acquire knowledge about other bodies through the intellect. The way in which the intellect acquires knowledge persuades Aquinas to make a distinction between the *passive* and *active* intellect. The active intellect, Aquinas writes, “is something in the soul.”⁴⁶ As such, the active intellect is active in so far as it forms its concepts based on sensible things. Aquinas comments that if something is moved from potentiality to act, it must be moved to actuality by something already in actuality. Therefore, one must “assign on the part of the intellect some power to make things actually intelligible, by abstraction of the species from material conditions.”⁴⁷ The passive intellect is given its name for two reasons. First, because, in contrast to the active intellect, the passive intellect is dependent upon sensible things for its knowledge. Since the human soul does not possess a reservoir of innate ideas upon which to draw, Copleston remarks that “it depends for the

⁴⁴ ST I, 78, 1.

⁴⁵ ST I, 84.

⁴⁶ ST I, 79, 4.

⁴⁷ ST I, 79, 3.

acquisition of knowledge on sense-experience.”⁴⁸ Second, the passive intellect, as a *tabula rasa*, is passive because, as Selman observes, “it is a potential *for* something, for having intelligible likeness.”⁴⁹ The intellect, identified and understood in this manner, causes Adler to conclude that the human soul’s intellectual power is “the underlying cause” of humanity’s ability to know universals and particulars.⁵⁰ Therefore, Gilson concludes, “[t]he act proper to an intelligent soul is evidently intellectual knowledge.”⁵¹

The reason Aquinas asserts that the appetitive power, or the will, is important to the theologian is because it is the will that moves the intellect.⁵² Aquinas identifies this movement of the intellect by the will as an efficient cause. He writes, “wherever we have order among a number of active powers, that power which regards the universal end moves the powers which regard particular ends.”⁵³ In this manner, “the will moves the intellect as to the exercise of its act.”⁵⁴ Aquinas explains this by commenting that the object of the intellect is truth, while the object of the will is goodness.⁵⁵ However, it must be understood that the will does not exist or operate independent of the intellect.

O’Donnell comments that Aquinas’s position maintains that the will “obtains from the

⁴⁸ Copleston, 163.

⁴⁹ Selman, 44.

⁵⁰ Mortimer J. Adler, The Difference of Man and the Difference it Makes, (New York: Fordham University Press, 1993), 130.

⁵¹ Gilson, 208.

⁵² ST I, 82, 4.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ ST I-II, 9, 1.

⁵⁵ ST I, 82, 4.

intellect the information it needs in order to make right decisions.”⁵⁶ For this reason, Aquinas judges the will as the intellectual appetite. Kreeft describes Aquinas’s concept of the will as the “power of the soul to desire or choose a good known by the intellect.”⁵⁷

Aquinas considered the intellect and the will as the two primary powers of the human soul. Based on this identification by Aquinas, Davies observes that “the human soul . . . is the *locus* of thought and will.”⁵⁸ However, it must be understood that the intellect and the will do not exist or act independently. Rather, with Aquinas’s composite dualism, the intellect and the will work together, and are the cause of the soul’s knowledge and desire of things outside itself in two ways. First, the intellect perceives the forms of material things, thereby obtaining knowledge of them. Second, the will moves to desire those things that the soul understands as its proper end. In this manner, the rational soul is able to have both an intellectual knowledge and intellectual appetite.⁵⁹

The Implications of Aquinas’s Composite Dualism

The previous section constructed and clarified Aquinas’s understanding of the human soul, identified and analyzed the human soul’s immateriality and immortality as two of its key properties, and examined the human intellect and will as two of its most significant powers. Among the most important facets of Aquinas’s understanding of the human soul are the implications his position has for one’s belief concerning the nature of

⁵⁶ Robert A. O’Donnell, Hooked on Philosophy: Thomas Aquinas Made Easy, (New York: Alba House, 1995), 61.

⁵⁷ Kreeft, 30.

⁵⁸ Brian Davies, The Thought of Thomas Aquinas, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 216.

⁵⁹ Kreeft, 266.

human consciousness, human freedom, and human destiny. Each of the implications regarding human consciousness, human freedom, and human destiny, which result from Aquinas's composite dualism, will now be considered.

The first implication that results from Aquinas's composite dualism concerns human consciousness. For Thomistic dualism, human consciousness has two key factors that are relevant for this thesis. The first factor, human rationality, is an intrinsic element of Aquinas's definition of a human soul. Because a human being possesses a rational soul, as opposed to a purely vegetative or sensitive soul, it is the nature of a person to be a rational being. One way to demonstrate this is to consider a human person's ability to think conceptually. Though the world contains many creatures that have sensitive souls, (able to perform operations based on information provided through the corporeal senses), and which are able to think perceptually, only humanity has the ability to think conceptually.⁶⁰ It is a necessary outcome of Aquinas's position that humanity's rational soul gives a person the ability to think conceptually, rather than just perceptually. A basis for this will be provided and defended in Chapter 3.

The second factor of human consciousness to be considered is fascinating, and has major implications for the focus of this thesis. Aquinas maintains that the capacity for self-transcendence is a natural result of the human soul's conscious character and identity as a rational soul. As stated above, Aquinas's position maintains that only a rational soul is able to think both perceptually and conceptually. Since a human being is able to think both perceptually and conceptually, it follows that a person is able to comprehend universals and not only particulars. With this ability for conceptual and

⁶⁰ ST I, 78, 1.

rational thought, Aquinas asserts, comes the capability for self-transcendence. Adler echoes this belief and writes that “human thinking transcends the immediate environment and extends not only to objects in the remote past and the remote future but also to objects that have no temporal locus whatsoever.”⁶¹ Therefore, according to Thomistic dualism, the human soul is necessarily self-transcendent. Barron writes that, “the human is touched by a divine energy which lures him to self-transcendence.”⁶²

The second implication that results from Thomistic dualism concerns the nature of human freedom. There are two elements of human freedom that deserve attention. To begin, it is important to communicate that, for Aquinas, general volitional acts and moral volitional acts are not the same. Creatures with both rational and sensitive souls may make general volitional acts. This concept is closely connected with how one defines freedom. If freedom is defined as the ability for a creature to act without compulsion from an outside source, then a creature with a sensitive soul that acts in a certain manner, and is not compelled from an outside force to act in this manner, has freedom in accordance with that and similar acts. For instance, suppose a cat named Boris wakes from a nap on a couch and experiences the sensation of hunger. It jumps off the couch and walks into the kitchen where it sees a substance it is used to consuming, which happens to relieve the hunger sensations it experiences. Such an action would be understood as a free act, since Boris did not act under compulsion from any outside source. This would also be the case for creatures with rational souls (humans) in regards to actions that have no moral connection. However, in regards to human freedom,

⁶¹ Adler, The Difference of Man and the Difference it Makes, 136.

⁶² Robert Barron, Thomas Aquinas: Spiritual Master, (New York: Crossroad, 1996), 142.

Aquinas asserts that the rational soul's intellectual and appetitive powers provide humanity the ability to make volitional *moral* choices. Davies observes that, for Aquinas, "the mention of human action brings us to the realm of morality."⁶³ Though, as stated above, not every free human act is necessarily a moral act, every act that is based on rationality and volition is a moral act. This is evident for two reasons. First, the human person has the ability, using the intellect and the will, to act towards an end which is considered desirable by the intellect and the will. Second, such an action is based on a volitional choice, since "every individual action must needs have some circumstance that makes it good or bad, at least in respect of the intention of the end."⁶⁴ Aquinas further comments that

if an action that proceeds from deliberate reason be not directed to the due end, it is, by that fact alone, repugnant to reason, and has the character of evil. But if it is directed to a due end, it is in accord with reason; wherefore it has the character of good.⁶⁵

Consequently, "the moral content of every human act resides in the intention of the agent."⁶⁶ For instance, the owner of Boris, through his intellectual ability, realizes that it is time for the cat to be hungry, and that feeding it would be a morally good thing to do. Through an act of his will he fills Boris' feeding dish and places it in the spot that Boris is familiar with in regards to finding food to eat. The end that both the intellect and the will were directed to was a good end. Under this understanding, this action – feeding Boris – would be considered a morally good act, since it was an action that was fulfilled

⁶³ Davies, 221.

⁶⁴ ST I-II, 18, 9.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ O'Donnell, 73.

by actions of both the intellect and of the will, directed towards a proper good end.

The second element of human freedom is a direct result of humanity's moral freedom. This element is humanity's moral responsibility. As outlined above, human freedom, according to Aquinas, means that a human being is both a rational and free creature, since freedom of choice is an act of the will that results from a judgment of the reason. Turning from this to human responsibility, Aquinas states that if the human person were not free "counsels, exhortations, commands, prohibitions, rewards, and punishments would be in vain."⁶⁷ Since a human being is a creature endowed with a rational soul and capable of moral choices, this naturally leads Aquinas to hold that a person is responsible for his moral actions. Adler writes, "the burden of moral responsibility . . . is inseparable from freedom of choice."⁶⁸

The final implication resulting from Thomistic dualism concerns human destiny. For the purposes of this thesis, three elements of human destiny that follow from Aquinas's composite dualism will be examined. To begin, Aquinas's position naturally leads to the concept of the immortality of the human soul. There are three reasons why Aquinas's understanding of the human soul leads to this conviction. First, since the human soul is an immaterial substance, the presence of a body is not necessary in order for the soul to continue to exist. Second, since the soul is naturally transcendent, it is not necessary for the soul to be located in or defined by a physical body. Third, the human soul is immortal, and survives the death of the body, because the human soul is an

⁶⁷ ST I, 83, 1.

⁶⁸ Adler, The Difference of Man and the Difference it Makes, 268-287.

intellectual substance.⁶⁹ Thomistic dualism justifies this assumption based on the nature of human conceptual thought. McInerny writes, “[t]he nature of thinking lifts the human soul, although it is the substantial form of a living body, free from the confining and restricting consequences of matter.”⁷⁰ Hence, the soul does not exist and is active because of a body. Rather, a body is able to survive and be active because of the presence of a soul.

However, Aquinas does not conclude his discussion concerning human destiny at this point. The second element of human destiny that follows from Thomistic dualism concerns the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body, and builds upon the previous argument concerning the immortality of the human soul. For Aquinas, the immortality of the human soul necessitates a future resurrection of the body. This is so for two reasons. First, revelation upholds the assertion of a future resurrection of the body. Aquinas believed that it was contrary to the Christian faith to accept a spiritual resurrection and deny a bodily one.⁷¹ Second, reason supports the doctrine of a future resurrection of the body. He writes,

It is also clear . . . that the soul is naturally united to the body, for in its essence it is the form of the body. It is, then, contrary to the nature of the soul to be without the body. But nothing which is contrary to nature can be perpetual. Perpetually, then, the soul will not be without the body. Since then, it persists perpetually, it must once again be united to the body, and this is to rise again. Therefore, the immortality of the soul seems to demand a future resurrection of bodies.⁷²

⁶⁹ ST I, 75, 6.

⁷⁰ McInerny, 129.

⁷¹ CG 4, 74, 6.

⁷² CG 4, 79, 10.

For Aquinas, “man cannot achieve his ultimate happiness unless the soul be once again united to the body.”⁷³ “For Aquinas paradise is no disembodied, purely intellectual state of affairs; on the contrary, it is richly imagined as the blissful fulfillment of the totality of human being,” Barron concludes.⁷⁴ Clearly, according to Thomistic dualism, human destiny is based on the immortality of the soul that culminates in the future resurrection of the body.

The final implication to be considered by this thesis concerning human destiny concerns humanity’s special creation. Indeed, in many ways this implication is a basis for the other two. For Aquinas, humanity’s special creation signified that each human individual was made in the image of God. Thomistic dualism provides three signs that give evidence in support of this idea. The first sign is human morality. This can be established by understanding the relationship of morality to both God and human beings. For Aquinas, both God and each human individual have an intellect and a will.⁷⁵ Aquinas defines moral actions as those actions that move “voluntarily in the light of recognized ends or goals” informed by a rational intellect.⁷⁶ This leads Aquinas to regard both God and the human person as moral agents. In this manner, human morality is a sign of man being made in the image of God. The second sign is human immortality. Adler states that “[o]nly man requires God’s special creative action. No other living thing on earth is vouchsafed individual immortality by God.”⁷⁷ One reason for this is the

⁷³ CG 4, 79, 11.

⁷⁴ Barron, 148-149.

⁷⁵ ST I, 19, 1.

⁷⁶ Davies, 220.

⁷⁷ Adler, The Difference of Man and the Difference it Makes, 286-287.

necessary intervention by God for the creation of each human person. The biological processes of reproduction cannot account for the coming into existence of each rational human soul. Hence, the genesis of each human person “requires the intervention of divine causality.”⁷⁸ The third sign is human rationality. Aquinas, quoting Augustine, writes that things which know and understand “approach so near to God in likeness, that among all creatures nothing comes nearer to Him.”⁷⁹ Therefore, “intellectual creatures alone, properly speaking, are made to God’s image.”⁸⁰ Adler echoes this judgement when he states that “the human intellect is the only basis for understanding man as made in the image or likeness of God.”⁸¹

This chapter has attempted to establish the boundaries of this thesis by analyzing Aquinas’s composite dualism and exploring its implications for human consciousness, human freedom, and human destiny. The chapter began by defining the soul in general, and identifying the human soul in particular as a rational soul. This was followed by the identification of the immateriality and immortality of the soul as two of its key properties relevant to this thesis. Next, the intellect and the will were identified as the human soul’s two principle powers which are particularly relevant to the current issues in the mind-body debate being studied in this thesis. Finally, the issues of human consciousness, human freedom, and human destiny that result from Thomistic dualism were identified and examined.

⁷⁸ Adler, The Difference of Man and the Difference it Makes, 286.

⁷⁹ ST I, 93, 2. Aquinas is quoting Augustine’s *QQ LXXXIII, qu. 51*. Cf. 83 Different Questions. trans. David L. Mosher (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1977), 84-88.

⁸⁰ ST I, 93, 2.

⁸¹ Mortimer J. Adler, Intellect: Mind over Matter, (New York: Macmillan, 1990), 192.

This chapter has demonstrated that Aquinas's composite dualism is both elaborate and thorough. Based on this chapter, three judgments may be offered. First, Aquinas's understanding of the human soul as the form of the body and the living principle of life is philosophically defensible. Utilizing human experience, scientific knowledge, logic, and Scriptural insight, Aquinas demonstrates his expertise with both philosophy and theology. Further, Aquinas's position has not been demonstrated as erroneous despite modern attacks against his notion of the human soul from both metaphysical materialists and substance dualists. Second, Aquinas's conclusions concerning the human soul, particularly his understanding concerning human freedom and destiny, are in accordance with the Christian faith. It is true that Aquinas is a Natural Theologian, but he is equally a Biblical Theologian. His philosophical and theological positions concerning the nature of the human person are fully informed by historic orthodox Christian faith. Third, Aquinas's composite dualism is beneficial in demonstrating the importance of a proper understanding of the human soul. As Barron observes, "Aquinas's writings on the human person are extremely 'soulful,' reminding us of our dignity and destiny as children of the divine."⁸² For these reasons, Aquinas must be considered as an essential resource for the study of human consciousness, human freedom, and human destiny, and of how these issues relate to the current debate regarding the mind-body problem. It is these three issues that will be examined in more detail in the following chapters.

⁸² Barron, 159.

CHAPTER 3

THOMISTIC DUALISM AND HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS

With Aquinas's composite dualism outlined and explained in Chapter 1, this chapter will explore the relevance of Thomistic dualism to the modern mind-body debate in relation to the issue of human consciousness. It should be noted that the study of human consciousness has, until recently, been largely ignored by most disciplines except philosophy, which has kept the fires of the debate regarding the nature and basis of human consciousness burning. However, now both philosophers and physical scientists have begun to take the issue of human consciousness seriously. This has been a radical reversal to the normal attitudes encountered among critics of non-materialistic conceptions of human consciousness.¹

The specific issue, which this chapter will attempt to resolve, is whether metaphysical materialism can account for the phenomena of human consciousness. This chapter will begin by defining the term human consciousness, and identify the principal factors of human consciousness that relate to this thesis. This will be followed by an examination of the soft materialist conception of human consciousness of John Searle, the quantum-physicalist position of Roger Penrose, and the hard materialistic position of Francis Crick. These materialistic understandings of the nature of human consciousness

¹ Francis Crick quotes a statement from John Searle. "As recently as a few years ago, if one raised the subject of consciousness in cognitive science discussions, it was generally regarded as a form of bad taste, and graduate students . . . would roll their eyes at the ceiling and assume expressions of mild disgust." Francis Crick, *The Astonishing Hypothesis: The Scientific Search for the Soul*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1994), vii.

will then be critiqued in light of Aquinas's composite position, showing that they have an inadequate basis for understanding the nature of human consciousness.

What is Human Consciousness?

Human consciousness has continually been a source of vigorous debate in relation to the mind-body issue. Indeed, The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy proclaims human consciousness as perhaps "the most challenging and pervasive source of problems in the whole of philosophy."² An important reason why human consciousness is a problem is because the answer of how to define human consciousness is not settled. One general definition would state that human consciousness is any type of human mental state. However, G. F. Stout provides a more helpful definition of human consciousness when he writes that it is "not only the awareness of our own states, but these states themselves, whether we have cognisance of them or not."³ Any valuable definition of human consciousness must contain three principal factors concerning human consciousness. The first principal factor of human consciousness is thought or thinking. The act or ability to think is necessary in order to achieve any level of awareness. This may be illustrated by calling attention to the fact that, though the type of conscious activity in various forms of living organisms is debated, no one can plausibly claim that inanimate objects, such as Michelangelo's David, are conscious.⁴ However, the human capacity for thought, as it

² Simon Blackburn, editor, The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 77.

³ Paul Edwards, editor in chief, The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 193.

⁴ Of course, this is not to say that no one has made this claim. For instance, Searle notes that John McCarthy, champion of the belief in artificial intelligence, once remarked that machines "as simple as thermostats can be said to have beliefs." John Searle, Minds, Brains and Science, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 30.

relates to human consciousness, must be understood as more than the act or ability of sensation. This is because the ability to think moves beyond the ability to sense “either as an elaboration of the materials of sense or as an apprehension of objects which are totally beyond the reach of the senses.”⁵ This issue will be discussed later in this chapter.

A second principal factor of human consciousness is the act or ability of an individual to observe his own thoughts and ideas. In other words, a person has the ability to think about his thinking. John Locke considered this to be a vital factor for understanding human consciousness when he defined consciousness as “the perception of what passes in a man’s own mind.”⁶ This factor focuses on the introspective nature of human consciousness – the act or ability of observing one’s own mental state. This factor of human consciousness is almost a universal aspect of understanding human thought. Bertrand Russell wrote that the “faculty of being acquainted with things other than itself is the main characteristic of a mind.”⁷

The third principal factor of human consciousness is self-knowledge, and must be differentiated from the type of knowledge mentioned in the previous paragraph. Human self-knowledge is a vital factor in regards to properly understanding the phenomena of human consciousness and should be differentiated from an individual’s knowledge of one’s own thoughts and ideas. It is apparent that higher forms of living organisms have a certain level of knowledge. For instance, in order for Boris, the domestic cat introduced in Chapter 1, to be able to eat, he requires the ability to attain a certain amount of

⁵ Mortimer J. Adler, The Great Ideas: A Lexicon of Western Thought, (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 543.

⁶ John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, II, 1, 19.

⁷ Quoted by Mortimer J. Adler, The Great Ideas, 543.

knowledge. This would include his awareness of certain sensations and objects, such as the hunger sensations being caused by his body, and the apprehension of such objects as the kitchen floor, his food bowl, and the food in the bowl. However, human consciousness has the ability to be aware of not only one's surroundings, but of one's self as well. The level of abstractive thought, which is necessary to have the self-knowledge which human consciousness displays, points to the third principal factor of human consciousness. This illustrates that there is a dual character to human thinking – a person's ability to think perceptually and conceptually – and follows from Aquinas's distinction between the sensitive soul and the rational soul. This will be further examined at the end of this chapter. Hence, human thought has the ability to be aware of one's self, as well as the objects of which one is thinking.

Though the exact properties of human consciousness continue to remain an open question in philosophy,⁸ it has been demonstrated that these three factors are vital and necessary components of human consciousness. These three principal factors establish a more complete understanding of human consciousness and make a more accurate definition of human consciousness possible. "It is by means of consciousness that a person acquires the ideas of the various operations of mental states, such as the ideas of perceiving, thinking, doubting, reasoning, knowing, and willing and learns of his own mental states at a given time."⁹

With human consciousness properly defined and the factors related to it provided above, attention will now be given to three conceptions of human consciousness found in

⁸ Robert Audi, ed. The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 606.

⁹ Paul Edwards, editor in chief, The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 191.

the current mind-body debate. Each of these will first be outlined and evaluated. The evaluation will focus on two areas, the philosophical justification for their arguments, and a critique in view of Aquinas's composite dualism. First, the metaphysical materialistic position of John Searle will be examined. This will be followed by the quantum-physicalist position of Roger Penrose.

The Soft Materialistic Basis for Human Consciousness: John Searle

Prior to examining Searle's conception of human consciousness, it is necessary to answer two questions. First, how does Searle define the phenomena of human consciousness? Second, under what framework does Searle seek to understand human consciousness? After Searle's position has been outlined, his argument in favor of a materialistic basis for human consciousness will be examined and critiqued.

To begin, it is important to note that Searle has a narrow definition of human consciousness. He understands consciousness as the ability to be aware of one's surroundings.¹⁰ In this regard Searle is in agreement with John Locke's definition of human consciousness, as the perception of that of which a mind has knowledge. Yet, Searle also considers three other factors to be necessary for human consciousness. These other factors serve to augment his definition of human consciousness. The first factor he refers to as intentionality, or "the feature by which our mental states are directed at, or about, or refer to, or are of objects and states of affairs in the world other than themselves."¹¹ The second related factor involves the subjective nature of mental states.

¹⁰ Searle, 15.

¹¹ Ibid., 16.

This is an important factor of human consciousness because it is the nature of a person's mental states to be subjective and unable to be experienced by others.¹² The third related factor to human consciousness is the phenomena of mental causation, which considers the fact "that thoughts and feelings make a real difference to the way we behave, that they actually have some *casual* effect on the physical world."¹³ For instance, if a person decides to get up out of bed in the morning, this desire causes their body to move in a specific manner that results in them getting out of bed. Alongside these three factors, the mystery of human consciousness is one of the reasons why the mind-body problem seems so difficult.¹⁴

However, Searle is convinced that the solution to the mind-body problem is, in fact, a simple one.¹⁵ According to Searle, the key to understanding human consciousness, like other aspects of the mind-body problem, is to understand it under a completely materialistic framework. Searle maintains that all mental states are, in fact, biological phenomena. "Consciousness, intentionality, subjectivity and mental causation are all a part of our biological life history, along with growth, reproduction, the secretion of bile, and digestion."¹⁶ Therefore, Searle's materialistic position may be described as a combination of mentalism (the belief that mental phenomena really exist), and physicalism (the belief that all that exists in the world are physical particles with their

¹² Searle, 16.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ As Searle writes, "[t]he way, in short, to dispel the mystery is to understand the process," Minds, Brains and Science, 23. However, as will be argued in this chapter, the physical process cannot account for all aspects of the mystery.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 41.

properties and relations).¹⁷

Searle's argument in favor of a materialistic conception of human consciousness has two major elements. The first element contains two premises which he proposes. The first premise is that all mental phenomena "whether conscious or unconscious, visual or auditory, pains, tickles, itches, thoughts, indeed, all of our mental life, are caused by processes going on in the brain."¹⁸ Searle goes to great length to establish this part of his argument. For Searle all sensations "are caused by a series of events that begin at free nerve endings and end in the thalamus and in other regions of the brain."¹⁹ This first premise in his argument is important for Searle since it provides the basis for the remainder of his argument. Hence, "everything that matters for our mental life, all of our thoughts and feelings, are caused by processes inside the brain."²⁰ The second premise, that all mental phenomena are features of the brain, necessarily follows from the first.²¹ However, Searle's conclusion, that human consciousness is entirely caused by physical processes occurring in the brain, does not follow from these premises. Though they are necessary conditions for his position, they are not sufficient conditions. Searle is aware of this, and notes that this conclusion about the nature of human consciousness is often puzzling because the conclusion appears to imply that the brain causes itself. Such an assertion appears to be a fallacious argument. Searle illustrates this as follows.

It is tempting to think that whenever A causes B there must be two discrete events, one identified as the cause, the other identified as the effect; that all

¹⁷ Searle, 26-27.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

²¹ *Ibid.*

causation functions in the same way as billiard balls hitting each other. This crude model of the causal relationships between brain and the mind inclines us to accept some kind of dualism; we are inclined to think that events in one material realm, the 'physical', cause events in another insubstantial realm, the 'mental.'²²

Therefore, in order further to establish his position, Searle provides the second element of his argument. Searle introduces a qualifying statement into his argument which he believes, together with the two premises, comprises sufficient conditions for his position. Searle states that the self-referential problem (that brains cause minds, and minds are only features of brains) may be avoided by correcting common misunderstanding of causation. To demonstrate this Searle uses an illustration that distinguishes between micro and macro properties common in physics. Consider a glass of water on a table. Each object is composed of micro-properties that manifest themselves as macro-properties when observed at the macro level, which are in turn observed as features.

For example, the solidity of the table in front of me is explained by the lattice structure occupied by the molecules of which the table is composed. Similarly, the liquidity of the water is explained by the nature of the interactions between the H₂O molecules. Those macro-features are causally explained by the behaviour of elements at the micro-level.²³

Hence, the seemingly mysterious relationship between the mind and brain (or mental events and brain events) may be explained in a similar way. Searle argues that human consciousness may be logically understood as a surface feature that is accounted for by the behavior of the micro-elements that make up the brain, and "at the same time is *realised in* the system that is made up of the micro-elements."²⁴

²² Searle, 20.

²³ Ibid., 21.

²⁴ Ibid.

The other three features that are related to human consciousness, intentionality, subjectivity, and mental causation, have as their foundation this notion of causation, or cause-effect relationship. Intentionality, such as thirst (or the desire to drink) is to be understood as caused by physical events in the central nervous system and realized in the hypothalamus. “Thirst is therefore an intentional state: it has content; its content determines under what conditions it is satisfied, and it has all the rest of the features that are common to intentional states.”²⁵ The second related factor was subjectivity. Because the human central nervous system is a closed system “the existence of subjectivity is an objective fact of biology.”²⁶ The third related factor was mental causation. Mental causation refers to the question of how mental events can cause bodily movements. Searle maintains that “brain activity causes bodily movements by physiological processes.”²⁷

Despite the apparent simplicity of Searle’s argument, it is unclear which type of causation to which Searle’s argument is referring. According to inductive reasoning, there are four main types of causation that seek to determine the causes of things or events. In order for Searle’s argument (that human consciousness is caused by and realized in physical processes in the brain) to be valid, it must conform to one of these types and survive a critique.

One type of causation identifies the causes of things or events in terms of distant causes in the causal chain from the phenomena being considered. This type of causation

²⁵ Searle, 24.

²⁶ Ibid., 25.

²⁷ Ibid., 26.

is referred to as the *proximate cause*. For instance, suppose there is a car that breaks down on Interstate 10 outside Phoenix, Arizona. The owner checks under the hood and notices that there is no oil in the engine. Upon inspection by a mechanic, it is discovered that there is a manufacturing defect in the oil pan that caused all of the oil to leak out of the car. The defect in the oil pan would be the proximate or remote cause of the car breaking down. However, this is not the type of causation on which Searle's argument is based. This is because Searle states that the physical events occurring in the brain are not distant causes necessary for human consciousness. Rather, his argument implies a more direct correlation between the physical events in the brain and the phenomena of human consciousness.

A second type of causation, the *probable cause*, refers to things or events where it is not necessarily true "that producing the cause always produces the effect."²⁸ Suppose that the manufacturing defect in the oil pan only produces a leak in extremely warm weather. Accordingly, the owner of a similar make and model of car living in Minnesota would not necessarily experience the same breakdown as the owner living in Arizona. The type of causation also does not seem to apply to Searle's argument either.

A third type of causation may be described as a *necessary condition* for bringing about a particular thing or event. Something is a necessary condition if it is required for the actualization of a thing or event. This type of causation does apply to Searle's argument, since he writes that "everything that matters for our mental life, all of our thoughts and feelings, are caused by processes inside the brain."²⁹

²⁸ Kahane and Tidman, *Logic and Philosophy: A Modern Introduction* 7th ed., (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1995), 338.

²⁹ Searle, 19.

The fourth main type of causation is usually described in terms of one thing or event being the *sufficient condition* for another thing or event. For instance, the cause of Julius Caesar's death was being stabbed repeatedly by knives. His being stabbed repeatedly (damaging vital organs and being denied proper medical treatment) would then be properly understood as a sufficient cause of his death. In other words, something is a sufficient condition if there are no other things or events necessary in order to actualize a certain thing or event. For this reason, Searle's argument also could conform to this fourth type of causation. However, of the two types of causation on which Searle could be basing his argument, it seems clear that the fourth type of causation is the one on which Searle's argument depends. This is because Searle is convinced that the central nervous system and the physical events in the brain are all that is necessary for the achievement of the phenomena of human consciousness. Whether or not this is an adequate accounting for the basis of human consciousness will be discussed at the end of the chapter.

It has been demonstrated that Searle believes that the brain, and the physical events that occur in the brain, are necessary and sufficient conditions for human consciousness. In light of this, because of his belief in the reality of mental phenomena, Searle's position on human consciousness should be further defined as a type of *soft materialism*. Clearly, Searle cannot be described as a dualist because, though he believes that the mind and body interact in order to generate consciousness in human beings, he believes that "all mental phenomena are just features of the brain."³⁰

³⁰ Searle, 26.

The Quantum-Physicalist Basis for Human Consciousness: Roger Penrose

The mathematician Roger Penrose has recently published his proposed solution to the modern mind-body debate, and shares many of the same elements as John Searle's. These will be outlined briefly. However, Penrose's position is also quite unique. This section will briefly outline the way in which he believes human consciousness should be understood. This will be accomplished by, first, providing his definition of human consciousness, and second, outlining and examining his theory for the basis of human consciousness. This will be followed by a critique. Since, as stated above, there are many similarities between Searle's soft-materialism and Penrose's quantum-physicalism, this section will briefly focus on those areas in which Penrose's position is unique with regards to understanding the nature and basis for human consciousness.

Penrose is candid in his admission that he is unwilling to define human consciousness. The reason for this is because, he writes, "we do not know what it is."³¹ However, Penrose does attempt to identify and explain the various components of human consciousness. In this manner, though Penrose is hesitant about defining human consciousness, he does believe that it is possible to understand the mystery referred to as human consciousness through an entirely scientific explanation.³² Nonetheless, Penrose maintains that the key to this explanation is not with neurobiology, physiology or traditional physics. Rather, he looks to quantum theory, and its application at the molecular and quantum levels in the human brain, as the way in which human

³¹ Roger Penrose, The Large, the Small and the Human Mind, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 99. Penrose, however, goes on to bring two terms into the discussion he believes are necessary for a proper definition of human consciousness – awareness and intelligence.

³² *Ibid.*, 97.

consciousness is to be understood. Penrose believes that if human consciousness could be understood by classical physics it would be able to be duplicated in a mathematical or computational scale. If true, it would be possible to construct a conscious computer – one that would pass the Church-Turing test. However, Penrose does not believe that this is possible. This is because the “physical action of the brain evokes awareness, but this physical action cannot be properly simulated computationally.”³³ Therefore, Penrose seeks to understand the nature and foundation of human consciousness on the basis of the recent lessons and theorems from quantum physics. Stated briefly, Penrose believes that

Non-local effects . . . occur in quantum mechanics and they cannot be understood in terms of one thing being separate from another – some sort of global activity is taking place. It seems to me that consciousness is something global. Therefore, any physical process responsible for consciousness would have to be something with an essentially global character. Quantum coherence certainly fits the bill in this respect.³⁴

Penrose’s theory is very complex, and it is not the objective of this chapter to completely outline his theory. However, the point being made is that Penrose’s theory, like Searle’s, is based on metaphysical materialism. From this two points against his argument emerge. First, though he pushes the explanation of human consciousness to the quantum level, Penrose is quite satisfied with his physicalist position.³⁵ Clearly, then, Penrose’s position, though unique, is another example of an argument for the nature and foundation of human consciousness based on metaphysical materialism. Second, Penrose is not specifically clear about how his theory could account for human consciousness.

His argument appears to be that because both quantum mechanics and human

³³ Roger Penrose, Shadows of the Mind, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 12.

³⁴ Penrose, The Large, the Small and the Human Mind, 133.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 98.

consciousness are mysterious they must be causally related in some manner.³⁶ However, because Penrose does not offer a detailed outline of his proposal, his theory cannot be challenged, defended or defeated. Therefore, Penrose's argument ultimately suffers from a problem of indefiniteness, in that it cannot be challenged and is not falsifiable.

The Hard Materialistic Basis for Human Consciousness: Francis Crick

Soft materialists are not the only ones who have championed this metaphysical materialistic understanding of human consciousness. One of the more systematic accounts is found in the recent research and writings of Francis Crick. This section has three main objectives. The first one is to provide Crick's definition of human consciousness. The second objective will be to identify the major differences between Crick's hard materialistic basis for human consciousness, and the soft materialism of Searle and Penrose, which are relevant to this thesis. The third objective will be to identify the major similarities between these positions that are relevant to this thesis.

Crick defines consciousness as "a vivid internal picture of the external world."³⁷ This definition corresponds well with Searle's definition provided earlier in this chapter. Such a picture would necessarily involve an awareness of one's surroundings, and would also include, according to Crick, an awareness of the self. For this reason Crick believes that the best way to approach the "problem" of human consciousness is through the scientific study of human visual awareness.³⁸

³⁶ Stephen Hawking provides a similar critique about Penrose's theory of human consciousness in his small article in The Large, The Small and the Human Mind, 171.

³⁷ Crick, 9.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 203.

Despite the close association with Searle's definition of human consciousness, there are several elements in Crick's understanding for the basis of human consciousness which challenge Searle's approach. Two of them are pertinent to this thesis. First, in contrast to Searle's use of philosophy, Crick assumes that using only "scientific" and naturalistic methods is the best way to approach the quest concerning the nature of human consciousness.³⁹ He writes that the mind "requires a scientific explanation," and that "what is needed are suggestions for new experiments in order to validate this assumption."⁴⁰ This opinion is echoed by many within the scientific community investigating the nature and basis for human consciousness.⁴¹ Phillip Johnson observes that despite Crick's insistence "that scientists hold their hypotheses only as provisional beliefs and not by 'blind faith,' it is not clear what, if anything, could convince him that there is more to the mind than matter. Materialism to Crick is equivalent to science, and science to rationality."⁴² In this way, Crick is locked completely within a framework of metaphysical materialism. It is from this framework that the second point of disagreement is established. Whereas Searle maintained that mental phenomena actually exist, Crick asserts that this is not the case. Rather, Crick believes that a full and detailed account of the nature of human consciousness may be based on and obtained exclusively

³⁹ It is ironic that Crick's position is the opposite of those who began the scientific revolution, such as Galileo and Descartes, both of whom "made a sharp distinction between the physical reality described by science and the mental reality of the soul, which they considered to be outside the scope of scientific research." John R. Searle, "The Mystery of Consciousness," The New York Review, 2 Nov. 1995, 60.

⁴⁰ Crick, 19.

⁴¹ Christof Koch, one of Crick's former students, once stated that "philosophy has a much slimmer chance of providing lasting insights about the mind-body problem" and that curious philosophers "should heed the advice of their illustrious forebear Ludwig Wittgenstein: 'Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.'" Jack Horgan, "Can Science Explain Consciousness?," Scientific American, July, 1994, 94.

⁴² Phillip Johnson, Reason in the Balance: A Case against Naturalism in Science, Law and Education, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 65.

through a materialistic explanation. In his recent book, The Astonishing Hypothesis, Francis Crick writes, “your joys and your sorrows, your memories and your ambitions, your sense of personal identity and free will, are in fact no more than the behavior of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules.”⁴³ Hence, the mind is to be understood as “a consequence of the action of the components of the brain.”⁴⁴ It is important to remember that Searle maintained that human consciousness is the cumulative result of certain surface features of the brain. Though Crick would agree with Searle’s materialistic understanding, Crick’s position on human consciousness is also reductionistic.⁴⁵ Crick maintains that the “true description of us is the complex, ever-changing pattern of interactions of billions of [neurons], connected together in ways that, in their details, are unique to each one of us.”⁴⁶ The late Carl Sagan echoes this hard materialistic and reductionistic position concerning the nature of human consciousness in his Pulitzer Prize winning book, The Dragons of Eden. “My fundamental premise about the brain is that its workings – what we sometimes call ‘mind’ – are a consequence of its anatomy and physiology, and nothing more.”⁴⁷

However, Searle and Crick’s positions share some important similarities. First, as stated above, both Crick and Searle believe that human consciousness may be described by causally explaining the physical events that occur in the brain. For instance, Crick

⁴³ Crick, 3.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 7. Cf. John Searle, “The Mystery of Consciousness,” The New York Review, 2 Nov., 1995, 62.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 260.

⁴⁷ Carl Sagan, The Dragon’s of Eden: Speculations on the Evolution of Human Intelligence, (New York: Random House, 1977), 7.

agrees with Searle that the event of human awareness may be understood by “the activity of the various cortical areas as well as the thalamus.”⁴⁸ Second, each of the above positions – Crick’s hard materialism, Searle’s soft materialism, even Penrose’s quantum-physicalist position – consider the physical properties and events of the human brain and central nervous system as both necessary and sufficient conditions for human consciousness.

However, do these materialistic positions of Searle, Penrose, and Crick adequately account for the nature and basis for human consciousness? The remainder of this chapter will argue that the above materialistic conceptions of human consciousness in fact do not, and that the composite dualism of proposed by Thomas Aquinas offers a more persuasive explanation for human consciousness.

The Thomistic Composite Dualist Basis for Human Consciousness

As illustrated above, a large number of scientists and philosophers have begun to defend various materialistic conceptions of the nature and basis of human consciousness. Each of those examined by this chapter shares a similar characteristic: that the human brain and the events occurring in the brain are both necessary and sufficient causes for human consciousness. In contrast, Aquinas’s composite dualism maintains that this is not an accurate understanding for the basis of human consciousness.⁴⁹ The remainder of this chapter will support this assertion of Thomistic dualism, defending several key elements

⁴⁸ Crick, 249.

⁴⁹ One reason why this is an insufficient understanding is because of the belief of some (e.g., Crick) that human consciousness is a purely scientific issue. Mortimer J. Adler maintains that the nature of the human mind is *both* a scientific and philosophical question. Cf. Mortimer J. Adler, The Conditions of Philosophy: Its Checkered Past, Its Present Disorder, and Its Future Promise, (New York: Atheneum, 1965), 21-38.

of Thomistic dualism. The objective of this segment will be to demonstrate that the implications for human consciousness that result from Aquinas's position concerning the powers and properties of the human soul will illustrate that the brain and events occurring in the brain cannot be necessary and sufficient conditions for human consciousness. Since the approaches outlined above cannot account for human consciousness, it will be argued that Aquinas's understanding of the human soul accounts for human rationality, which is a universally acknowledged characteristic of human consciousness.

Aquinas believed that one of the main implications for his conception of the human soul concerned the nature of human rationality. Because a human being possesses a rational soul, as opposed to a vegetative or sensitive soul, it is the nature of a human being to be a rational creature.⁵⁰ It is the rational type of soul which provides human individuals their intellectual ability and character. The importance of this may be illustrated by highlighting Aquinas's discussion concerning the powers and properties of the human soul relevant to human consciousness.

Thomistic dualism maintains that there are two cardinal powers of the human soul that are relevant to understanding the basis for human consciousness – the intellect and the will. Though the power of the will is a vital aspect of Aquinas's anthropology, it is the second power – the intellect – that is particularly relevant to this issue. For Aquinas, the active intellect forms the concepts by which a person is able to acquire knowledge of both material and non-material things.⁵¹ Hence, the human intellect is the necessary and

⁵⁰ ST I, 76, 1.

⁵¹ ST I, 79, 3. "Now nothing is reduced from potentiality to act except by something in act; as the senses are made actual by what is actually sensible. We must therefore assign on the part of the intellect some power to make things actually intelligible, by abstraction of the species from material conditions."

sufficient cause for a person's ability to comprehend particulars and universals. For Aquinas, it is a person's rational soul that gives that person the ability to think conceptually, rather than just perceptually.

This distinction is implicit in the observation that animal thinking is confined to the perceptual present, whereas human thinking transcends the immediate environment and extends not only to objects in the remote past and the remote future but also to objects that have no temporal locus whatsoever.⁵²

This assertion contradicts the materialist's assumption that human consciousness may be accounted for based solely on the physical characteristics of the brain and brain events. This assertion is based on the following principle. It is not hard to understand how a physical creature can perceive a physical object by physical causality through a brain and central nervous system. However, under the mechanistic positions described above, it is not clear how a human individual could perceive the idea of a universal object (which is an object of thought, though not a physical object) based on the physical causality of the human brain and central nervous system. This principle is an unavoidable result of the position of Aquinas's composite dualism that the human intellect has a particular property, a quality that cannot be accounted for through a purely materialistic understanding of human consciousness. This leads back to the first property of the human soul identified by Aquinas – immateriality. This principle based on Aquinas's position may be demonstrated by establishing the premise concerning the unique and conceptual character of human thought. In order to demonstrate the validity of this premise it is necessary to further investigate the difference between animal thought and human thought. For Aquinas, and unlike Descartes, since the lower animals have

⁵² Mortimer J. Adler, The Difference of Man and the Difference it Makes, (New York: Fordham University Press, 1993), 136.

sensitive souls, they are capable of a certain level of thought – perceptual thought.

Humanity, however, because of its rational soul, has the capacity for conceptual thought.

The character of conceptual thought has a certain property that demonstrates that only humans have this particular intellectual capacity. Human conceptual thought has the capacity to obtain knowledge of universals. In terms of epistemological knowledge, a universal refers to a concept that identifies a type of object, but not necessarily the object itself. Consider, for instance, use of the term “cat.” When a person uses this word he may be referring to any cat, regardless of breed, size, color, or disposition. This use of the word cat would indicate the ability to have knowledge of a universal.⁵³ However, when a person refers to a specific cat, utilizing a proper name, such as “Boris,” he is displaying the ability to think perceptually, because he has the ability to understand a particular object in reality.⁵⁴ Likewise, Boris has the ability to visualize and have knowledge of a particular – the specific object that feeds it. However, according to the implications of Thomistic dualism, Boris is unable to understand the universal idea of “owner” because the universal signified by the term “owner” does not exist in physical reality. One attempt to clarify this makes the following illustration using a triangle as an example. Any triangle that can be experienced in reality or visualized in the human mind has a particular proportion and angular structure. However, humans have the ability to understand what is meant by triangularity without referring to a particular triangle.⁵⁵ This

⁵³ “This demarcation of one thing to an other (or from all others) is what constitutes its *concept*.” Wolfhart Pannenberg, Metaphysics and the Idea of God, trans. Philip Clayton, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990), 24.

⁵⁴ “To apprehend something as a particular instance of a certain kind involves an apprehension of the kind itself.” Mortimer J. Adler, Ten Philosophical Mistakes, (New York: Macmillan, 1985), 48.

⁵⁵ Mortimer J. Adler, Intellect: Mind Over Matter, (New York: Macmillan, 1990), 50.

act of comprehending a universal is a power of the intellect. As Aquinas states, “no action belongs to anything except through some principle formally inherent therein.”⁵⁶ Aquinas further maintains that “the power which is the principle of this action must be something in the soul.”⁵⁷ Since Adler has demonstrated that “animal thinking is confined to the perceptual present,”⁵⁸ the ability for humans to comprehend universals and to intellectually transcend the here and now indicates that there must be an immaterial property to human intellect. And this property cannot be accounted for through a purely materialistic conception of human rationality and consciousness. Hence, Aquinas writes,

Our concepts are universal in their signification of objects that are kinds or classes of things rather than individuals that are particular instances of these classes of kinds. Since they have universality, they cannot exist physically or be embodied in matter. But concepts do exist in our minds . . . Hence, that power must be an immaterial power, not one embodied in a material organ such as the brain.⁵⁹

“However,” a critic may object, “triangles have an existence in reality. Therefore, how can it be argued that triangularity only exists in the human mind, and not in the mind of the lower animals?” This counter argument can be resolved by observing that there are universal concepts that can be understood in the human mind which have no physical existence in reality, and which require conceptual thought. One example of this is the concept of the infinite. The concept of the infinite can only exist in the mind because there is no physical example of an infinite object to which one could be referred. Quentin Lauer argues along similar lines, stating that it is impossible for the human senses to

⁵⁶ ST I, 79, 4.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Adler, *The Difference of Man and the Difference it Makes*, 136. Pages 112-226 (chapters 8-12) contain Adler’s complete argument for this assertion.

⁵⁹ Adler, *Intellect*, 50.

represent infinity to the mind. Consequently, the concept of the infinite “can be the object of thought and thought alone – as Hegel put it, of pure rational thought.”⁶⁰

The ability of the human intellect to think conceptually implies that human consciousness has a transcendent character.⁶¹ The idea of conceptual thought being a product of the nature of humanity’s rational soul, and providing a person the ability to think beyond mere perceptual experience is a natural outcome of Thomistic dualism. There have even been some findings based on scientific research that supports this notion. The famous experimental surgery by physician Wilder Penfield on the temporal lobes of the brain is one example. Penfield discovered that electrical stimulation of the brain would cause the patient not merely to recall but to *relive* certain encounters of a patient’s past in explicit detail, including sounds, sights, smells and sensations.⁶² The amazing aspect of this is that the patient remained conscious during the entire operation, able to distinguish the vivid memory (replayed like a movie in her mind) from the reality of her being operated on in a hospital. The patient was able to transcend the experiential and sensational perceptions of her brain. Roger Sperry’s neurological research led him to the conclusion that the self-transcendent nature of the human mind forces one to acknowledge that the human mind cannot be accounted for merely through neuronal activity in the brain.⁶³ This finding has led several neurophysiologists to the belief that

⁶⁰ Quentin Lauer, Hegel’s Concept of God, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 173.

⁶¹ Wolfhart Pannenberg argues that it is difficult to understand how a person can conceive of a border without also thinking about what lies beyond that border. Hence, the idea “of the finite as such can therefore not be thought without already thinking the Infinite at the same time.” Metaphysics and the Idea of God, 24-25.

⁶² Cf. William Poundstone, Labyrinths of Reason, (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 3-5.

⁶³ Laurence W. Wood, “Recent Brain Research and the Mind-Body Dilemma,” The Asbury Theological Journal, 41, no. 1 (1986), 43.

“the brain is directed and controlled by an immaterial mind.”⁶⁴ Hence, Sperry’s “major contention is that the human mind (the self) is fundamentally distinct from the neuronal activity of the brain.”⁶⁵ Hence, if humans are creatures whose minds can be totally understood in a materialistic framework it is difficult, if not impossible, to conceive how a person has the ability to transcend his sensory experience.

These arguments maintain that the human mind’s capacity for conceptual thought, and the transcendent character of human thought, persuasively imply that there exists an immaterial component to the human mind – one which cannot be accounted for through a purely naturalistic and mechanistic framework. In the light of these arguments and this evidence the assertion that human consciousness may be completely explained by the brain and mental events occurring in the brain maintained by Searle, Penrose, and Crick is difficult to accept. For instance, recall that Searle maintained that the central nervous system and physical events in the brain were sufficient conditions for human consciousness. However, the human capacity for conceptual thought implies that a non-material component is necessary in order for conceptual thought to be accomplished. This leads back a statement by Aquinas in the Summa Theologiae. He writes that

if besides the intellectual soul there pre-existed in matter another substantial form by which the subject of the soul were made an actual being, it would follow that the soul does not give being absolutely, and consequently that it is not the substantial form; and so at the advent of the soul there would not be absolute but only relative generation, nor at its removal complete corruption, all of which is clearly false.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Wood, 57.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 55.

⁶⁶ ST I, 76, 4.

For Aquinas, a substantial form is what animates a body. It is the rational soul that is the substantial form which provides a person his intellectual and self-transcendent abilities. Aquinas would argue that if another form, such as physical body alone, were the substantial form of humanity, then all physical things would be living.⁶⁷ “For it is clear that to be a principle of life, or to be a living thing, does not belong to a body as such; if that were the case, every body would be a living thing, or a principle of life.”⁶⁸ This provides a rational basis for Aquinas’s composite dualism, that the human body and the human mind (or rational soul) together make one substance. Therefore, the intellectual character of a person must contain an immaterial substance that cannot be accounted for by the brain or by neurophysiological events in the brain.

⁶⁷ The implications of this assertion are profound given the remark by John McCarthy that even machines (certainly only a physical thing) such as thermostats can be said to have certain beliefs.

⁶⁸ ST I, 75, 1.

CHAPTER 4

THOMISTIC DUALISM AND HUMAN FREEDOM

The focus of this chapter will be on human freedom, which is the second issue in the current mind-body debate being studied by this thesis. Like human consciousness, human freedom has been a topic of considerable debate for quite some time. Yet, this debate has made little progress since no consensus exists on what exactly human freedom is or whether it actually exists. The objective of this chapter is to examine several of the key approaches to human freedom found in the current mind-body debate, determining the persuasiveness of these arguments for these positions in light of Thomistic dualism.

The first segment of this chapter has a four-fold aim: a.) to briefly examine the types of human freedom and demonstrate the importance of libertarian freedom to the mind-body debate; b.) to identify the particular elements of libertarian human freedom; c.) to outline the problem of human freedom resulting from the law of physical determinism; and d.) to identify and examine the three main interpretations used in the current mind-body debate to solve the problem of human freedom. The second segment of this chapter will analyze the hard deterministic interpretations of the problem of human freedom of B. F. Skinner and Francis Crick. The third segment will examine John Searle and Roger Penrose's compatibilist interpretation of the problem of human freedom. The final segment will explore John Searle's rejection of the major solutions to the problem of human freedom, examine his own proposal and offer a critique in favor of the composite dualism of Thomas Aquinas.

What is Human Freedom?

Because of the vigorous debate concerning human freedom, the current mind-body debate has defined human freedom into several different categories. Essentially, a person may be regarded as free in three ways. First, human beings may possess *political freedom* if, because of favorable political circumstances, they are governed by their own consent and have an opportunity to participate in governmental policies and actions.¹ Second, human beings may be regarded as *morally free*. In this sense, a person has the ability to choose as they ought in regards to moral virtues that are in accordance with human nature. Third, human beings are regarded as free in regards to having the ability of *self-determination*. This third way is closely tied in with the second. Hence, moral freedom may be regarded as a result of self-determination. This sense of freedom maintains a person's identity as a free agent in regards to "the origins and conditions" of behavioral choices.² It is this final definition or type of human freedom (the ability to freely choose one's own actions) with which this chapter is chiefly concerned.

There are several elements of human freedom interpreted as the ability for human individuals to make free choices (or self-determination) that are not causally determined. One condition of freedom requires that physical events and actions do not causally determine the actions of a free moral agent. In other words, a human agent is able to make free choices that are not causally pre-determined based on physical substances or events. A second condition of human freedom maintains that a person has the ability to

¹ It is understood that the definition of political freedom is a Compatibilist idea of freedom, whereas the definitions of moral freedom and self-determination are libertarian. This is necessary since humans live in political societies with other free agents, which necessarily will involve differences or compromise at one time or another. The alternative, of course, would be a non-political society – a Hobbesian world.

² Robert Audi, ed. The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 280.

make free choices that are not based on coercion by an outside force. A third condition often found with this interpretation refers to the moral dimension of human freedom. This moral dimension maintains that an agent is ultimately responsible for his actions made as a result of human freedom. A final element is that many who argue for this type of human freedom understand it to be inherent in human nature. Accordingly, this type of freedom is often referred to as natural freedom. For Adler, natural freedom must consist in the freedom of the will, or the ability to choose one thought or action over another. "Having this freedom, our actions are not instinctively determined or completely conditioned by the impact of external circumstances on our environment, as is the case in the behavior of other animals."³

However, this interpretation is not shared by all. Prior to the Enlightenment, few philosophers, theologians, and scientists challenged the notion that human beings have this type of freedom. But, with the rise of science and the use of the scientific method in studying human behavior and human physiology, the idea of physical determinism has convinced some to doubt the reality of libertarian human freedom.

In relation to the mind-body issue, the problem of human freedom originates from the supposed deterministic nature of the universe, which is claimed by some to refute the reality of human freedom. The problematic nature of human freedom in a deterministic universe is often presented by referring to the law of physical determinism. This law maintains that since every event in the universe is caused by previous events, there can be no freedom of the will in the sense that one is truly free to make decisions that are not

³ Mortimer J. Adler, *Six Great Ideas*, (New York: Macmillan, 1981), 141.

determined by an outside influence, such as a mechanistic cause.⁴ This law is often given a logical formula that resembles the following. In any event e , there will be an antecedent state of nature, N , coupled with a law of nature, L , such that, given the conditions resulting from N and L , e will be the result. For instance, suppose N is Boris, the aforementioned cat of Chapter 3; that he is walking across the living room and notices an electrical outlet in the wall next to him. Presume that there exists a law of nature, L , which causes cats to stick their paws into electrical outlets. Now, given these conditions (based on N and L), the result will be e , Boris suffering from an electric shock and, most likely, electrocution. Therefore, according to hard determinism, no events or actions can be truly free because all events are causally determined by physical laws and pre-existing physical states. This application of the law of physical determinism has become a predominant approach to the relationship between science and the problem of human freedom. One reason such confidence was given to the causal succession of events was because of the apparently objective and autonomous nature of those events from the perspective of human observers.⁵

Others, however, have attempted to assert the reality of human freedom despite the deterministic character of the physical universe. In order to solve the apparent conflict between physical determinism and human freedom there have been three main interpretations of the true nature of human freedom: hard determinism, soft determinism,

⁴ Richard Swinburne defines physical determinism as “the thesis that every physical event (which does not have a mental event as part of its cause) has a cause, a prior event which necessitates its occurrence in all its detail.” Cf. The Evolution of the Soul, 2nd ed., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 233-234.

⁵ Werner Heisenberg, Across the Frontiers, (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 216. Heisenberg is calling attention to the seeming autonomous nature of the universe outside of human experience. This is one reason why Heisenberg believes that modern science has been so successful in its ability to describe the true nature of physical reality.

and libertarianism. *Hard determinism* would describe a free action as one which has no cause whatsoever. However, hard determinism maintains that human freedom is an illusion because, according to the law of physical determinism, all types of human behavior may be understood as causally conditioned and determined. Many twentieth century scientists, philosophers, and psychologists who are convinced of the completely causal nature of the universe have defended this position. In order to philosophically defend the idea that human freedom is illusory the hard determinist points to the law of physical determinism.⁶ Hence, the hard determinist places human choices entirely within the realm of the causally connected physical universe. In other words, because science indicates that the law of physical determinism is universal and applies to all events, human actions and choices cannot be free, but are, in fact, causally determined.

Soft determinism, often referred to as compatibilism, takes a different approach. The soft determinist maintains that the qualities necessary for a free choice are entirely compatible with the law of physical determinism. Many philosophers during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, such as Spinoza, Hobbes, Locke, and Hume, defended this position, along with theologians, such as Jonathan Edwards.⁷ Soft determinism often understands freedom along the lines of “the power of doing or refraining from an action according to what one wills, so that by choosing otherwise one would have done otherwise.”⁸ In other words a person fails to act freely when prevented from acting as he chooses through manipulation or compulsion, or is forced into acting

⁶ Bertrand Russell, Why I am Not a Christian, (New York: Touchstone, 1957), 38.

⁷ William J. Abraham, An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1985), 145-148. Abraham presents a general but persuasive argument against several types of soft determinism often found in Calvinistic theology.

⁸ Audi, The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, 281.

against his will through coercion. That previous physical events and states causally determined a person's actions are considered irrelevant by the soft determinist.

Ultimately, soft determinism locates freedom entirely in the will. So long as a person's will is not violated then they are to be considered free, even though other outside causes (such as physical states or events) leave them no real choice to act otherwise.

Libertarianism, on the other hand, maintains that a rational human agent is by nature a free agent, and as a free agent has a real choice. This position rejects the arguments of the hard determinist concerning the causal nature of human actions and behavior, and considers the compatibilist position as an evasion of the true nature of human freedom. There have been two main attempts to preserve the notion of human freedom in face of the law of physical determinism. The German idealist, Immanuel Kant, attempted to accomplish this by compartmentalizing a person into two parts, a noumenal self and a phenomenal self. Since the phenomenal self is part of the physical universe and physically determined, it is not free. However, since the noumenal self is immaterial, the rational self is capable of free action. Those who state that the conflict between the law of physical determinism and the universal experience of human freedom is only apparent often take a different approach. Libertarians allow that a conflict would exist if all things were pre-determined. However, the libertarian maintains that some things, such as human free will, are not determined. Therefore, in order to maintain human freedom advocates of this position often postulate the existence of a new category of human actions, such as uncaused acts of volition based on human rationality. These attempts are not universally accepted, and leave unanswered the question whether libertarian human freedom is real.

Initially, it could be argued that the libertarian is attempting to avoid the conclusion that seems inevitable based on the known physical laws that govern the universe. However, there are two aspects of human freedom that serve as strong reasons for supporting the libertarian concept of human freedom. First, libertarian human freedom seems to be a universal human experience. A person always has the opportunity to prove someone else wrong if they attempt to predict a future act or behavioral pattern. For instance, suppose that one of the owners of Boris, say the wife, is going away for an extended period of time due to business. Prior to leaving she instructs her husband to feed the cat as soon as he arrives home from work each day she is gone, suggesting that feeding the cat is now his responsibility since she cannot feed the cat while away, and to consider her feelings if the cat starves. It is perfectly possible for the husband to say to himself, "I'll show her; I won't feed the cat at all!" Under the libertarian concept of freedom the free action of choosing to feed or not to feed Boris is necessarily dependent on the husband's ability to make this decision on his own and absent any manipulation (such as a post-hypnotic suggestion) or coercion (such as forcing him at gunpoint). This aspect of libertarian freedom is specifically related to humans as rational creatures, since such indeterminate behavior is not witnessed in inanimate objects, such as rocks and lakes,⁹ or even by non-rational living creatures, such as trees, goldfish or cats.¹⁰

Second, libertarian human freedom is necessary in order for humanity's understanding of justice and responsibility to make sense. This involves the moral

⁹ Searle mentions this concerning inanimate objects, saying that the option to do something other than what is done "is simply not open to glaciers moving down mountainsides or balls rolling down inclined planes or the planets moving in their elliptical orbits." Searle, *Minds, Brains and Science*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 88.

¹⁰ This is based on the non-rational character of animal thought and behavior described in the previous chapter. In other words, lower animals act and behave according to instinct and not free choice.

dimension to human freedom mentioned above. If humans are to be truly considered morally responsible for their actions, then it follows that humans must have the ability to choose a morally good act (such as feeding the hungry cat) over a morally repugnant act (such as letting the cat starve). Hence, if a person has no ultimate power over their actions or decisions, how can that person be held morally responsible for those actions and the consequences which result?

So far this chapter has defined human freedom, identified and explored its major elements and provided a few reasons why libertarian human freedom is defended. The remainder of this chapter will focus attention on three interpretations regarding human freedom found in current literature on the mind-body debate. These arguments, provided by Francis Crick, B. F. Skinner, John Searle, Roger Penrose, and Richard Swinburne, will be outlined and evaluated in light of the composite dualism of Thomas Aquinas.

Hard Determinism and Human Freedom: Skinner and Crick

As stated above, many recent attempts to solve the problem of human freedom have endeavored to illustrate that human freedom is illusory. Most of these attempts have appealed to the law of physical determinism in order to demonstrate that the libertarian concept of freedom is incorrect. This section will analyze the arguments against libertarian human freedom advanced by B. F. Skinner and Francis Crick and critique them according to the Thomistic account of human freedom based on Aquinas's composite dualism.

B. F. Skinner's argument against human freedom is a good example of how a hard determinist applies the law of physical determinism to human behavior and uses it to

deny the notion of libertarian freedom. In order to properly understand and critique Skinner's interpretation of human freedom it is necessary to examine his understanding of these phenomena. It is clear that Skinner reduces the idea of human freedom to "forms of behavior which have proved useful in reducing various threats to the individual and hence to the species in the course of evolution."¹¹ Based on this understanding of human freedom Skinner presents two basic arguments on which his attack against human freedom is based. The first is a historical argument. Skinner traces the progressive nature of scientific inquiry to illustrate how certain beliefs in the past have been proven false. He then applies this argument to the problem of human freedom. For instance, Skinner points out that it was once believed "that a projectile was carried forward by an impetus, sometimes called an 'impetuosity.'"¹² Skinner also mentions that Aristotle and Zeno considered human thought to be of divine origin.¹³ These beliefs, of course, were eventually abandoned in favor of a more scientific and accurate understanding of the nature of the world. Hence, "[p]hysics and biology moved farther away from personified causes when they began to attribute the behavior of things to essences, qualities, or natures."¹⁴ Consequently, Skinner maintains, those involved in studying the problem of human freedom "cannot take that line today, and the commonest alternative is to appeal to antecedent physical events."¹⁵ However, Skinner bemoans, many people in the field of behavior sciences continue to appeal to some sort of internal state to account for human

¹¹ B. F. Skinner, Beyond Freedom and Dignity, (New York: Knopf, 1971), 26.

¹² *Ibid.*, 8.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

behavior and actions.¹⁶ Consequently, Skinner concludes, “[a]lmost everyone who is concerned with human affairs . . . continues to talk about human behavior in this prescientific way.”¹⁷

However, this argument is not strongly compelling. First, in order to strengthen his conclusion, Skinner presents an *ad hominem* argument by assailing the intelligence of those who continue to hold to a non-deterministic basis for human behavior. Since “intelligent people” no longer believe that men are possessed by demons, Skinner argues, all intelligent people should also abandon the idea of a non-materialistic and deterministic account of human behavior.¹⁸ But, in fact, many intelligent people continue to maintain their belief in human freedom. Skinner’s historical argument also fails by assuming that human nature is to be entirely understood by physical processes. In other words, what was discovered to be true of projectiles will also be true of human thought and behavior. However, Skinner fails to establish this; he simply assumes it to be true. In fact, all of human experience leads one to the conclusion that human behavior is not predictable in the same way the behavior of billiard balls may be predicted. Second, Skinner’s argument is open to objection because it assumes premises necessary for his conclusion. Skinner simply assumes that human behavior can be investigated, measured, and completely determined through scientific examination. However, he does not attempt to demonstrate why this is so. Further, given the universal experience of human freedom, it is uncertain how such an assertion could be demonstrated.

¹⁶ Skinner, 8.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

The next argument is a biological one. Here, Skinner asserts that a person's "genetic endowment, a product of the evolution of the species, is said to explain part of the workings of his mind and his personal history the rest."¹⁹ According to Skinner, it is the genetic code and environmental stimulus that foster the illusion of human freedom.²⁰ "Man's struggle for freedom is not due to a will to be free, but to certain behavioral processes characteristic of the human organism, the chief effect of which is the avoidance of or escape from so-called 'aversive' features of the environment."²¹ Skinner further argues that a "scientific analysis of behavior dispossesses autonomous man and turns the control he has been said to exert over to the environment."²² Skinner even considers the literature and arguments promoting various ideas of freedom to be part of this stimulus. Hence, it is wrong to consider these items to be imparting a philosophy to people. Rather, such stimulus "induces people to act."²³ One reason for this, Skinner maintains, is that those advocates of human freedom have "never come to grips with techniques of control which do not generate escape or counterattack because it has dealt with the problems in terms of states or minds or feelings."²⁴ Skinner then links human freedom with human self-knowledge, arguing that human society often encourages self-observation which results in the inaccurate belief that humans are free creatures. Skinner then argues that human self-knowledge (or human consciousness) "is valuable only to the

¹⁹ Skinner, 11.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 42.

²² *Ibid.*, 205.

²³ *Ibid.*, 30.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 36-37.

extent that it helps to meet the contingencies under which it has arisen.”²⁵ In other words, human consciousness is one of the principle causes of the belief in human freedom.

However, this argument is not entirely persuasive either. According to the theory of evolution, natural selection rewards those members of a species that can produce viable offspring. As stated above, Skinner maintains that the illusion of human freedom is simply another form of behavior that natural selection produced in order to reduce the threat of extinction in the human species. Yet, it is not clear how abstract mental abilities, such as self-knowledge (consciousness) and the belief in libertarian freedom significantly aid the human species over and against other animal species. This is important since other animal species fail to exhibit behavior that would demonstrate the ability for self-knowledge and self-determination, though they do exhibit behaviors beneficial for survival, such as those based on sensory knowledge and instinct. In fact, natural science has so far been unable to provide evidence that abstract mental powers are the product of natural selection. Skinner assumes this fact, but does not provide sufficient support for it. In order to demonstrate the implausibility of Skinner’s reasoning, consider the following thought experiment concerning a prehistoric hominid named Paul. In order to survive and produce offspring it is necessary for Paul to display good tiger-avoidance behavior.²⁶ However, there are a great number of ways in which natural selection could encourage such behavior and not have him display such abilities as self-knowledge and freedom. In fact, just such tiger-avoidance behaviors, which are not based on self-awareness, are daily demonstrated by, for example, antelopes, or

²⁵ Skinner, 193.

²⁶ This thought experiment is derived from Alvin Plantinga in his book Warrant and Proper Function, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 212-232.

zebras. Yet, such creatures do not exhibit behavior that would lead one to believe that they possess self-awareness and libertarian freedom. Recall the principle from Aquinas that states that one is able to identify the nature (or soul) of a creature through its behavior or actions. Only humanity displays behavior that would suggest that it possesses self-awareness and libertarian freedom. If abstract mental abilities, such as self-awareness and libertarian freedom, were useful simply for producing survival-enhancing behavior and selected by evolution, then one would logically expect to find this behavior in, at least, several species. However, only humans exhibit such mental abilities. Given this, it seems implausible that natural selection would produce such characteristics in only one species.²⁷ Yet, why would evolution even select for the illusion of freedom? Skinner's attempt to invoke natural selection as the means by which human consciousness is established, which in turn causes the belief in freedom, fails to adequately account for libertarian human freedom. How, for example, could natural selection produce human self-knowledge? And, in turn, why would human self-knowledge produce the illusion of libertarian freedom? It seems that, just prior to his death, Skinner began to realize this when he remarked that "[e]volutionary theorists have suggested that 'conscious intelligence' is an evolved trait, but they have never shown how a nonphysical variation could arise to be selected by physical contingencies of survival."²⁸ What Skinner says of consciousness also could be said of libertarian freedom. Unless and until evolutionary explanations for human freedom produce a

²⁷ A. R. Wallace, co-discoverer of the principle of natural selection, observed wrote: "Natural selection could only have endowed savage man with a brain a little superior to an ape, whereas he actually possesses one little inferior to that of a philosopher." Quoted by John Polkinghorne, The Faith of a Physicist, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 17.

²⁸ Quoted by J. P. Moreland, "Searle's Biological Naturalism and the Argument from Consciousness." Faith and Philosophy 15 no. 1 (January 1998), 87.

theory which accounts for how and why the experience of freedom evolved, it is difficult to accept this explanation of human freedom.

Skinner's biological argument appears to be persuasive only to those who agree with his mechanistic and deterministic account of human behavior. In addition, it is unclear how he could provide a persuasive reason for assuming that natural selection would produce self-knowledge, and consequently the illusion of freedom, in human beings.

Further, Skinner's position necessitates that both of the main reasons for the belief in human freedom are to be considered deceptive and misleading. Skinner attempts to show that the universal experience of human freedom is to be understood within the concepts of behavioral characteristics induced by either positive or negative reinforcement. From this it follows that the common human experiences of justice and morality are also to be considered unreal. According to Skinner's argument, morality is reducible to modified behavioral changes brought about by the environment.²⁹ However, neither of Skinner's arguments seems persuasive enough to justify his extreme opinion that negates a universally held experience of human freedom. The principle of credulity, which states that in the absence of strong counter-evidence things are likely to be as they appear, applies here. Since Skinner does not provide strong evidence to undermine the universal experience of libertarian freedom, it logically follows that the experience of libertarian freedom is most likely true experience of reality.

Skinner's two main arguments for his interpretation of the problem of human freedom suffer from two problems themselves. First, his historical argument assumes as

²⁹ Skinner, 184.

one of its premises the conclusion he wishes to reach – that freedom is illusory because human behavior is entirely determined by physical states and events based on the genetic code and environmental conditions of each individual. Second, his biological argument fails to adequately account for how or why natural selection would produce such abstract and complex abilities and thought processes, as self-knowledge and the false belief in self-determination. Overall, Skinner's arguments in favor of his proposed solution to the problem of human freedom are illogical and unscientific.

The next argument by a hard determinist against libertarian freedom to be investigated is that of Francis Crick. Crick defines human freedom merely as the “feeling that one is free to make personal choices.”³⁰ Crick writes, it is “our undeniable feeling that our Will is free,” indicating that belief in human freedom is a universally shared human experience.³¹ Despite this, Crick asserts, along with other hard determinists, that human freedom is completely illusory. In fact, Crick maintains that a person's “sense of personal identity and free will, are in fact no more than the behavior of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules.”³² From this understanding Crick identifies two key questions. The first question is whether a neural correlate can be found that sufficiently explains the common human phenomena of free will. The second question is whether it can be demonstrated that the human will “only appears to be free.”³³ Crick goes on to state, “I believe that if we first solve the problem of our awareness (or

³⁰ Crick, The Astonishing Hypothesis: The Scientific Search for the Soul, (New York: Scribner's, 1994), 273.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

³² *Ibid.*, 3.

³³ *Ibid.*, 10.

consciousness), the explanation of Free Will is likely to be easier to solve.”³⁴

Unfortunately, Crick’s attempt to solve the problem of freedom is based solely on *scientific* principles and investigations, which causes problems for his argument.

Crick provides three assumptions from which emerge his conclusion concerning his understanding of human freedom. The first assumption is that there is a part of the brain that is concerned with making plans for future actions.³⁵ His second assumption is that a person is not aware of the neural computations necessary in order for the brain to make decisions and plans. His third assumption is that a person has an awareness of the decision made, but not of the computations that went into making the decision. The details of Crick’s arguments in favor of this position are quite complex and do not need to be examined at length here. The point Crick wishes to make about freedom is that such a person would have the illusion of free will. In this manner, Crick wishes to reduce human freedom to specific neural firings in the same way he reduced human consciousness.

However, Crick’s argument seems to suffer from several philosophical dilemmas. First, despite Crick’s assertion that he wishes to propose a reductionistic interpretation of the problem of human freedom (and thereby illustrate that it is illusory), he actually bases his proposal on a type of causal emergentism.³⁶ This renders his proposal inconsistent. It is also unclear how Crick’s position could provide a purely materialistic account of human freedom. If human behavior cannot be predicted in a purely mechanistic manner,

³⁴ Crick, 10.

³⁵ Crick outlines these assumptions on pages 266-267 in *The Astonishing Hypothesis*.

³⁶ John R. Searle, “The Mystery of Consciousness,” *The New York Review*, 2 Nov., 1995, 62-64. Searle offers a persuasive argument for this reinterpretation of Crick’s data and argument.

how can human behavior be reduced to purely physical phenomena? Further, despite his attempt to demonstrate that human freedom is unreal, Crick's conclusion does not necessarily follow from the assumptions that serve as his premises. In other words, a scientific theory that lacks predictive power is simply not a valid scientific theory. Finally, Crick's argument leaves the reader uncertain how such a conclusion could be reached even if those premises were reworded or reworked.

Overall, Crick's argument fails to sufficiently account for the common human experience of free will or self-determination. Skinner's argument suffers from the same problem. Despite the scientific complexity and the biological basis on which their theories rest, both Crick and Skinner have failed to offer a more persuasive account of human freedom than Aquinas does. As established in Chapter 2, Aquinas understood the human soul – the living principle of life – to be the locus of human consciousness and freedom.³⁷ Unlike Crick's claim that the illusion of free will is directly caused by conscious thought, Aquinas maintains that the intellect and the will work together to form the soul's knowledge and desire for certain objects – whether they be objects of thought (such as truth) or objects of physicality (such as water). Aquinas's account of human rationality, which is a common element of human nature, being the basis for the universal experience of human freedom provides a more plausible reason for why all humans believe that their will is free.

Further, Crick's position corresponds to Skinner's, which requires that, along with the common experience of human freedom, one must consider the universal human sense of morality and justice to be illusory as well. Yet Aquinas's basis for human freedom

³⁷ Brian Davies, The Thought of Thomas Aquinas, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 216.

provides a more compelling reason for why humanity has a sense of justice and responsibility in regards to free choices. Since humans are creatures endowed with rational souls, it follows that each person is morally responsible for those choices. These two reasons together also provide another reason for following Aquinas's interpretation of human freedom rather than Skinner's or Crick's. Aquinas's solution to the problem of human freedom is more persuasive for two reasons. First, it is a more simple solution, and accounts for human freedom through self-evident elements of human nature – the intellect and the will. In a sense, Ockham's razor could be applied to Aquinas's argument: Aquinas's interpretation of human freedom is the simplest adequate solution to the problem of human freedom outlined at the beginning of this chapter. Second, Aquinas's solution also sufficiently accounts for the moral responsibility human freedom entails. For Aquinas, human morality is a natural outcome of human rationality, rather than a deception brought about by human environmental conditioning and genetic encoding.

Compatibilism and Human Freedom: Penrose

The focus of this chapter will now shift to Roger Penrose's approach to the problem of human freedom. This segment has three main objectives. First, to identify Penrose's type of proposed solution according to the classifications presented earlier in this chapter. Second, to outline and analyze the main components of his interpretation of the problem of human freedom. Third, to critically examine his solution and conclusions concerning human freedom.

As stated in Chapter 3, Penrose believes that if human consciousness could be understood by classical physics it would be able to be duplicated in a mathematical or computational model. Penrose wants to argue that this same claim also applies to human behavior and the problem of human freedom. Yet, Penrose maintains that if this were the case the problem of human freedom would be answerable by the hard determinists. Though Penrose recognizes that the actions of human beings are substantially determined by heredity and environment, he opposes the hard determinist's claim that human behavior is entirely explicable by these factors.³⁸ Instead, Penrose offers a modification of the traditional compatibilist (or soft determinist) solution to the problem of human freedom that is based on his understanding of recent developments in quantum theory.

There are two main components which comprise Penrose's modified compatibilist solution to the problem of human freedom. The first element relates to a common error that Penrose believes is inherent to most deterministic accounts of human behavior, and concerns the idea of computability. Computability refers to the ability to mathematically predict certain outcomes, whether theoretical or physical. In relation to the problem of human freedom, Penrose recognizes, hard determinism claims the same ability as computability in mathematics. However, Penrose believes that this is a mistake.

In philosophical discussions, free will has always been talked about in terms of determinism. In other words, 'Is our future determined by our past?' and issues of that nature. It seems to me that there are lots of other questions which might be asked. For example, 'Is the future determined *computably* by the past?' – that is a different question.³⁹

³⁸ Roger Penrose, The Large, the Small and the Human Mind, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 124.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 124.

Utilizing a mathematical theorem by Robert Berger, Penrose establishes that no computer action exists which can simulate the evolution of the universe.⁴⁰ Hence, Penrose concludes that it is necessary to make a sharp distinction between computability and strict determinism.⁴¹ From this basis, Penrose argues that, despite a mechanistic universe, there must still exist a randomizing element of the universe that challenges the notion of strict mechanistic determinism.

The second component of Penrose's solution to the problem of human freedom is the identification of this random element, which he calls quantum non-locality. Quantum non-locality, according to Penrose, relates to "the quantum-mechanical description" of the possibilities that are open for the position of an electron in an atom.⁴² "Not only might the electron have one or another particular location, but it might alternatively have any one of a number of possible states, in which, in some clear sense, it occupies *both* locations simultaneously."⁴³ Penrose asserts that current theories of quantum physics make it "very difficult to understand quantum non-locality within the framework of Special Relativity."⁴⁴ Therefore, a radical new theory is required. "This new theory will not just be a slight modification of quantum mechanics but something as different from standard quantum mechanics as General Relativity is different from Newtonian gravity."⁴⁵ This inability of current theories to account for quantum non-locality leads

⁴⁰ Penrose, The Large, the Small and the Human Mind, 119.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Roger Penrose, Shadows of the Mind, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 258.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Penrose, The Large, the Small and the Human Mind, 137.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Penrose to consider that “the true quantum gravity theory might be non-computable.”⁴⁶ For evidence of this, Penrose points to the new Geroch-Hartle model of the universe, which has, as a fundamental element, a non-computational element in it.⁴⁷ Ultimately, according to Penrose’s theory, in order to solve the problem of human freedom, “a completely different conceptual framework” is necessary.⁴⁸ Accordingly, “quantum non-locality would be built into the theory.”⁴⁹

Despite its originality and resourcefulness, there are several problems with Penrose’s proposed solution to the problem of human freedom. First, his approach to the problem of human freedom is not a true proposal at all. By referring to an undetermined and non-existent radical new theory of quantum gravity, Penrose’s only achievement is to push the problem away. In other words, he avoids the problem, rather than attempting to solve it. This is not to say that Penrose completely ignores the problem. In fact, he has a good understanding of the physical law of determinism and the universal experience of human freedom. However, he is unable to resolve the apparent divergence between the deterministic character of the world and human behavior, even within his own model. Instead, in order to solve the problem of human freedom while maintaining his mechanistic understanding of the universe, he appeals to a model which has not been established, and which may not ever be fully developed or correspond to reality.

Second, Penrose’s proposal contains three unconfirmed assumptions. First, he fails to account for the possibility that a future modification of General Relativity or

⁴⁶ Penrose, The Large, the Small and the Human Mind, 120.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 137.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

current quantum mechanics may explain the phenomena of quantum non-locality. He seems to assume that the current model can never properly account for the phenomena of quantum non-locality. The second assumption relates to Penrose's failure to account for the possibility of a non-quantum solution to the uncertainty principle (or quantum non-locality).⁵⁰ He merely assumes that a radical new theory is required. Finally, Penrose assumes the mechanistic nature of the universe. Consequently, the libertarian solution to the problem of human freedom is immediately rejected without thoughtful consideration.

Based on these problems, it appears to be safe to assert that Aquinas's proposal may be a better solution to the problem of human freedom for at least two reasons. First, rather than appealing to a non-existent theory that may not correspond to reality, Aquinas bases his approach to human freedom on a proposal that is more philosophically sound. Unlike Penrose, who must appeal to a yet-to-be-determined theory, Aquinas offers both theoretical and experiential evidence to support his composite dualistic solution to the problem of human freedom.⁵¹ Second, Aquinas's explanation of human freedom better accounts for the moral dimension of human freedom. Like Skinner, Penrose's position seems to understand the moral dimensions of human behavior to be based on heredity and environment, that is the environment of quantum indeterminacy passed on through the natural process of genetic evolution.⁵² In other words, both deny any actual moral dimension to human behavior. In contrast, Aquinas bases the moral dimension of human

⁵⁰ Mortimer J. Adler has offered such an account for the uncertainty principle. He maintains that any attempt to view the atom, or other elementary particles, at the quantum level changes the state of the object attempting to be viewed. Cf. Truth in Religion: The Plurality of Religions and the Unity of Truth, (New York: Macmillan, 1990), 93-100.

⁵¹ ST I-II, 18, 9.

⁵² Penrose, The Large, the Small and the Human Mind, 124.

behavior on the soul's intellectual and appetitive powers, as well as the soul's ability to make volitional actions in accordance to those powers. Further arguments against a position similar to Penrose's will be discussed in the following segment which will deal with John Searle's approach to the problem of human freedom.

Searle and the Problem of Human Freedom

Searle provides a strong philosophical analysis of the various modern attempts at solving the problem of human freedom in Minds, Brains and Science. Searle describes the problem of human freedom in the following manner.

The problem about the freedom of the will is not about whether or not there are inner psychological reasons that cause us to do things as well as external physical causes and inner compulsions. Rather, it is about whether or not the causes of our behaviour, whatever they are, are sufficient to *determine* the behaviour so that things *have to* happen the way they do happen.⁵³

Interestingly, Searle rejects each of the major interpretations relating to the problem of human freedom – hard determinism, compatibilism, and libertarianism. The final segment of this chapter will explore the reasons for Searle's rejection of the solutions to the problem of human freedom identified at the beginning of this chapter, and analyze and critique his understanding of why the problem of human freedom will continue to remain a problem.

Searle's main reason for rejecting the hard deterministic interpretation is based on the universal and psychological experience of human freedom. "As many philosophers have pointed out, if there is any fact of experience that we are all familiar with, it's the simple fact that our own choices, decisions, reasonings, and cogitations seem to make a

⁵³ John Searle, Minds, Brains and Science, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 89.

difference to our actual behaviour.”⁵⁴ Therefore, Searle maintains, “Human freedom is just a fact of experience.”⁵⁵ Yet, Searle is quite aware of the problem the law of physical determinism poses to the idea of human freedom. Yet, despite the seeming large-scale predictable nature of the world, the non-predictable behavior observed in human beings is not comparable to glaciers moving down mountainsides and other events in nature that are based on the law of physical determinism.

This is a characteristic philosophical conundrum. On the one hand, a set of very powerful arguments force us to the conclusion that free will has no place in the universe. On the other hand, a series of powerful arguments based on facts of our own experience inclines us to the conclusion that there must be some freedom of the will because we all experience it all the time.⁵⁶

Searle’s argument provides two reasons for rejecting theories based on quantum indeterminacy, such as the one by Roger Penrose described above. First, the ability of quantum mechanics to describe nature is limited to the micro level – that is, the world of quantum particles. Accordingly, any type of indeterminism detected at the quantum level cannot support any theory of the freedom of the will. This is because “the statistical indeterminacy at the level of particles does not show any indeterminacy at the level of objects that matter to us – human bodies.”⁵⁷ Therefore, any appeal, such as the one provided by Roger Penrose, to quantum mechanics or quantum non-locality at the micro-level, fails to properly account for human behavior at the macro-level. Second, even if there were some indeterminacy of particles in the human brain, it does not follow that

⁵⁴ Searle, Minds, Brains and Science, 87.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 88. Searle goes on to assert that the “characteristic experience that gives us the conviction of human freedom, and it is an experience from which we are unable to strip away the conviction of freedom, is the experience of engaging in voluntary, intentional human actions,” Minds, Brains and Science, 95.

⁵⁶ Searle, Minds, Brains and Science, 88.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 87.

that indeterminacy could force particles to change paths. Therefore, according to Searle, theories based on quantum indeterminism cannot provide evidence that forms of mental energy, on which human freedom is based, could “move molecules in directions that they were not otherwise going to move.”⁵⁸ Of course, this does not disprove such theories, but Searle is philosophically correct in establishing that such theories fail to provide persuasive reasons for adopting Penrose's theory over another one.

Traditional forms of compatibilism also pose philosophical problems for Searle. As stated previously, compatibilism asserts that the qualities necessary for a choice to be free are completely compatible with the law of physical determinism. Though previous physical states or events causally determine a person's actions, this fact is considered irrelevant by the compatibilist. Exploring such assumptions, Searle asks the question, “Is it ever true to say of a person that he could have done otherwise, all other conditions remaining the same?”⁵⁹ For example, recall the couple who owns Boris the cat. Is it possible for the husband to have chosen to feed the cat? Under the compatibilist solution to the problem of human freedom, the answer would have to be no. That is because choosing not to feed Boris was, in fact, determined. Such actions were determined “by certain sorts of inner psychological causes (those which we call our ‘reasons for acting’) and not by external forces or psychological compulsions.”⁶⁰ The difficulty is that compatibilism does not account for “for the ordinary notion of human freedom.”⁶¹ Another way to state this argument against compatibilism is to say that it attempts to

⁵⁸ Searle, Minds, Brains and Science, 87.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

solve the problem of human freedom by redefining what constitutes a free act. In other words, traditional forms of compatibilism utilize a type of fallacy called persuasive definition, which consists in redefining terms in order to establish an argument.

“Compatibilism, in short, denies the substance of free will while maintaining its shell.”⁶²

The universal experience of freedom, Searle asserts, is “the foundation stone” for the belief in libertarian human freedom.⁶³ However, Searle's denial of libertarian human freedom is based on two points. First, if libertarian freedom were true it would be necessary to change science and philosophy's fundamental beliefs about the nature of the universe. For Searle, it would seem that libertarian freedom would necessitate the ability for humans to make molecules divert from one path to another. This is because, according to Searle, “there is not the slightest evidence to suppose that we should abandon physical theory in favor of such a view.”⁶⁴ Second, there is no compelling reason to abandon the modern scientific and physical understanding of the universe. Therefore, it does not seem that “there is any scope for the freedom of the will because on this conception the mind can only affect nature in so far as it is a part of nature.”⁶⁵ Moreover, Searle reasons, if “we accept this conception of how nature works, then it doesn't seem that there is any scope for the freedom of the will because on this conception the mind can only affect nature in so far as it is a part of nature.”⁶⁶ Searle

⁶² Searle, Minds, Brains and Science, 89.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

describes this view as biological naturalism.⁶⁷ For Searle, the libertarian notion of free will violates the law of physical determinism. Essentially, Searle claims that modern science, dominated by the law of physical determinism, demonstrates that the libertarian notion of free will is incongruent with nature and, hence, irrational.

However, Searle's argument against libertarian freedom contains some problems which need to be addressed. First, Searle's rejection of libertarian freedom is almost entirely based on the assumption that physical determinism is correct. For if human beings were to actually possess free will, which is the common experience of all humans, this would imply that two types of substances exist in the universe.⁶⁸ Nonetheless, Searle does not provide a compelling reason to disregard the common and universal experience that human beings have the power to choose their actions. Despite the fact that modern science has the ability to answer many questions regarding the physical operation of the universe, Searle does not provide any evidence to support his eagerness to tip the balance in favor of the law of physical determinism over human experience. Stewart Goetz, who maintains that Searle's position is defective because of and motivated by his fear of dualism, provides a second criticism of Searle's argument. Noting that Searle emphasizes that causal reductionism does not necessitate ontological reductionism, Goetz observes that Searle "wants the reader to believe that his conception of the mental is not incompatible with the most obvious features of our mental life," such as intentionality.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ John Searle, The Rediscovery of the Mind, (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1992), 1.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁶⁹ Stewart Goetz, "Searle on the Mind: Does He Need Refutation or Help?," manuscript, 8. Paper delivered on April 11, 1997, at the 1997 Midwestern Regional Meeting of the Society of Christian Philosophers, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

“What Searle asserts and what is the case, however, are two different things. While he wants to keep some obvious features of the mental, he is willing to dispense with others when he believes they have dualistic implications.”⁷⁰ Therefore, Searle's argument suffers from an internal inconsistency in his acceptance of various qualities of the mental life. “Though it seems to us,” Goetz concludes, “that we have free will, [Searle] is led to deny that we do because of his fear of dualism.”⁷¹ Such a fear is not a philosophically justifiable reason to argue against any sort of dualistic understanding for the basis of human freedom. Second, Searle argues that libertarian human freedom grants a person the ability to change the pathways of molecules from one direction to another. For Searle modern science has conclusively demonstrated that the universe “consists of particles and their relationships with each other, and everything about the world can be accounted for in terms of these particles and their relations.”⁷² For this reason, Searle concludes that the modern scientific understanding of the world leave no room for libertarian human freedom. However, libertarian freedom maintains that freedom is not composed of or based on molecules or their pathways. So how is this a problem? Searle is assigning a property to libertarian freedom which it does not claim. Ultimately, absurd materialistic reductionism ends up chasing its own tail by denying the universal experience of human freedom. Again, as Goetz has observed, the only plausible reason why Searle would assert this is because he assumes that any sort of dualistic understanding of human nature is wrong. Searle even concedes that “[w]e are reluctant to concede any of the

⁷⁰ Goetz, 9.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid., 4.

commonsense facts that sound ‘Cartesian,’”⁷³ However, Searle is either unwilling or unable to provide a rational justification for abandoning the ‘commonsense’ and universal experience of libertarian human freedom.

Thomistic dualism offers two points relevant to issues brought up by Searle. First, under Aquinas’s conception of composite dualism Searle would not need to take such radical steps in order to avoid dualism. As Goetz observes, the type of dualism that Searle is wary of is Cartesian dualism. It would seem that Searle’s chief concern is relinquishing to the non-material substance of mind complete control of the human being. Aquinas wants to maintain that, since the rational soul is the form of the human body, the non-material substance of mind (or soul) animates the body. This conception of the relation between the mind (soul) and the body is different than the Cartesian notion of the mind (soul) as the motor of the body. The unity of the human person was a vital aspect of Aquinas’s composite dualism. This aspect of Aquinas’s theory could serve as a bridge between substance dualism (of the Cartesian-Platonic kind) and the attempt of soft determinism (such as Searle’s) to locate all human actions and behavior within physical causes and events.

Second, Thomistic composite dualism takes seriously the universal experiential nature of human freedom. Though there is not a direct correspondence between the modern scientific belief that the law of physical determinism applies to all objects in the universe equally and the medieval belief as God as the cause of all movement in the universe, there are certain similarities between them. Aquinas’s solution to the thirteenth

⁷³ Searle, The Rediscovery of the Mind, 13.

century version of the law of physical determinism defends libertarian human freedom.⁷⁴ Aquinas maintains that because humans are rational beings, it follows that they have freedom of the will.⁷⁵ However, this freedom has as its foundation the notion of God as the first cause. According to Aquinas these two ideas are not mutually inconsistent. The reason Aquinas maintains this is based on his understanding the nature of God as being the first cause. Since God is the first cause of all things which exist, he therefore moves “causes both natural and voluntary.”⁷⁶

And just as by moving natural causes He does not prevent their acts being natural, so by moving voluntary causes He does not deprive their actions of being voluntary, but rather is He the cause of this very thing in them; for He operates in each thing according to its own nature.⁷⁷

In other words, if God is the first cause of human actions being free in a libertarian sense, then God’s being the first cause of human freedom makes human freedom a libertarian type of freedom, rather than illusory or psychologically compelled.⁷⁸

Though it is highly doubtful that Searle would accept these proposals outright, Thomistic dualism both provides a rational and coherent alternative to the form of dualism that Searle rejects (Cartesian dualism), and rescues him from the absurdity of rejecting the universal human experience which he knows to be true. It seems clear that

⁷⁴ Recently, Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange has argued that internal inconsistencies in Aquinas’s argument make his view of human freedom a Compatibilist one. However, this thesis, based on the analysis found in chapter two, has assumed as one of its premises that Aquinas’s view of human freedom is libertarian. Cf. Luis de Molina, *On Divine Foreknowledge: Part IV of the Concordia*, trans. Alfred J. Freddoso, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 62-70.

⁷⁵ It may be necessary to assert again that this is not a one-to-one relationship between these two views. However, in relation to human freedom, the effects are the same.

⁷⁶ ST I, 83, 1.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Peter J. Kreeft, *The Summa of the Summa*, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 299.

Searle, and those who favor his solution to the problem of human freedom, need to take a serious look at the account of human freedom in Thomistic dualism.

This chapter has briefly examined several modern proposals that attempt to solve the problem of human freedom which results from the law of physical determinism prevalent in both modern philosophy and science. It was demonstrated that, despite several arguments against it from different philosophical and scientific perspectives on the problem of human freedom, the Thomistic account of human freedom is not philosophically irrational or incoherent. Rather, is advantageous in two areas: it is philosophically rational and consistent, and it avoids the problems identified by those who argue for a materialistic or deterministic account of human freedom. The next chapter will examine perhaps the most significant aspect of Aquinas's proposed solution to the mind-body problem – human destiny.

CHAPTER 5

THOMISTIC DUALISM AND HUMAN DESTINY

Chapters 3 and 4 discussed human consciousness and human freedom, which are the first two issues in the current mind-body debate being explored by this thesis. This final chapter will focus on the third issue, human destiny, and consider it in relation to three differing positions. For the purposes of this thesis, human destiny is understood as the soul's (or individual) survival after death of the body. It is important to note that, for Aquinas, "whether or not Fred's soul survives the death of Fred will depend on whether God wills to keep it in being."¹ Nonetheless, Aquinas is convinced that it is God's nature not to annihilate any creature.²

There are many different dimensions to human destiny which could be addressed by this chapter. One dimension concerns the various religious factors of human destiny based on Christian theological reflection, such as the nature of the resurrection body, the final destinations of Heaven or Hell, and the possibility of an intermediate state. However, there are two objectives for this chapter. The first objective is to determine whether the idea of life after the death of the physical body – that is, *any* kind of human existence which transcends death – is both philosophically coherent and rationally defensible. The second objective of this chapter is to determine if Aquinas presents a more plausible proposal concerning human destiny than others do.

¹ Brian Davies, The Thought of Thomas Aquinas, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 216.

² ST I, 65, 1.

For substance dualists the notion of the immortality of the soul is not an idea which is hard to accept. In fact, such a view, to most substance dualists, would seem rather obvious. However, in relation to Aquinas's composite dualism, the issue becomes decidedly more difficult. Adler writes,

For those, like Plato and Descartes, who conceive the soul as an immaterial entity having being in its own right, these questions can be immediately answered in favor of the soul's capacity for separate existence. Only when the soul is conceived as a form which, together with matter, constitutes the substance of a living body, does there seem to be both meaning and difficulty to the question whether the soul continues to endure separately when a plant, an animal, or a man dies, i.e., when such composite substances decompose."³

Unfortunately, many metaphysical materialists who are currently engaged in the mind-body debate deny that any type of human existence beyond the death of the body is possible.⁴ Some might be willing to concede the bare possibility of such an existence, but would find discussions on the subject basically incoherent since they would deny the possibility of observing non-physical or trans-physical realities. Of course, if one denies the existence of such a reality, it follows that one will not bother looking for it either. Such denials are usually based on the following two assumption: that only material or physical materials exist, and "scientific" studies of those materials are the only reliable means of knowledge.⁵ This has the unfortunate consequence that Crick, Searle, Penrose, and Skinner, because of such presuppositions, dismissing themselves from the

³ Mortimer J. Adler, The Great Ideas: A Lexicon of Western Thought, (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 809.

⁴ One way in which metaphysical materialists could conceive of life after the death of the body is if, in the distant future, some sort of advanced "super" technology could be utilized to collect and maintain human thought patters in a computer. Of course, not all would agree with even this proposal.

⁵ Aquinas calls into question similar assertions often found in the "modern" world when he wrote that "it is the acme of stupidity for a man to suspect as false what is divinely revealed . . . simply because it cannot be investigated by reason." CG I, 3, 4.

conversation. However, not all have left the table. Both philosophy and hard science retain representatives who are willing to engage in rational speculation concerning the issue of human survival after the death of the body. This chapter will examine and critique their arguments on how to properly understand such an ultimate view of human destiny.

The first segment of this chapter will describe and explore three human aspirations which are universally shared by humans in various cultures, ages and locations. It will be argued that these aspirations suggest that it may be possible for an individual to survive after the death of his body. The second segment will identify and argue in favor of several conditions necessary in order for the idea of a human destiny beyond death to be philosophically coherent and rationally defensible. The third segment will analyze and critique two objections to Aquinas's position on human destiny from positions which, though closely associated, differ from the Thomistic account of human destiny discussed in Chapter 2. This segment will also offer a brief final observation on this thesis.

Human Destiny as the Fulfillment of Human Aspirations

In Chapter 2 it was argued that there is a common human nature, and that this nature may be understood through Aquinas's designation of the human soul as a rational soul,⁶ which "is the primary principle of our nourishment, sensation, and local movement; and likewise of our understanding."⁷ As stated earlier, Aquinas's position

⁶ ST I, 78, 1.

⁷ ST I, 76, 1.

argues that its actions or behavior determines the nature of a creature. With Aquinas's "rational soul" as the basis, this thesis has already established that human beings possess an intellectual power (the intellect) and an appetitive power (the will).⁸ Some of what flows from humanity's intellect and will are desires or aspirations towards certain objects, whether they be objects of physicality (such as a new car), or objects of thought (such as love or justice).⁹ However, there are several aspirations which are experienced universally by human beings in every age, culture, and location, and which seemingly may be fulfilled in only one way. Three such aspirations are particularly relevant to the objective of this chapter.

The first aspiration concerns the desire for an ultimate justice and morality that is beyond the physical life in this world. As established in Chapter 2, morality is a natural and necessary outcome of human rationality and society. However, no matter how much it is attempted, the degree of justice in this world cannot ultimately fulfill all of the desires for justice generated by morality. There are two aspects of the human aspiration for justice and morality which need to be explored. The first aspect is that perceptions of justice and morality experienced in the world are often *incorrect*. Humans, being fallible creatures, will undoubtedly make mistakes in areas of justice and morality. A judge or jury may mistakenly impose a guilty verdict on an actually innocent person, consequently inflicting an unjust punishment on that individual. The second aspect of justice and morality is that such justice and morality as experienced in this world is often *insufficient*. The feeling of loss, isolation, and pain at the death of a loved one to a drunk driver cannot

⁸ Cf. Discussion on the powers of the soul on pages 27-29 of Chapter 2.

⁹ This is not to say that objects of thought, such as love, justice, beauty, cannot be experienced through physical objects, but that these experiences originate in objects of thought and not physical things.

be overcome by any amount of “justice” provided legally by the courts, or illegally through vengeful retribution. Other, more general and common, forms of justice and morality point towards the incomplete nature of temporal justice. John Polkinghorne writes that “[b]elief in a human destiny beyond death stems . . . from the recognised incompleteness of our lives in this world. All of us die with business unfinished, hurts unhealed, potentialities unrealised.”¹⁰ These unhealed hurts, unfinished potentials, incomplete and incorrect applications of justice and morality provide a reason for assuming that, if justice is truly to be served and morality is to be more than mere sophistry, justice and morality must not end at death. It seems a plausible assumption that the desire for justice and morality would, therefore, be fulfilled beyond death. This would entail that there is an existence beyond the death of the body, a destiny unique to humans because of their rational nature, which allows ultimate justice and morality to be experienced.

The second aspiration concerns understanding the meaning of human existence and the desire to achieve some ultimate purpose in life. It is a common human experience to desire a meaning and purpose for life. One grand example of such a search is found in the book of Ecclesiastes. This book is unique in that “[u]nlike all other books of the Bible, it has no faith flashbulb attached to its camera to reveal the inner depths or hidden meanings of life.”¹¹ Here is mankind’s search for ultimate meaning and purpose uncovered. Throughout the book Qohelet asks the question, “Does my life have any meaning at all?” Such a question illustrates modernity’s greatest fear, a fear that,

¹⁰ Polkinghorne, Belief in God in an Age of Science, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 23.

¹¹ Peter J. Kreeft, Three Philosophies of Life, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 19.

ultimately, everything is meaningless. “Ecclesiastes is a terror to modern man because when he looks into its mirror he sees the ultimate nightmare: The Man With No Face.”¹² In his attempt to establish meaning and purpose in his life, Qohelet pursues wisdom, pleasure, wealth and power, duty and honor, and piety. However, after traveling down these roads as far as one can go, each of these is proven meaningless in the judgment of Qohelet. “Vanity of vanities! All is vanity.”¹³ As Kreeft writes, “[i]f death is, as it seems to be, the final end, then life’s story is vanity with a vengeance. The cosmos has been groaning in evolutionary travail with us, and we are only the cosmic abortion.”¹⁴ Ecclesiastes profoundly illustrates that humanity (both as an individual and as a race) searches for ultimate meaning and purpose. If death is the ultimate end of a human being, then nothing matters at all.¹⁵ The point to be made is this. If life is meaningless, if death is the end, then why do human beings search for ultimate meaning and purpose? Why do human beings throughout history desire for and seek after some sort of life after death, or even eternal life?¹⁶ It seems that all other animals in the world are desperate to survive in order to produce offspring. Yet, humanity is concerned with the larger issue of

¹² Kreeft, Three Philosophies of Life, 32.

¹³ Ecclesiastes 1:2.

¹⁴ Kreeft, Three Philosophies of Life, 47.

¹⁵ Polkinghorne writes, “If cosmic history is no more than the temporary flourishing of remarkable fruitfulness followed by its subsequent decay and disappearance, then I think Macbeth was right and it is indeed a tale told by an idiot.” Belief in God in an Age of Science, 21.

¹⁶ An ancient example of this is *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. The following are several lines by Gilgamesh during his quest for eternal life after the death of his friend Enkidu. “I am going to die! – am I not like Enkidu?!” (75). “The issue of Enkidu, my friend, oppresses me, so I have been roaming long roads through the wilderness. How can I stay silent, how can I be still? My friend whom I love has turned to clay. Am I not like him? Will I lie down, never to get up again?” (85). Kovacs observes that, through such thoughts, Gilgamesh “rebels against mortality” (xx). Maureen Gallery Kovacs, The Epic of Gilgamesh, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989).

ultimate meaning, and not simply with species survival. It would seem that the reason for this quest for meaning and purpose in humans is because there is some sort of existence beyond the death of the body. For life to have an ultimate meaning and purpose, it is necessary for there to be an existence beyond the death of the body. This seems a plausible assumption. As Polkinghorne writes:

The human paradox is that we perceive so many signs of value and significance conveyed to us in our encounter with reality, yet all meaning is threatened by the apparent finality of death. If the universe is truly a cosmos, if the world is really intelligible through and through, then this life by itself cannot be the whole of the story.¹⁷

The final aspiration concerns the human quest for complete and ultimate happiness. For Aquinas, complete and total happiness is only available as the *summum bonum*, or ultimate good. “Final and perfect happiness can consist in nothing else than the vision of the Divine Essence.”¹⁸ This may be established by understanding that Aquinas maintains that individuals naturally desire through the will that which the intellect understands as good. This is because humans achieve happiness through the satisfaction of desires.¹⁹ For Aquinas, no desire is evil in and of itself, because the will desires that which is understood as good. Of course, the human intellect may misidentify a good as the ultimate good, and desire it in order to experience perfect happiness. Unfortunately, in this manner, that person will only experience a limited type of happiness. For example, a person may believe that money is good, because with money one may live a comfortable lifestyle. However, since a comfortable life is not the proper

¹⁷ Polkinghorne, *Belief in God in an Age of Science*, 23.

¹⁸ ST I-II, 3, 8. Cf. CG 4, 79, 11.

¹⁹ ST I-II, 5, 8.

end of man, the desire for money and a comfortable life becomes evil. This is because it moves the individual away from the ultimate and eternal good, which is God, and towards a limited and temporal good. Therefore, Aquinas argues, “[h]appiness is the attainment of the Perfect Good.”²⁰ There are three reasons why the human desire for ultimate happiness (or the good) points to a human destiny beyond the death of the body. First, the desire for ultimate happiness is universally shared by all rational souls. Aquinas provides two reasons for this assertion. First, a person’s intellect is capable of apprehending the universal and perfect good, which is God.²¹ It was argued in Chapter 3 that the human mind, unlike all other animal minds, is capable of comprehending the idea of infinity, or the infinite. Now, the infinite is an object of thought, and not a physical object. Therefore, though there is nothing in the physical universe which properly can be called infinite, the human mind is able to apprehend such an idea based on analogical reasoning from objects in the world which are observed through the sense.²² Likewise, the concept of God is an object of thought,²³ though one cannot point to something material and say, “That is God.”²⁴ Second, a person’s will is able to desire God, which is the universal and perfect good.²⁵ This is a variation on an old philosophical argument: the human desire for water in order to quench a thirst is a plausible reason to assume the

²⁰ ST I-II, 5, 1.

²¹ Ibid.

²² This refers back to Aquinas’s notion, found originally in Aristotle, that all human knowledge is mediated through the senses.

²³ For Aquinas, God is not an object of human thought, while the idea of God is. Accordingly, it follows that there is a Being who, if correct, corresponds to that concept. In this latter respect, the idea of God is unlike the idea or concept of the infinite.

²⁴ Of course, unless that person is mentally unstable.

²⁵ ST I-II, 5, 1.

existence of water. In the same way, the human desire for ultimate happiness provides a persuasive reason for assuming that it is possible for a person to achieve perfect happiness.

The second reason is that ultimate happiness cannot be achieved in this life. In order to demonstrate this, Aquinas provides three arguments. First, Aquinas maintains that ultimate happiness is a perfect and sufficient good, and as such, necessarily excludes every evil and fulfills every desire.²⁶ However, he reasons, “this present life is subject to many unavoidable evils: to ignorance on the part of the intellect, and to inordinate affection on the part of the appetite, and to many penalties on the part of the body.”²⁷ For his second argument, Aquinas writes that the “natural desire of the rational creature is to know everything that belongs to the perfection of the intellect.”²⁸ “Yet,” Aquinas argues, “if God were seen, Who is the fount and principle of all being and of all truth, He would so fill the natural desire of knowledge that nothing else would be desired, and the seer would be completely beautified.”²⁹ Aquinas summarizes this argument in the following passage which deserves to be quoted in full.

God cannot be seen in His essence by a mere human being, except he be separated from this mortal life. The reason is, because as was said above (A. 4), the mode of knowledge follows the mode of the nature of the knower. But our soul, as long as we live in this life, has its being in corporeal matter; hence naturally it knows only what has a form in matter, or what can be known by such a form. Now it is evident that the divine essence cannot be known through the nature of material things. For it was shown above (AA. 2, 9) that the knowledge of God by means

²⁶ ST I-II, 5, 3.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ ST I, 12, 8.

²⁹ Ibid.

of any created similitude is not the vision of His essence. Hence it is impossible for the soul of man in this life to see the essence of God.³⁰

Augustine echoes this same understanding of the implication of the human knowledge of God in an often-quoted passage in his Confessions.

The person who knows all those matters [that is, all creatures] but is ignorant of you is unhappy. The person who knows you, even if ignorant of natural science, is happy. Indeed the one who knows both you and nature is not on that account happier. You alone are his source of happiness . . .”³¹

Third, the human desire for the good cannot be satisfied in this life. “For man naturally desires the good, which he has, to be abiding. Now the goods of the present life pass away; since life itself passes away, which we naturally desire to have, and would wish to hold abidingly, for man naturally shrinks from death. Wherefore it is impossible to have true Happiness in this life.”³² Kreeft states that the “value of this terrible truism of Thomas’ is that it heads us off from the desperate optimism of hunting for Heaven on earth, which has always brought about enormous misery, both individually and socially, while its traditional ‘pessimism’ . . . can produce a joyful detachment.”³³

The third reason why the human desire for ultimate happiness argues in favor of an existence beyond the death of the body is that the human desire for the *summum bonum* is a desire for ultimate reality itself. It has already been established that Aquinas understands the Beatific Vision to be the only way in which rational creatures could

³⁰ ST I, 12, 11.

³¹ Augustine, Confessions, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 5, 6. In this passage, of course, Augustine understands happiness in a perfect sense, and not in a temporal or limited sense.

³² ST I-II, 5, 3. Peter Kreeft observed that in “all the arguments in the *Summa* this would seem to be . . . the most obviously conclusive, since its premises are verified in everyone’s experience every day” A Summa of the Summa, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 394.

³³ Peter J. Kreeft, A Summa of the Summa, 394.

achieve perfect and complete happiness. Aquinas also maintains that humans cannot, because their nature is to seek only the good (whether real or apparent), desire evil for itself. Those things which are desired by the human will which are evil, are desired because the human intellect has mistaken them to be goods. Hence, all things which are evil are, in fact, good things perverted. C. S. Lewis believed that evil has no objective reality. “It is simply good spoiled. That is why I can say there can be good without evil, but no evil without good.”³⁴ Now, according to Aquinas, all rational agents move out of intention towards an end.³⁵ Further, all creatures, whether they have rational knowledge of it or not, move towards the final end because, “since everything desires its own perfection, a man desires for his ultimate end, that which he desires as his perfect and crowning good.”³⁶ For Aquinas, God is the final end of all things, because “He intends only to communicate His perfection, which is His goodness; which is the likeness of the divine perfection and goodness. Therefore the divine goodness is the end of all things.”³⁷ Now, since God is perfectly good, it is difficult to maintain that God would create rational creatures which are oriented towards an end which they are incapable of obtaining. With these principles established the following syllogism may be proposed. Ultimate goodness (the *summum bonum*) is the proper end of a rational agent. That proper end is, in fact, God. Hence, a person’s desire for the proper end is a desire for God. Yet, as was established above, man cannot fully achieve his proper end in this life.

³⁴ C. S. Lewis, The Letters of C. S. Lewis to Arthur Greeves, Walter Hooper, ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1986), 465.

³⁵ ST I-II, 1, 2.

³⁶ ST I-II 1, 5.

³⁷ ST I, 44, 4.

Therefore, it is necessary for there to be an existence beyond the death of the body in order for man to achieve this proper end.

These three human aspirations – the desire for an ultimate justice and morality beyond this life, the search for a meaning and purpose to human existence, and the quest for complete and perfect happiness – each point to the same conclusion: that physical death is not the end of human existence. Though these human aspirations do not prove that there is life after death, together they present a persuasive and defensible argument in favor of the conclusion that there is a human existence beyond the death of the body which allows the possibility of these aspirations being fulfilled. This fulfills the first objective of this chapter. Attention will now turn towards exploring whether Aquinas presents a more plausible position than others do.

Several Conditions Necessary for Human Destiny Beyond Death

As stated above, the idea of a human destiny beyond physical death is speculative in nature. However, it seems clear that there are several conditions which need to be met in order for such a notion to be philosophically coherent and rationally plausible. For the purpose of this thesis, three such conditions will be explored. The first condition concerns whether a human destiny beyond physical death allows human nature to be fulfilled. The ability of an existence beyond death to fulfill human nature was addressed in the previous segment. However, those modern metaphysical materialists, like Skinner, who assume that human nature is primarily oriented toward reproduction through the process of natural selection, ignore without sufficient cause the reality of the human drive to fulfill those natural transcendent desires discussed in the previous section. The reason

for abandoning these ideas is based on the notion that they cannot be studied or confirmed scientifically. However, this is not a valid argument for two reasons. First, whereas Aquinas takes seriously the idea that it is at least possible for human nature to be totally fulfilled in all of its most basic desires and then argues logically to show that this is, in fact, possible, the materialist fails to even rationally engage any alternative to the view he has chosen. It was shown in Chapter 4 that science, though quite successful in understanding physical reality, is unable to account for the universal human experience of libertarian freedom. The materialist avoids the problem by ignoring it, by denying that libertarian freedom exists, despite his inability to demonstrate such an assertion. Such reasoning does not provide much philosophical coherence or confidence in its conclusions. Assuming away logical problems by assuming away whole categories of existence may simplify argumentation, but only at the cost of fatally weakening the argument if the physicalist assumption is false. By contrast, Aquinas bases his position on objective human experience. It is objective because the desire of a rational creature to fulfill his nature is a universal experience in the human species. Second, Aquinas's position is based on sound biblical and philosophical argumentation. In the medieval world of Aquinas, the "biblical notion of the intimate connection between body and spirit had largely been forgotten as Christianity moved into the world of Hellenistic philosophy."³⁸ However, Aquinas, deeply concerned with a proper theological understanding of the nature of humanity, returns to the biblical notion which emphasizes that "paradise is no disembodied, purely intellectual state of affairs; on the contrary, it is

³⁸ Robert Barron, Thomas Aquinas: Spiritual Master, (New York: Crossroad, 1996), 142.

richly imagined as the blissful fulfillment of the totality of human being.”³⁹ Turning to the modern world, many materialists assume the truth of certain premises without proper evidence and simply ignore those that support dualistic notions. In contrast, Aquinas carefully lays out his argument in specific terminology which corresponds to both human experience and valid logical reasoning. Not surprisingly, his conclusions concerning the ability of human nature to be fulfilled continues to have persuasive power. Again, because of the speculative nature of this discussion, it is impossible for anyone to prove absolutely that a destiny beyond death does actually exist. However, Aquinas’s argument does, in fact, demonstrate that such a transcendent existence could fulfill human nature.

The second condition for a coherent and defensible argument for human destiny concerns the integrity of the personal identity of the individual after the death of the body. In contrast to substance dualism (Plato and Descartes), Aquinas did not believe that a personal identity was reductively equal to an individual’s soul. Rather, a human being is a unified creature, composed of both body and soul. For Aquinas, “my soul is not I.”⁴⁰ As Davies summarizes, “the existence of a human soul apart from what is bodily is unnatural.”⁴¹ This is because, in the words of Aquinas:

It belongs to the very essence of the soul to be united to a body, just as it belongs to a light body to float upwards. And just as a light body remains light when forcibly displaced, and thus retains its aptitude and tendency for the location proper to it, in the same way the human soul, remaining in its own existence after separation from the body, has a natural aptitude and a natural tendency to embodiment.⁴²

³⁹ Barron, 148-149.

⁴⁰ Super I ad Cor. 15. Cf. Davies, 216.

⁴¹ Davies, 217.

⁴² ST I, 76, 1.

Therefore, by its nature, the soul naturally belongs to the body, as the form of the body. For Aquinas, the death of the body implies that the body has lost its form – the first principle of its life.⁴³ However, though the body is capable of perishing, the human soul, being subsistent, cannot perish. “On Aquinas’s account, therefore, the human soul can only be said to survive as something purely intellectual, as the *locus* of thought or will.”⁴⁴ For Aquinas, the rational nature of the human soul (having both an intellect and a will) requires that it be immortal. Aquinas defends the validity of this position in another passage which deserves to be quoted in full.

As we have said already (AA. 5, 6, 7), all the powers of the soul belong to the soul as their principle. But some powers belong to the soul alone as their subject; as the intellect and the will. These powers must remain in the soul after the destruction of the body. But other powers are in the composite as their subject, as all the powers of the sensitive nutritive parts. Now accidents cannot remain after the destruction of the subject. Therefore, when the composite is destroyed, such powers do not remain actually: but they remain virtually in the soul, as in their principle or root.⁴⁵

Given this, the question still remains as to how personal identity can be transferred, since Aquinas maintains that the soul is not the totality of the human person. In other words, personal identity requires bodily continuity. For a human person to live again, according to Aquinas, soul must be united to a body, but not just any body. “The soul of an ox cannot be the soul of a horse’s body, nor can the soul of this ox be the soul of any other ox. Therefore, since the rational soul that survives remains numerically the same . . . it must be reunited to numerically the same matter.”⁴⁶ How can such a thing be

⁴³ ST I, 75, 1.

⁴⁴ Davies, 216.

⁴⁵ ST I, 77, 8.

⁴⁶ CT 1, 153. While a student, Aquinas was referred to by other students as the “Dumb Ox” – a thought which must have caused him to smile while writing this line.

accomplished if the body is destroyed? To answer this Aquinas appeals to doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. For Aquinas, the resurrection of the body and its reunion with the soul will accomplish three things. First, it will satisfy the desire of the soul to be united with the body.⁴⁷ Second, it will allow the rational creature to experience happiness, which is the natural desire of any creature.

Since therefore the natural condition of the soul is to be united to the body, it has a natural desire for union with the body. Hence, the will cannot be perfectly at rest until the soul is again joined to the body Therefore the human being's final happiness requires the soul to be again united to the body.⁴⁸

The third thing Aquinas's position accomplished is to maintain bodily continuity. Aquinas writes, "[a]t the resurrection the soul will not resume a celestial or ethereal body, or the body of some animal No, it will resume a human body made up of flesh and bones, and equipped with the same organs it now possesses."⁴⁹ Aquinas does not offer speculation as to the manner in which this may be accomplished. What Aquinas does assert is that such an action is outside the capability of nature. Therefore, Aquinas's position on the continuity of personal identity that results from the resurrection of the dead requires a supernatural act on the part of God. Aquinas "is absolutely clear that such numerical identity is needed if I am to live again, and, given his belief in the power of God, he finds no objection in principle to believing that it can be brought about."⁵⁰ Though speculative in nature, Aquinas's position is both philosophically coherent, and rationally defensible.

⁴⁷ Barron, 149.

⁴⁸ CT 1, 151.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Davies, 219.

The third condition concerns whether the human soul is able to have knowledge while separated from the body. In dealing with this issue Aquinas draws upon the previous discussions. Because a human is a united being, the rational soul is necessary for knowledge because the soul is the locus of the intellect and will.⁵¹ Yet, it would seem that the physical body is also necessary for knowledge because, for Aquinas, all human knowledge is mediated through the senses. In other words, “our knowledge derives from and is dependent on the fact that we are sensing beings.”⁵² Aristotle believed that because the intellect and will were interior principles of an individual, they dissolved along with the body at death. However, Aquinas maintains that the rational soul is capable of knowledge after the death of the body. He provides two key reasons for this. First, Aquinas asserts that powers of the intellect and the will do not belong to a rational soul as its interior principles, rather, they belong to the rational soul as its subject.⁵³

For by soul we mean that whereby the thing having life lives, so it must be understood as existing in a subject, taking subject here in a broad sense according to which not only what actually exists is called a subject, as an accident is said to be in a subject, but prime matter too is called a subject. The body which receives life is rather the subject or matter than what exists in a subject.⁵⁴

This difficult quote can be made more intelligible by recalling that, for Aquinas, a principle is a source, or that from which something proceeds, while a subject, in metaphysical terms, is a substance in relation to attributes. Basically, Aquinas is arguing that the intellect and the will are not accidental (that is, non-essential), because they are

⁵¹ Davies, 216.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 43.

⁵³ ST I, 77, 8.

⁵⁴ Aquinas, *Commentary on the De Anima, Book Two, Lesson 1*. Quoted by Ralph McNerny, *A First Glance at St. Thomas Aquinas: A Handbook for Peeping Thomists*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 122.

the fundamental attributes of the rational soul in human beings.⁵⁵

Second, as established in Chapter 2 and defended in Chapter 3, the intellect is based on an immaterial substance, and not on a material substance. Therefore, though the material body dissolves after death, the human intellect remains because it is based on an immaterial substance. McInerny comments, “Aristotle and Aquinas pin their philosophical arguments that the human soul can exist independently of the body after death on the character of thinking. The nature of thinking lifts the human soul, although it is the substantial form a living body, free from the confining and restricting consequences of matter.”⁵⁶

An additional issue related to this discussion should be addressed briefly. Aquinas believed that knowledge acquired in this life is retained after the death of the body on the basis that “knowledge resides in the intellect.”⁵⁷ Further, though the state of the separated soul is not the same as in its union with a body, “it follows that through the intelligible species acquired in this life the soul apart from the body can understand what it understood formerly, but in a different way.”⁵⁸ Aquinas does not show a separated soul can have knowledge apart from sense images. However, it follows from his position that the immaterial intellect, being the basis for knowledge, survives the death of the body.

These three conditions – the ability of human nature to be fulfilled, the continuance of personal identity, and the separated soul’s ability to have knowledge – are

⁵⁵ In other words, “the human soul is the first principle of human, rational life, i.e., knowing and willing.” Kreeft, A Summa of the Summa, 29.

⁵⁶ McInerny, 128-129.

⁵⁷ ST I, 89, 5.

⁵⁸ ST I, 89, 6.

necessary factors in order for the notion of a human destiny beyond physical death to be an intelligible idea. Though not incontrovertibly established, this segment has demonstrated that these issues are philosophically coherent and rationally defensible under Aquinas's understanding of the nature (its immateriality and immortality) and powers (the intellect and the will) of the rational human soul.

Two Opposing Positions on Human Destiny

So far, this chapter has explored human destiny as the fulfillment of universal human aspirations, and examined several conditions necessary for human destiny to be considered a plausible theory. Attention will now be given to two objections concerning Aquinas's conception of human destiny. The first objection, which comes from the philosopher Richard Swinburne, is based on a different theoretical foundation for the immortality of the soul. The second objection, which comes from particle physicist John Polkinghorne, approaches the issue from an avowedly Thomistic perspective, though he opposes the view that the soul survives the death of the body. These two positions will be analyzed and then evaluated.

Swinburne's complex and well-argued solution to the mind-body problem is approached from the position of substance dualism. That is, that human beings consist of two distinct and separate substances – body and soul. Thus, Swinburne agrees with Aquinas on a number of issues related to the mind-body problem, such as the immaterial nature and basis of human consciousness, and the libertarian freedom of the will. Despite the close proximity of their positions, however, Swinburne disagrees with Aquinas concerning the human soul's ability to survive the death of the body. Swinburne believes

that, at death, the soul ceases to function, because the human soul is dependent on the brain for operation.⁵⁹

Therefore, in light of the difference between Swinburne and Aquinas concerning the destiny of the soul, two main contrasting elements between their positions need to be identified and evaluated. The first element is that Swinburne maintains that the immaterial substance of the soul is what is essential to the nature of a human individual. For Swinburne, “[s]ince the body which is presently yours could have been mine (logic and even natural laws allow), that shows that none of the matter of which my body is presently made is essential to my being the person that I am.”⁶⁰ The second element is that Swinburne disagrees with Aquinas’s position that the soul of any being (whether vegetative, sensitive, or rational) is the principle of its behavior (or the form of its body). Rather, Swinburne conceives the soul as a distinctive part of an organism.⁶¹ From these two contrasting elements, Swinburne believes that because the brain is a necessary component in order for the soul to function, the body is necessary in order for the soul to function.⁶² Therefore, Swinburne concludes, “[w]e need a form of dualism which brings out that the soul does not have a *nature* so as to function on its own.”⁶³ For this reason, Swinburne finds Aquinas’s position to be inadequate. However, this thesis contends that

⁵⁹ Swinburne, The Evolution of the Soul, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 298.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 153.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 183.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 176. Swinburne analogizes the soul with a light bulb plugged into a light socket, which stands for the body. The only way for the light bulb to shine (function) is for it to be plugged into a non-damaged socket. In this way, the soul is inert, and has no mental life. It follows that Swinburne could argue that the soul does “survive” the death of body. However, any such existence is only in potential, and not actual. Swinburne’s position sounds very similar to the concept of “soul sleep.” Cf. The Evolution of the Soul, 310-311.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 306.

this is what Aquinas's position entails. Recall that, for Aquinas, the soul is naturally linked to the body which it animates. Once the soul is removed, the body ceases to function because its principle of life is gone. The soul, however, though it may continue, cannot function properly as a soul in respect of its cardinal powers – knowledge and will. What Aquinas leaves open, and what it would seem Swinburne wishes to deny, is the ability for these powers to function in a way that is not natural to the soul, but continues in such a way that the personal identity of the individual is protected. The only reason Swinburne offers for why this could not be the case is the unified nature of a human individual as a creature comprised of both body and soul. He writes:

Aquinas tried to make provision in his system for the normal embodiedness of men by claiming that the soul separated from its body 'is not a man.' But, although lacking its bodily expression and source of knowledge, the soul is still the subject of action and experience, and thus, in my terminology, a person. Hence, even in Aquinas's system, what we value most about men has a natural immortality; and this seems to jar with the biblical affirmation.⁶⁴

Swinburne desires his understanding of the mind-body problem to closely connect with the Scriptural doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. However, Swinburne seems to miss Aquinas's point. As established above, Aquinas maintains that the natural condition of a person is a unified being, with the rational soul being the form of the human body. For Aquinas, the doctrine of the resurrected body establishes that the soul needs to be reunited to its body in order for its fundamental nature to be fulfilled, in accordance with human experience of the need for a body and the Scriptural doctrine of the resurrection of the body. In other words, Swinburne's objection to Aquinas's position is actually solved in Aquinas's position. Of course, this does not demonstrate that Swinburne's position is

⁶⁴ Swinburne, 311-312.

incorrect. However, it does illustrate that Aquinas's position is both rationally defensible, and coincides with Scripture, despite Swinburne's assertion that it is not.

The second contrasting position to be examined in this chapter is that of John Polkinghorne. By his own admission, Polkinghorne approaches the mind-body problem from a generally Thomistic perspective.⁶⁵ He provides a more detailed description of his position when he writes:

My understanding of the soul is that it is the almost infinitely complex, dynamic, information-bearing pattern, carried at any instant by the matter of my animated body and continuously developing throughout all the constituent changes of my bodily make-up during the course of my earthly life.⁶⁶

Accordingly, “[m]y soul is the *real me*, but that is neither a spiritual entity temporarily housed in the physical husk of my body, nor is it just the matter that makes up that body.”⁶⁷ Instead, the soul is the form (or information-bearing pattern) of the body. What is interesting about Polkinghorne's position is that, like Swinburne, he disagrees with Aquinas's belief that the soul survives the death of the body. Of course, Polkinghorne is not saying that physical death is the end of a person. Indeed, “an indispensable part of coherent Christian belief is to expect a destiny beyond death.”⁶⁸ Rather, Polkinghorne insists that the soul is “dissolved at death by the decay of the body.”⁶⁹ Polkinghorne's hope for a human destiny beyond death is based on his assertion that “it is a perfectly

⁶⁵ Polkinghorne states that his “view of the soul that I have been trying to express would not have surprised St Thomas Aquinas.” John Polkinghorne, *Beyond Science: The Wider Human Context*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 61. However, his view is more closely associated with that of Aristotle, which is discussed on page 109 of this chapter.

⁶⁶ John Polkinghorne, *The Faith of a Physicist*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 163.

⁶⁷ Polkinghorne, *Beyond Science*, 61.

⁶⁸ John Polkinghorne, *Quarks, Chaos and Christianity*, (New York: Crossroad, 1996), 95.

⁶⁹ Polkinghorne, *The Faith of a Physicist*, 163.

coherent hope that the pattern that is me will be remembered by God and its instantiation will be recreated by him when he reconstitutes me in a new environment of his choosing. That will be his eschatological act of resurrection.”⁷⁰ Polkinghorne submits two reasons for belief in the doctrine of the future resurrection of the body. The first reason is theological. Since God is ultimately powerful, it follows that God is capable of accomplishing such a feat, despite the inability of the human mind to conceive how it could be accomplished. Further, God is ultimately good. “God does not just cast us off as discarded broken pots, thrown on to the rubbish heap of the universe when we die. Our belief in a destiny beyond death rests in the loving faithfulness of the eternal God.”⁷¹

The second reason is historical. Polkinghorne understands the historical act of Christ’s resurrection from the dead to give a glimpse into the prospective destiny of humanity. In addition, Polkinghorne views the historical act of the creation of the universe as alluding to an eventual historical act of rebirth and renewal of the universe. He writes, “the new creation is the divine redemption of the old.”⁷² Polkinghorne then connects these two elements of his historical argument together. “The resurrection of Jesus is the beginning within history of a process whose fulfillment lies beyond history, in which the destiny of humanity and the destiny of the universe are together to find their

⁷⁰ Polkinghorne, *The Faith of a Physicist*, 163. Apparently, Polkinghorne believes that God, based on his perfect memory, will reassemble particles into a new form, which will happen to retain the soul of an individual. Recall that Polkinghorne is a particle physicist, and that when all you have is a hammer all problems appear to be nails.

⁷¹ Polkinghorne, *Quarks, Chaos and Christianity*, 92.

⁷² Polkinghorne, *The Faith of a Physicist*, 167.

fulfillment in a liberation from decay and futility.”⁷³ Hence, “the Christian hope is of death and *resurrection*.”⁷⁴

Nevertheless, despite the reasonableness of his argument, Polkinghorne’s position suffers from the problem of several unanswered questions. The first one can be established by examining two elements of Aquinas and Polkinghorne’s positions. First, like Polkinghorne, Aquinas believes that a human being is a union of both body and soul. “The body is not the essence of the soul; but the soul by the nature of its essence can be united to the body, so that, properly speaking, not the soul alone, but the *composite*, is the species.”⁷⁵ Second, Aquinas agrees with Polkinghorne’s position that the future resurrection of the body is the culmination of human destiny.⁷⁶ This illustrates that Aquinas recognizes, along with Polkinghorne, the explicit need for the restoration of the body along with the physical world. As Barron writes, “[t]o bring the grubby flesh right into the heart of the beatific vision is one of Aquinas’s humanist masterstrokes.”⁷⁷ Yet, following Polkinghorne’s reasoning, it is difficult to understand how personal identity could be maintained at the resurrection without the immortality of the soul. He writes, “[o]ur hope is of the resurrection of the *body*. By that I do not mean the resuscitation of our present structure.”⁷⁸ Of course, Aquinas does not believe this either. The only way in which this seems plausible is if God, who will redesign each individual at the

⁷³ Polkinghorne, The Faith of a Physicist, 164.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 163.

⁷⁵ ST I, 75, 7.

⁷⁶ Cf. CG 4, 79, 6.

⁷⁷ Barron, 175.

⁷⁸ Polkinghorne, The Faith of a Physicist, 164.

resurrection of the dead, remembers the form of each individual. This is a plausible notion. However, a more thoroughgoing Thomistic position is preferable for two reasons. First, it provides a rational argument for personal identity based on principles that are accessible by reason, and does not force one to appeal to mystery in order to solve the problem. Second, it solves the problem of ambiguity concerning what essential physical parts of the individual need to be created or reformed at the resurrection in order for personal identity to remain intact.

However, another question remains to consider. If, as Polkinghorne alleges, the soul is the form of the present body, how can personal identity be continued when God “reconstitutes” each individual at the resurrection? Polkinghorne asserts that the soul is the form of this present body, while also maintaining that the resurrection will be a result of God remembering those patterns, and remaking them. Aquinas’s basis for the immortality of the soul, one which is not explicitly or implicitly contradicted by Polkinghorne’s position, is a more logically consistent position. It corresponds to “the facts of human existence,” and solves the logical conundrum of how personal identity can continue between the death of the body and the resurrection of the dead. In this manner, Aquinas’s position on human destiny answers problems both theoretical and practical. Further, Polkinghorne does not provide an adequate reason for abandoning this aspect of the Thomistic perspective on human destiny. Of course, this does not make his position incorrect. Yet, it does leave his position vulnerable to attack by materialists who would maintain that Polkinghorne’s position is similar to theirs with an added bit of hopeful theology to lift the spirit.

This chapter has presented three arguments in favor of a human destiny beyond the death of the body. The first segment argued that certain human aspirations (ultimate justice and morality, a purpose and meaning to life, and the quest for happiness), which are shared by various cultures, religions, ages, and geography, strongly suggests that it is possible for a human to survive after the death of the physical body. The second segment argued that certain conditions (the ability of human nature to be fulfilled, the continuation of personal identity after physical death, and the separated human soul's ability to have knowledge) were provided for in Aquinas's position on human destiny, and that this position was philosophically coherent and rationally defensible. The third segment explored two different opinions on the basis for an existence beyond the death of the body. It was shown that, though the others are plausible, Aquinas's position is both rationally and theologically defensible, and corresponds to the reality of human experience, and should be preferred.

It was stated in Chapter 1 that many in the current mind-body debate have ignored Aquinas's proposed solution to the mind-body problem. Despite the assertion that it is "difficult to pin down," this thesis has demonstrated that Aquinas's position is clear, coherent, comprehensive, and even contemporary.⁷⁹ Aquinas's solution continues to correspond to recent neurophysiological discoveries, as well as tried-and-true philosophical analysis. Indeed, as Maritain declared, "Thomism is not a museum piece."⁸⁰ Quite the contrary, the findings of this thesis suggests that Aquinas's composite dualism is a more plausible solution to the mind-body problem than those offered by the

⁷⁹ Lynne Rudder Baker, "Need a Christian be a Mind/Body Dualist?" Faith and Philosophy 12 no. 4 (Oct. 1995), 503.

⁸⁰ Jacques Maritain, A Preface to Metaphysics, (Salem, NH: Ayer, 1987), 9.

hard materialist, soft materialist, or substance dualist. Clearly, Aquinas's proposed solution to the mind-body problem deserves a complete and honest hearing in the wider discussion of the mind-body debate.

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