

[1.0] Is the human intellect the substantial form of the human body?

1. [2.1] And it is argued first that it is, by the definition of soul given in *On the Soul* II, which Aristotle says is “most general.” Consequently, it is proper to the intellective soul, for he says there that the soul is “the act of the body,”  
5 etc. But act and form are the same. Therefore, etc.

2. [2.2] Again, the human intellect is a substance, and every substance is matter, or form, or a composite of matter and form, as is held in *On the Soul* II and *Metaphysics* VII. And the intellect is neither matter nor a composite. Therefore, it is a form, and it is not the form of anything else but the human  
10 body. Therefore, etc.

3. [2.3] Again, the specific differences of species from the category of substance must not be taken from accidents or extrinsic considerations, but from the substance of the thing; and not from the matter, since it has the same nature in all generable and corruptible things. Therefore, the specific difference  
15 of man, *viz.* rational, is taken from the substantial form, *viz.* from the intellect, whose activity is to reason. Therefore, the intellect is the substantial form of man.

4. [2.4] Again, if the intellect does not come from the nature and substance of man, since it does not come from his matter, it must be his substantial  
20 form. But it is argued that it does come from the nature and substance of man: first, because otherwise, human happiness would not consist in its activity, the opposite of which Aristotle states in *Nicomachean Ethics* I and X; second, because otherwise, man himself would not be said to be the intellect, and to the highest degree, which is the opposite of Aristotle’s intention in *Nicomachean Ethics* VI  
25 and IX; third, because man would not be said to understand by virtue of the fact that the intellect understands, and yet he is not said to understand in any other way; fourth, because otherwise, man would not exist in his substance, but only as a brute animal, since he would not have an intellective soul from his substance, but only a sensitive soul. And in that case, he would not be obliged  
30 to love intellect more than sense, which is contrary to Aristotle in *Nicomachean*

*Ethics* IX. The consequence is obvious because it is evident that after God, at least, man is obliged to love nothing but himself.

5. [3.1] The opposite is argued by Aristotle, when he says in *On the Soul* II that nothing prevents a certain part of the soul from being separated, since it is the act of no body. And he is speaking here of the intellect. Therefore, the intellect is not the act or form of the human body.

6. [3.2] Again, it would follow that man is everlasting, which is false, since he dies. The consequence is obvious, because a thing is seen to be everlasting whose substantial form is everlasting, which indicates that it is something in actuality. And yet Aristotle posits that the intellect is everlasting, for as he says, it is separated from other things, “as what is everlasting from what is corruptible.”

7. [3.3] Again, the form of the human body is not an admixture, *i. e.* it has not been mixed with matter and compounds of corporeal qualities, although the human body is material and complex. And yet Aristotle says the intellect itself must be “unmixed,” because “it understands all things.” When explaining this, the Commentator expressly says that it is necessary that it “be neither a body nor a power in a body,” etc.

8. [4.0] This question has been raised to distinguish opinions about the intellect in order to see where they agree and disagree, after which we will inquire into their differences.

9. [4.0] I say, then, that there have been three renowned opinions about this intellect.

10. [4.1] The first was Alexander’s, when he says that the human intellect is a generable and corruptible material form, derived from a material potentiality and materially extended, just like the soul of a cow or dog, and that it does not remain after death.

11. [4.2] Another was the opinion of Averroes, when he says that the human intellect is an immaterial, ungenerated, and incorruptible form, and that it is not derived from a material potentiality, extended, or, indeed, multiplied by the number of men; but rather, there is a unique intellect for all men, *viz.* an intellect by which I understand, you understand, and so for everyone else. Thus,

it is not a form inhering in a body. That is why he imagines that just as God is present and immediate to the whole world and to each and every part of it without inhering in the world or any part of it, so the intellect is related to men, *viz.* such that it does not inhere in any of them, but it is immediately present to each of them, despite being indivisible.

12. [4.3] The third opinion is the truth of our catholic faith, to which we must firmly adhere, *viz.* that the human intellect is the substantial form of a man inhering in the human body, but not derived from a material potentiality or extended by its extension, and so not naturally generated or corruptible. But it is not everlasting simpliciter because it was created in time. Nevertheless, it is sempiternal hereafter in such a way that it will never be corrupted or annihilated, though God could, by his absolute power, annihilate it.

13. [5.1] However, all these opinions agree in one conclusion concerning which the present question was asked, *viz.* that the human intellect is the substantial form of the human body. And this seems sufficient to conclude the arguments that were made at the beginning of the question.

14. [5.2] And finally, the faithful and the Commentator are in agreement in regard to a second conclusion, *viz.* that the human intellect is not a material form in the sense that it is derived from a material potentiality, or materially extended.

15. [5.2.1] Aristotle and the Commentator seem to want to demonstrate this conclusion with many arguments, the first of which is from what was stated in the preceding question, *viz.* since the human intellect understands all things, it must be unmixed.

16. [5.2.2] The second is that it is everlasting, and no form derived from a material potentiality is everlasting.

17. [5.2.3] The third argument is that if it were material in this way, then in order to exercise its proper operation it would require a certain arrangement of tangible qualities in the matter subject to it or in the organ through which it would exercise its operation, and this is false.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the consequence

<sup>1</sup>Explain tangible qualities...

is obvious, since every form that is material in this way is the form of a simple element, or of a body mixed from elements. If it is the form of a simple  
95 element, it is agreed that it determines a certain arrangement of qualities, as fire determines hot and dry, water determines cold and moist, etc. If it is the form of a mixed body, then it would determine for itself a proportion of qualities in keeping with the proportion of elements in the mixture, because it is said in *On the Heavens* I that a mixture is moved according to the nature of its  
100 determining elements.

18. [5.2.3.1] But the falsity of the consequent is proved by Aristotle, first because certainly any compound of this kind of body, or of its organ, whether the body or the organ subject to it, would be more hot than cold, more moist than dry, or conversely. This could not be consistently said, since it understands  
105 hot and cold alike, moist and dry alike, and conversely, in every degree.

19. [5.2.3.2] Second, the same falsity of the consequent is proved because every form determining an arrangement of tangible qualities for itself in this way is capable of being affected with a corruptive affection,<sup>2</sup> and Aristotle says that the intellect is unaffected in this way.

20. [5.2.3.3] Third, the same conclusion is further proved because the intellect is not affected in this way in performing its operation, as is sense. For because sense needs a corporeal organ and a certain amount of organic complexity, it is overburdened by what is exceedingly sensible, so that after very loud  
115 sounds, we cannot hear soft sounds very well, nor are we able to perceive feeble odors after strong ones. But the intellect is not overburdened in this way, because it does not understand by means of a corporeal organ. That is why, when it has understood something intelligible in the highest degree, such as God or the Intelligences, it does not understand the lowest things less, but even more.

21. [5.2.4] The fourth argument for the main thesis is that if the intellect  
120 were derived from a material potentiality and extended, it would be unable to receive anything except singularly and individually, just like sense. Therefore, it could cognize nothing universally.

<sup>2</sup>See III.1 on corruptive affections.

22. [5.2.5] The fifth argument is that it could only receive extended things. Thus, it could not cognize indivisibles such as God and the Intelligences,  
125 which is false.

23. [5.2.6] The sixth argument is that a corporeal and extended power can be reflected neither on itself nor on its own operation. Thus, the intellect would not be able to cognize itself or its own activity, just as the sense of sight or hearing does not cognize its own act because it cannot be reflected. For this  
130 reason, Aristotle concludes that a common sense must be posited for cognizing the acts of the exterior senses.

24. [6.0] Nevertheless, it must be noted that although the second conclusion is absolutely true and should be firmly held by faith, and although the arguments adduced for it are probable, it is not apparent to me that they are  
135 demonstrative, based on evident principles, leaving the catholic faith aside, unless God with a grace that is special and outside the common course of nature were to make it evident to us, just as he could make evident to someone the article of the Trinity or the Incarnation.

25. [7.0] For this reason, I think Alexander replied in the following way to  
140 these arguments.

26. [7.1] To the first, he said what was said in the preceding question.

27. [7.2] To the second, he denied that the human intellect is everlasting in the way the divine intellect is.

28. [7.3] To the third, he spoke just as we speak of the common sense or  
145 cogitative power, for certainly when it is said what type of compound it would be, one would say that it would be a compound of the organ of common sense or the imagination or the cogitative power, and one would say that the intellect is capable of being affected in the same way, just like the common sense. For this reason, he also said that just as we cannot see or hear well when the organ  
150 of sight or hearing has been damaged, so when the organ of common sense or imagination has been damaged, we cannot understand or reason well. But why, then, do we understand the lowest intelligibles better after we understand what is most intelligible? Because we understand those things, *viz.* God and the Intelligences, by reasoning and discursive thought. Things that are understood

155 in this way, however, do not overburden our organs as exterior objects can overburden them.

29. [7.4] To the fourth argument, Alexander said that an extended power is indeed carried to its object in a universal way, just like a horse's appetite. For the thirsty horse desires water, and not determinately this water to the exclusion of that, but indifferently, any water at all. Thus, it drinks whichever  
160 it finds first.

30. [7.5] To the fifth, he would say that the intellect understands an indivisible in a privative fashion, as Aristotle observes in *On the Soul* III. And it does this by attaching negation to the concept of a divisible.

165 31. [7.6] To the last, he would say that the intellect or sense is not strictly speaking reflected, but that it understands discursively, which many say is to understand reflexively, and also that reflection more strictly pertains to bodies than to separate substances.

[1.0] Is the human intellect a form inhering in the human body?

1. [2.0] It is argued that it is, on the authority of Alexander and the Catholic faith.

2. [3.0] The opposite is argued on the authority of the Commentator. The opinion of the Commentator was that the intellect does not inhere in the body but is present to it, just as Aristotle thought that an intelligence is present to a celestial sphere, or God is present to the world. For an intelligence, though indivisible and non-inherent, is thought to be immediately present to the entire sphere and to each of its parts, just as God is present to the entire world and to each of its parts. In this way, then, the Commentator says that the human intellect, existing indivisibly and uniquely, is immediately present to each man without inhering in any man.

3. [3.1] In this connection, we have the Commentator's probable arguments. The first is that no form inheres in matter unless it is derived from a material potency. But the human intellect is not derived from a material potency, as the Commentator says. Therefore, etc.

4. [3.2] His second argument is that there is a single intellect belonging to all men, for it is, he says, everlasting, and that which is everlasting is not made many by the number of corruptible things. But what is unique and undivided does not inhere in many things that are separate and distinct in place, like human bodies. Therefore, etc.

5. [3.3] Again, the intellect is thought to be indivisible, and according to the faith as well, because it is not materially extended, since it is not derived from a material potency. For such an indivisible would not inhere in a divisible subject like the human body. Therefore, etc.

6. [3.3.1] This argument can be set out deductively as follows: if an indivisible existing intellect inheres in a divisible body, it must inhere in each part of that body, or else in some parts and not in others. If it is said that it inheres in one part and not in the others, this will seem a fiction, because it could not be consistently attributed to any part and quantity. But if it is said

that it inheres in the entire body, *i. e.* in each part of it, it is obvious this will be in the body as a whole, since it is not divisible.

35 7. [4.0] And many absurdities seem to follow from this. [4.1] The first absurdity is that the same thing would, considered as a whole, be moved and at rest at the same time; and since resting is not being moved, the same thing would be moved and not moved at the same time, which implies a contradiction. The consequence is clear: suppose your foot is at rest and your hand is moved. Then the same thing which, considered as a whole, is in your hand, is moved with the motion of your hand; otherwise, it would not be continuous  
40 with your hand and in your hand. And so as well, what is continuous in your foot is at rest with your foot, for it remains continuously in the same place, *viz.* in your foot. Therefore, your intellect, the same indivisibly existing thing, would be moved and at rest at the same time, because it would be moved in your hand and at rest in your foot.

45 8. [4.2] But it gets worse, because it would follow that the same thing would, considered as a whole, be moved by contrary motions simultaneously if you moved your one hand to the right and your other to the left, or one higher and the other lower. A further absurdity is that it would follow that the same thing is separate from itself, which is impossible. The consequence is obvious,  
50 since the hand is separate from the foot; thus, what is in the hand as a whole is separate from what is in the foot as a whole.

9. [4.3] Third, it would follow that your foot would understand because the intellect considered as a whole would be present in it, and consequently, so would the act of thinking.

55 10. [4.4] Fourth, it would follow that your foot is a man, because even though a substantial form gives us something actual, there must be a composite of body and entire human substantial form for there to be an actual man. And your foot would be this kind of thing, since the intellect is the substantial form of the entire man.

60 11. [4.5] Fifth, it would follow that a substantial form would travel from subject to subject, which seems absurd. The consequence is obvious, because through change, some parts of the body leave and others arrive, and so the



same intellect that was previously in the parts that have left would later on be in those that are arriving.

65 12. [5.0] Nevertheless, this opinion is false.

13. [5.1] Accordingly, I propose the opposite conclusion, *viz.* that your intellect, by which you understand, inheres in your body without your matter. For in the first place, this conclusion must be firmly held on the basis of the Catholic faith. Second, it must be held by natural arguments, leaving the  
70 Catholic faith aside, as a pagan philosopher would hold it. My proof is that I think a pagan would hold the opinion of Alexander, about whom something will be said later.

14. [6.0] There are, however, some natural arguments that the soul inheres in the human body.

75 15. [6.1] The first is that otherwise, it would not belong to the essence of man, or a man would not be something one *per se*. Both seem absurd. Hence, it was sufficiently argued in the preceding question that the intellect must belong to the substance of a man, and belong intrinsically.

16. [6.2] The second argument is that one would assume either that there  
80 is a unique intellect for all men, or that there are many, in keeping with the number of men. But it is apparent that both of these are absurd. For first, it is absurd that the intellect is assumed to be unique, as will be seen later. But I also state that if it is not inherent, it must not be assumed that there is one for you and another for me, because let us suppose that *A* is your intellect and *B* is  
85 mine; then they must have the same nature and also not be moveable relative to your movement or mine, because they do not inhere in us. Thus, intellect *A* would not be closer or more proximate to you than intellect *B*, nor even to me, nor conversely, *viz.* before either of us understood. Therefore, natural reason does not dictate that *A* is any more your intellect than mine.

90 17. [6.3] The third argument is close to the preceding, *viz.* that Socrates' intellect is either moved from place to place with Socrates, or not. If you say that it is, this does not seem like a natural thing to say, since it does not inhere in him. For no means could be given by which this would happen, whether by touch or impulse, for it could not be said what sort of connection the intellect

95 has to Socrates' body on the basis of which it is moved with Socrates' body.  
This, however, could not be said, especially not before Socrates cognizes some-  
thing. On the other hand, if you were to say truly that it is not moved from  
place to place with Socrates, then he would be separate from his intellect, and  
so he could not understand through himself, unless you were to say that this  
100 intellect is everywhere by immediacy, as we would say of God. In that case,  
only one intellect would need to be posited, since it would be just as close to  
me as to you, especially before either of us was cognizing. Therefore, I could  
understand through it just like you, and so it would be a fiction to posit one  
for you and another for me. That is why the Commentator believed it to be  
105 unique, a view that will later be disproved.

18. [6.4] The fourth argument is that human reason, leaving faith aside or  
even including the faith, does not dictate that your intellect exists before you  
do, unless it is thought to be everlasting and unique, as the Commentator  
wished. But if it was made in time, this would be either by creation, which  
110 natural reason, leaving the faith aside, would not dictate, or by natural gener-  
ation, in which case it would be derived from a material potency and inherent.  
For everyone must assent to this conclusion, as long as man lives in this age, and  
whether a member of the faithful or not. For this reason, it must be noted, as  
it seems to me, leaving faith and supernatural action aside, that natural reason  
115 dictates that these, or their opposites, obtain in a form: *viz.* inhering in matter,  
being derived from a material potency, being materially extended, being made  
many (and not unique, undivided by bodies that are separate and spatially dis-  
tinct), being generated, and being corruptible. Alexander assumed all of these,  
then, in connection with the human intellect, and Averroes denies all of them  
120 together. But we assume by faith that they do not necessarily follow upon one  
another, namely we posit the inherence and multiplication, and we deny the  
derivation from material potency and the extension. And we assume that it  
was made in a supernatural way, *viz.* by creation and not by natural genera-  
tion. Nor is it strictly corruptible, *viz.* by natural means, but it is capable of  
125 being annihilated, and yet it will never be annihilated.

19. [7.0] To the Commentator's arguments, however, the faith would re-

spond in one way, and Alexander in another.

20. [7.1] To the first (3.1), the faith would deny the major and Alexander the minor.

130 21. [7.2] As for the second argument (3.2), the faith and Alexander both would deny that there is a unique intellect belonging to all human beings, and something will be said about this later on.

22. [7.3] To the third argument (3.3), Alexander would deny that the intellect is indivisible, and so the absurdities raised against its being indivisible  
135 would not be against him. But the faith grants that it is indivisible.

23. [8.1] And so to the first counter-instance (4.1), it is replied that the intellect is not moved and at rest at the same time because a contradiction would follow, as was argued above. But it is granted that the intellect is moved in the hand and at rest in the foot at the same time; indeed, it is simultaneously  
140 moved in the hand and not moved in the foot, and this is not a contradiction. For this reason, ‘it is at rest in the foot; therefore, it is at rest’ does not follow, since ‘it is not moved in the foot; therefore, it is not moved’ likewise does not follow. But when it is said that it is moved by contrary motions, we can speak just as we speak of the body of Christ in the consecrated host, when one priest  
145 carries the body of Christ to the right and another to the left. For the body of Christ is not moved *per se* by contrary motions, just as there is no absurdity when something is denominated as being moved by contrary motions, because it would not follow from this that contraries are in the same thing at the same time, just as it is not absurd for the same thing to be in places that are different or separate from each other, as will be discussed in the solution to the  
150 next argument. So it is not absurd for the same thing to be moved to those places at the same time, since the motions do not inhere in it, nor are they commensurably related to it.

24. [8.2] To the second counter-instance (4.2), it is said that the intellect is  
155 not separate from itself because it is not in the hand or foot commensurably, since it is not extended by the extension of the hand or foot. And it is not absurd for the same thing to be wholly and non-commensurably and in different places separate from each other, although this would be in a supernatural way, as the

body of Christ is simultaneously in paradise and on the altar. For the body  
160 of Christ in the host on the altar is not commensurate with the magnitude  
of the host, but it is whole in each part of the host; although the parts are  
separate from each other, it is not on that account separate from itself. And so  
in the same way, the intellect is somehow in the hand and foot, and in neither  
commensurably, since it is not extended in any of those members.

165 25. [8.3] To the third counter-instance (4.3), it would not be thought absurd  
that your foot understands as a partial understanding, not as a whole. But, you  
ask, what is a partial understanding? I say that a ‘partial understanding’ is  
that which is part of another understanding, and a ‘whole understanding’ that  
which understands, when it is not part of another understanding. For this  
170 reason, neither the intellect nor some part of a man is a whole understanding,  
but only the man himself.

26. [8.4] To the fourth counter-instance (4.4), it would be said that nothing  
is said to be a man or an animal in familiar and ordinary speech except the  
whole substance, *viz.* that which is not part of another substance. Nor is any  
175 other substance properly said to be a *this* something, whether on the basis of a  
substantial form or in another way, especially in organic things, except for the  
entire substance. And this should really be explored elsewhere.

27. [8.5] To the final counter-instance (4.5), it would be said that the way in  
which the intellect inheres in the human body is not natural but supernatural.  
180 And it is certain that supernaturally, God could not only form what is not  
derived from a material potency, but also separate what has been derived from  
its matter, conserve it separately, and place it in another matter. Why, then,  
would this not be possible as regards the human intellect?