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Patrick Zoll

*Munich School of Philosophy*, [patrick.zoll@hfph.de](mailto:patrick.zoll@hfph.de)

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# WHY THE DEAD HAVE NOT CEASED TO EXIST: THOMAS AQUINAS ON THE ROLE OF FORM IN HYLOMORPHISM

Patrick Zoll

Christian traditions, such as the Catholic one, authoritatively teach that human beings do not cease to exist at death, but survive their bodily deaths in virtue of their immortal souls and they refer to the views of Thomas Aquinas to support their commitment to such a 'survivalism'. In turn, some contemporary hylomorphists — so-called 'corruptionists' — contend that according to a hylomorphic anthropology the survival of a human being's separated soul is not sufficient for the survival of that human being, i.e., that human beings do not exist in the interim period between their bodily death and bodily resurrection, and they refer to Aquinas's hylomorphism to make their case.

In this essay, I explain in detail why Aquinas's hylomorphism is compatible with survivalism and incompatible with corruptionism. Corruptionists do not sufficiently pay attention to the role that form plays in Aquinas's hylomorphism and do not take into account some important implications of his doctrine of the unicity of substantial form. In Aquinas's view, the dead do not cease to exist because neither any of their essential principles nor their substantial being (*esse*) are annihilated at death. This is not the case because both are in fact given to the whole human being by the soul and not by the prime matter the soul configures, or by any additional form.

I conclude that Aquinas's hylomorphic anthropology does not conflict with the authoritative teachings about the afterlife of a Christian tradition such as Catholicism but that certain contemporary hylomorphisms do so because they do not share Aquinas's views on form and matter.

## 1. Introduction

Christian traditions, such as the Catholic one, authoritatively teach that human beings do not cease to exist at death, i.e., that a human being such as Mother Teresa who exists at time  $t_1$  prior to her death and exists at  $t_3$  after her resurrection does not cease to exist at  $t_2$  in the interim period after her death



and before her resurrection.<sup>1</sup> Rather, with references to texts by Thomas Aquinas, Catholic authorities such as the *Sacred Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith* and the *International Theological Commission* maintain that human beings survive their death and exist in the interim period after their death and before their resurrection in virtue of their immortal souls.<sup>2</sup> For example, according to this position, Mother Teresa has died and has not been resurrected yet but continues to exist in virtue of her soul which has survived her death.

Catholicism rejects the opposing 'corruptionist' view — according to which a human being such as Mother Teresa ceases to exist at  $t_2$  in the interim period after her death and before her resurrection — because this view is incompatible with traditional Catholic practices and orthodox teachings. First, if Mother Teresa, who has died and has not been resurrected yet, has not survived her death in virtue of her immortal soul but has ceased to exist at her death, it makes no sense that Christians ask dead Mother Teresa in prayer to intercede with God on behalf of human beings in this earthly life and it makes no sense that Christians pray on behalf of dead loved ones. The Catholic practice of intercessory prayer would make no sense at all because there are no saints to ask for intercession with God on behalf of human beings in this life or the afterlife. Furthermore, it makes no sense for human beings in this life to pray on behalf of dead loved ones because, according to corruptionism, those loved ones have not been resurrected yet and consequently do not exist. Thus, the traditional Catholic practice of intercessory prayer is meaningful and intelligible only if survivalism is accepted and corruptionism rejected.<sup>3</sup>

Second, if a human being  $X$  ceases to exist at death with the consequence that  $X$  does not exist at  $t_2$  in the interim period after  $X$ 's death and before  $X$ 's resurrection,  $X$ 's resurrection must consist in a re-creation by God. However, the problem with this account of a human being's resurrection is that it conflicts with a plausible and widely accepted general metaphysical principle. According to this principle, it is impossible that something  $X$  exists at time  $t_1$ , that  $X$  ceases to exist at  $t_2$ , that  $Y$  comes into existence at  $t_3$ , and that  $Y$  is numerically identical to  $X$ . Thus, the possibility that *Mother Teresa* — and not merely a creature which is a perfect copy of her — is resurrected and exists at  $t_3$  after her resurrection requires Teresa's *continued existence*, i.e., that Teresa exists at  $t_2$  in the interim period after her death and before her resurrection.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Of particular importance in this regard are the *Letter on Certain Questions Concerning Eschatology* (henceforth: *LQE*) published 1979 by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the document *Some Current Questions in Eschatology* (henceforth: *CQE*) published 1992 by the International Theological Commission.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *LQE*, no. 3; *CQE*, no. 5.4.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. *LQE*, no. 3.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. *CQE*, no. 4.3. Besides this philosophical reason, there are also important theological reasons to reject re-creationism. I limit myself to a short presentation of three of them. First, re-creationism implies that God interrupts his continuous creation of Mother Teresa by ceasing to give her being or existence in the interim period  $t_2$  after her death and before her

However, according to some contemporary hylomorphists — so-called ‘corruptionists’ — the acceptance of a hylomorphic anthropology requires us to embrace the view that the survival of a human being’s separated soul is not sufficient for the survival of that human being; i.e., that a human being such as Mother Teresa does not exist at  $t_2$  in the interim period after her bodily death and before her bodily resurrection, and they refer to Aquinas’s hylomorphism to make their case.<sup>5</sup>

Consequently, it appears that a hylomorphic anthropology can be reconciled with the Christian belief in the resurrection only if two conditions are fulfilled: first, the metaphysical principle must be rejected according to which it is impossible that something  $X$  exists at time  $t_1$ ,  $X$  ceases to exist at  $t_2$ ,  $Y$  comes into existence at  $t_3$ , and  $Y$  is numerically identical to  $X$ .<sup>6</sup>

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resurrection. In other words, he abandons his human creatures and allows that they are reduced to nothingness with their death. However, such an annihilism conflicts not only with God’s nature as creator but also with God’s nature as a perfectly good and loving creator. A perfectly good and loving creator never abandons the human beings he creates and loves in such a way that they are reduced to nothingness with their death. Thus, re-creationism is incompatible with orthodox Catholic protology. Second, if re-creationism is true, Christ’s life, passion, and resurrection have no salvific merit for dead human beings. According to re-creationism, dead human beings are delivered or liberated from sin and death only in virtue of God’s activity as creator. Facts such as Christ’s incarnation and that the second person of the Trinity is hypostatically united in Christ with a human nature play no role in a re-creationist soteriology. However, according to Aquinas and authoritative Catholic Christology and soteriology, dead human beings are delivered or liberated from sin and death in virtue of Christ’s life, passion, and resurrection, i.e., Christ’s life, passion, and resurrection have salvific merit for dead human beings and facts such that in Christ the divine nature is hypostatically united with his human nature play an important role in an explanation of how this works; cf. *SCG*, IV, cap. 79. Consequently, re-creationism is incompatible with orthodox Catholic Christology and soteriology. Third, orthodox Catholic doctrine rejects the view that all human beings will be saved and will enjoy perfect human happiness in communion with God in heaven. However, it is difficult to see how this can be the case if re-creationism is true. Either God re-creates some human beings in such a damaged condition that they cannot have communion with him and go to hell, or he does not. If he does, he creates something that is not good, i.e., not as it should be in his eyes, which conflicts with his nature as perfectly good and loving creator. A perfectly good and loving God does not create sinful, i.e., damaged or wounded, creatures and he does not re-create some human beings with the purpose that they suffer eternal separation from him. But if God does not re-create some human beings in such a damaged condition that they cannot have communion with him and consequently go to hell, no human being ends up in hell and all re-created human beings are saved. But if all human beings are saved in this way, God is by his nature not perfectly just because regardless of how a human being lived in his or her earthly life, everyone is re-created in such a way by God that he or she is in the condition to have eternal communion with him. Thus, re-creationism conflicts with orthodox Catholic eschatology.

<sup>5</sup>Cf., e.g., Nevitt, “Annihilation, Re-creation, and Intermittent Existence in Aquinas” and “Survivalism versus Corruptionism”; Toner, “Personhood and Death in St. Thomas Aquinas” and Toner, “St. Thomas Aquinas on Death and the Separated Soul.”

<sup>6</sup>For extensive defenses of the possibility of ‘gappy’ or intermittent existence, see, e.g., Nevitt, “Annihilation, Re-creation, and Intermittent Existence in Aquinas,” and Patrick Toner, “St. Thomas Aquinas on Mixture and the Gappy Existence of the Elements,” *Logical Analysis and History of Philosophy* 18, no. 1 (2015). I am thankful to an anonymous referee for drawing my attention to Toner’s article.

Second, the resurrection of a human being such as Mother Teresa must be understood as consisting in her re-creation.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, if contemporary corruptionists are correct in their interpretation of Aquinas's hylomorphism, it is not only the case that Catholic authorities have seriously misunderstood what Aquinas's view on the matter is when they refer to his hylomorphism to support survivalism, but that Aquinas seemingly is committed to views which conflict with orthodox Catholic doctrine. Similarly, if orthodox Catholic Christian philosophers want to be faithful to what their Christian tradition authoritatively teaches, they must reject hylomorphism or at least hylomorphism as it is presented by Aquinas. In other words, what is at stake in the debate between contemporary corruptionist and survivalist interpreters of Aquinas's hylomorphism

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<sup>7</sup>It is important to note that I do not claim in this paper that contemporary corruptionists intentionally defend and attribute to Aquinas a corruptionist view which conflicts with orthodox Christian teaching. To the contrary, corruptionists such as Toner or Nevitt believe that the corruptionism they defend is perfectly compatible with an orthodox account of the resurrection. However, there is the obvious problem that the corruptionist's claim that the existence of a human being such as Mother Teresa is gappy or intermittent conflicts with an orthodox Christian account of the resurrection which requires the *continuous existence* of that which is resurrected. Corruptionism commits one to the view that the existence of a human being such as Mother Teresa is *discontinuous*. And an orthodox Catholic account of the resurrection commits one to the view that the existence of Teresa is *continuous*. Corruptionists such as Toner and Nevitt are aware of this problem and attempt to solve it by distinguishing between two types of gappy existence, namely, gappy existence which implies that that which ceases to exist is annihilated and gappy existence which does not imply that that this is the case; cf. Toner, "St. Thomas Aquinas on Mixture and the Gappy Existence of the Elements," 263. Nevitt, for example, argues that the existence of a human being such as Mother Teresa is gappy in the unproblematic latter sense because she continues to exist *potentially* after her death and before her resurrection; cf., Nevitt, "Survivalism, Corruptionism, and Intermittent Existence in Aquinas," 13–14. My argument in this article is that such attempts to reconcile corruptionism with an orthodox account of the resurrection do not work because corruptionists such as Toner and Nevitt do not take into account that the corruptionism they defend commits them to a specific kind of nihilism, namely, an nihilism according to which the *existence* of a human being is reduced to *non-existence*, i.e., nothingness, at death. To claim that a human being such as Mother Teresa exists *potentially* in the interim period  $t_2$  after her death and before her resurrection does not solve the problem of the required continuous existence of Teresa because there exists nothing at  $t_2$  which could make claims such as "I am Mother Teresa" or "I, Mother Teresa, exist" true at  $t_2$ ; cf. Nevitt, "Survivalism, Corruptionism, and Intermittent Existence in Aquinas," 14. Only a Teresa which exists in actuality at  $t_2$  could make such claims true. A commitment to orthodox Catholic teaching requires to accept that human beings such as Mother Teresa continue to exist not only potentially but in actuality in the interim period. Thus, contrary to what corruptionists such as Toner and Nevitt themselves believe, the corruptionism they defend and attribute to Aquinas is not reconcilable with an orthodox account of the resurrection for the reasons I will give in this article. As I will show in this paper, all these problems of attempts to reconcile a hylomorphic anthropology with the Christian belief in the resurrection arise only due to a corruptionist misinterpretation of Aquinas's hylomorphism. Thus, I will demonstrate that once this misinterpretation is clarified, it results that Aquinas's hylomorphism is in perfect coherence with his orthodox account of the resurrection as well as his other theological views. I am thankful to Turner Nevitt for comments on a previous version of this paper which helped me to understand better the nature of the corruptionism he wants to defend.

is whether a worldview is coherent which combines Thomistic hylomorphism with survivalism and an orthodox Catholic account of the resurrection.<sup>8</sup>

In what follows, I explain in detail why Aquinas's hylomorphism is compatible with survivalism and incompatible with corruptionism. Corruptionists do not sufficiently pay attention to the role that form plays in Aquinas's hylomorphism and survivalists do not sufficiently take into account some important implications of Aquinas's doctrine of the unicity of substantial form. In Aquinas's view, the dead do not cease to exist because neither any of their essential principles nor their substantial being (*esse*) are annihilated at death. This is not the case because both are in fact given to the whole human being by the soul and not by the prime matter the soul configures or by any additional form.<sup>9</sup> I conclude that Aquinas's hylomorphic anthropology does not conflict with the authoritative teachings about the afterlife of a Christian tradition such as Catholicism, and that certain contemporary hylomorphisms conflict with orthodoxy precisely insofar as they do not share Aquinas's views on form and matter.

## 2. The Corruptionist Objection

It is helpful to begin with a short presentation of Aquinas's hylomorphic metaphysics to understand one of the most important objections against the compatibility of Aquinas's hylomorphism with survivalism. There is a broad consensus among contemporary interpreters of Aquinas that the following six metaphysical views are characteristic of his hylomorphism:<sup>10</sup>

MATERIAL SUBSTANCE: A human being prior to death is a material substance which is composed of two metaphysical constituents, namely, a rational soul — a particular sort of substantial form — and prime matter.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Cf. Survivalist interpretations of Aquinas's hylomorphism have been advanced, e.g., by Brown, *Aquinas and the Ship of Theseus*, 58 & 78 and "Souls, Ships, and Substances"; Eberl, *The Nature of Human Persons*, 208–49 and "Surviving Corruptionist Arguments"; Oderberg, "Survivalism, Corruptionism, and Mereology"; Skrzypek, "Complex Survivalism"; Stump, "Resurrection and the Separated Soul" and "Resurrection, Reassembly, and Reconstitution: Aquinas on the Soul."

<sup>9</sup>I am thankful to Eleonore Stump for discussions of this topic which helped me to see this point.

<sup>10</sup>Cf. Nevitt, "Survivalism vs. Corruptionism," 127; Nevitt, "Survivalism, Corruptionism, and Intermittent Existence in Aquinas," 1.

<sup>11</sup>In Aquinas's view, prime matter is devoid of any form and consequently not configured in any way, i.e., it is pure potentiality for form and configuration. Since, in Aquinas's view, form is that in virtue of which something is configured and exists as something in actuality, it follows that prime matter as such, i.e., in separation from form, does not exist in actuality; cf. *De principiis naturae* (henceforth: *DPN*), cap. 2. As that which is configured by a form in a matter-form composite, it accounts for the materiality of the whole, i.e., in virtue of being composed of prime matter the whole can be extended in three dimensions in space and time without it being the case that prime matter determines in any way this extension in space and time; cf. Stump, *Aquinas*, 37. In turn, the substantial form of a material substance X configures prime matter in such a way that a whole comes into existence which is a member of

MATERIAL SUBSTANCE\*: A human being, which comes into existence in virtue of a rational soul's configuring prime matter, is a material substance which is composed of a substantial form — a rational soul or intellect — and matter, i.e., a body.<sup>12</sup>

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a particular species or kind F and which has the causal powers and properties that members of F have, cf. *DPN*, cap. 1; *De ente et essentia* (henceforth: *DEE*), cap. 6; Stump, *Aquinas*, 38. In other words, the substantial form of X is that in virtue of which X is a material substance in actuality which is organized or configured, and unified in the way it is; cf. Stump, "The Nature of Human Beings," 127. I am thankful to an anonymous referee for making me aware of the needs to disambiguate a previous formulation of this claim and to explain Thomistic terms such as 'prime matter' and 'substantial form.'

<sup>12</sup>A few things are important to clarify here to evade possible misinterpretations of this claim. First, when Aquinas speaks about human beings in this way — e.g., *Summa theologiae* (henceforth: *ST*) I, q. 75, q. 76, a. 1, corp; *ST* II, q. 164, a. 1, ad 1; *Summa contra gentiles* (henceforth: *SCG*) II, cap. 57 — he uses the term 'matter' not to refer to prime matter, i.e., matter which the rational soul configures, but to matter which results from the rational soul's configuring prime matter, namely, configured matter which exists in actuality. Aquinas's technical term for this matter is 'designated matter' (*materia signata*), cf. *DEE*, cap. 2. Designated matter is three-dimensional matter, i.e., matter which has some measure and shape (determined dimensions in Aquinas's terminology). However, the designated matter which results from a substantial form's configuring prime matter is designated matter under indeterminate dimensions, cf. *Expositio in Librum Boethii De hebdomadibus* (henceforth: *In BDT*), q. 4, a. 2, corp. Designated matter under indeterminate dimensions is three-dimensional matter where the degree of extension in any dimension — their particular quantitative measure — is not specified or determined; cf. Eberl, *The Nature of Human Persons*, 31–32; Stump, *Aquinas*, 47–50. What is required for the specification or determination of the dimensions are accidental forms which belong to the category of *quantity*; cf. *In BDT*, q. 4, a. 2, corp. This point will become important later as we will see below when Aquinas distinguishes between the substantial and accidental corporeity of a human being. Second, according to Aquinas, the terms 'designated matter' or 'body' can be used interchangeably either to refer to the whole matter-form composite or material substance which comes into existence in virtue of a substantial form's configuring prime matter — a human being in this case — or to refer to a part of the whole matter-form composite, namely, that part of a human being which in virtue of its extension in three dimensions contrasts with the immaterial soul or intellect; cf. *DEE*, cap. 2; Eberl, *The Nature of Human Persons*, 31, 36, 46. Third, by committing himself to the view that a human being is composed of a rational soul or intellect and designated matter or a body, Aquinas's hylomorphism does not collapse into a kind of Platonic substance dualism. This is not the case precisely because a human being comes into existence in virtue of a rational soul's configuring *prime matter* and not already configured and therefore actual matter. In other words, what comes into existence by a rational soul's configuring prime matter is designated matter or a human body of which the rational soul or intellect is the substantial form and to which the soul is naturally and not accidentally united, cf. *ST* I, q. 75, q. 76, a.1, corp; *SCG* II, cap. 57. Thus, like Plato, Aquinas thinks that a human is a composite of soul and body. However, in Aquinas's view, a human being is a composite of soul and body not in a Platonic sense or in the sense of any other kind of substance dualism but in a very different sense. Since the rational soul configures prime matter and does not configure already configured and therefore actual matter, the soul is not the 'motor' of an already existing body or substance to which it is accidentally related. Rather, the soul is united to the body in a very different way, namely, as its form (*forma corporis*) which means that everything which is or becomes part of the body (e.g., an eye or food that is digested) is or becomes ensouled matter, i.e., human matter in the case of human beings, cf., *ST* I, q. 76, a.1. According to Plato's view, the matter or body to which a human soul is united is non-human matter which the soul uses as an instrument, but the soul is not present in each part of the human body in the way it is according to Aquinas's

DEATH: A human being is corrupted — she dies — if her soul ceases to configure prime matter and consequently ceases to be united to her body as the substantial form of that body.

BODY: If the human soul is separated from the matter or body of which it is the substantial form and to which it is naturally united in virtue of the soul's configuring prime matter, the human body is corrupted and ceases to exist.<sup>13</sup>

SOUL: A separated human soul survives the death of a human being X, i.e., a human soul exists at time  $t_2$  after the death of X and this human soul at  $t_2$  is numerically identical to the human soul X has at  $t_1$  prior to death.

RESURRECTION: After the resurrection at  $t_3$ , a human being Y exists who is numerically identical to a human being X who exists at  $t_1$  prior to death,

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hylomorphism in virtue of the soul's configuring prime matter and not designated matter, cf. *ST I*, q. 76, a. 8. I owe my gratitude to an anonymous referee for making me see that these points needed to be clarified to evade possible misunderstandings of this claim.

<sup>13</sup>Given that Aquinas uses the terms 'body' or 'designated matter' either to refer to the whole matter-form composite — the material substance — or to that part of a human being which in virtue of its extension in three dimensions contrasts with a human being's immaterial soul or intellect, someone could object that BODY could be read as giving expression to the view that not the whole matter-form composite — the material substance — but just a part of that human being is corrupted. But the latter view would conflict with Aquinas's position that only substances are corrupted, and it seems that both views can be reconciled only if Aquinas admits that the human body considered as a part of a human being is a substance. In short, it seems that the idea that the human body considered as a part of a human being is corrupted makes Aquinas's hylomorphic anthropology incoherent and forces Aquinas to adopt some form of substance dualism. However, this objection wrongly presupposes that reading BODY in this way commits Aquinas to the view that something else than the whole matter-form composite is corrupted if the human body considered as a part of a human being is corrupted. But this is not the case. If the human body considered as a part of a human being is corrupted, nothing else but the material substance or matter-form composite is corrupted because, in Aquinas's view, the body or designated matter referred to as a part of a human being is the whole human being but considered only insofar as it is extended in three dimensions, i.e., considered as matter in contrast to its immaterial soul or intellect. Thus, what corrupts in each case is the same which means that Aquinas can make sense of the idea that a human body considered as a part of a human being corrupts without committing himself to substance dualism. Furthermore, Aquinas's claim that a human body ceases to exist with the death of a human being might strike some readers as counterintuitive because it seems that a dead human body still exists, i.e., a body that although it is no longer a living human body is still a human body. However, in Aquinas's view, a dead human body is — strictly speaking — no longer a human body precisely because a human body exists in virtue of a rational soul's configuring prime matter and not already configured matter. According to Aquinas, any material thing has only one substantial form, i.e., the human body does not have an additional substantial form in virtue of which a human body could remain in existence as a human body after the human soul is separated from the body; cf. *ST I*, q. 76, a.4; *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 3, corp. Thus, in Aquinas's view, what happens to the human body after the death of a human being is that the substantial form of the human body is substituted by a different or several different non-animating substantial forms for which reason the remaining new material substance or collection of substances can be called 'a human body' only equivocally; cf. *Sententia libri De anima II*, lect. 1, 226. I am thankful to an anonymous referee for raising these worries.



i.e., a matter-form composite  $Y$  exists at  $t_3$  whose substantial form and whose matter/body are numerically identical to the substantial form and matter/body  $X$  has at  $t_1$  prior to death.<sup>14</sup>

In short, contemporary interpreters widely agree that Aquinas is committed to a hylomorphic anthropology which accepts MATERIAL SUBSTANCE, MATERIAL SUBSTANCE\*, DEATH, BODY, and SOUL, and that he is committed to RESURRECTION in virtue of being a Christian.

The decisive question which divides contemporary Thomistic hylomorphists and which has engendered a considerable debate is the following: is the survival of a human being  $X$ 's separated soul at  $t_2$  in the interim period (after the death of  $X$  and before  $X$ 's resurrection) sufficient for the survival of  $X$  at  $t_2$ ?

One of the most important corruptionist objections against the compatibility of Aquinas's hylomorphism with survivalism, and so of giving a positive answer to this question, runs like this:<sup>15</sup> According to MATERIAL SUBSTANCE\*, the human being  $X$  which comes into existence in virtue of  $X$  rational soul's configuring prime matter is a material substance which is composed of a substantial form —  $X$ 's rational soul or intellect — and  $X$ 's designated matter, i.e.,  $X$ 's body. Furthermore, according to DEATH and BODY,  $X$ 's designated matter or body of which  $X$ 's soul is the substantial form ceases to exist if  $X$ 's soul ceases to be united to it, i.e., that  $X$  as a material substance or matter-form composite ceases to exist if  $X$ 's soul is no longer the substantial form of  $X$ 's body.<sup>16</sup> Consequently, a hylomorphism which accepts MATERIAL SUBSTANCE\*, DEATH, and BODY, is incompatible with survivalism because  $X$  at  $t_1$  is a material substance and  $X$ 's surviving soul at  $t_2$  is obviously not a material substance. Thus, it seems that SOUL is of no help for survivalism and that Aquinas (and any hylomorphist who is committed to MATERIAL SUBSTANCE\*, DEATH, and BODY) must concede that the dead have ceased to exist at  $t_2$  in the interim period after their death and before their possible resurrection.

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<sup>14</sup>I am grateful to an anonymous referee for pushing me to improve a previous formulation of this claim. The resurrected bodies will of course have different qualities than the bodies that were corrupted; see *SCG IV*, cap. 86.

<sup>15</sup>Cf. Nevitt, "Survivalism vs. Corruptionism," 128–29.

<sup>16</sup>It is important to note that a survivalist does not reject DEATH and BODY, i.e., the view that a human being is corrupted and dies at death as a consequence of the separation of the soul from the body of which it was the substantial form. In other words, survivalists and corruptionists agree that at death a human being as a matter-form composite or material substance has ceased to exist. However, survivalists reject the corruptionist's claim that the human being that has been corrupted in this way has also ceased to exist. The latter kind of corruption can be called 'existence corruption' and the former 'composite of soul and matter corruption'; cf. Brown, *Eternal Life and Human Happiness*, 263–64. In short, corruptionists contend that *composite of soul and matter corruption* involves *existence corruption* and survivalists deny that this is the case. I am thankful to an anonymous referee for making me aware of the need to clarify what is corrupted at death according to corruptionism and survivalism.

### 3. Why Aquinas's Hylomorphism Is Compatible with Survivalism

To see why this corruptionist objection is flawed, and why a hylomorphism which embraces MATERIAL SUBSTANCE\*, DEATH, and BODY, is in fact *compatible* with survivalism, it is helpful to turn to chapters 80 and 81 of book IV of Aquinas's *Summa Contra Gentiles*. A close examination of some arguments presented in these chapters reveals that contemporary corruptionists do not sufficiently pay attention to the role that form plays in Aquinas's hylomorphism and that contemporary survivalists do not take into account some important implications of his doctrine of the unicity of substantial form.<sup>17</sup>

In Aquinas's view, the dead do not cease to exist after their death because neither any of their essential principles nor their substantial being (*esse*) are annihilated with their death. This is not the case because both are in fact given to the whole human being by the soul and not by the prime matter the soul configures, nor by any additional form.

Before I reconstruct and explain in detail this line of Aquinas's reasoning in the fourth book of his SCG, it is important to situate it in its dialectical context: After dealing with the sacraments (ch. 56–78), Aquinas turns to the topic of the bodily resurrection in chapter 79. According to Aquinas, Christ's death and resurrection has liberated human beings from sin and death.<sup>18</sup> While human beings obtain the effect of Christ's death and passion — the forgiveness of sins — in their earthly life through the sacraments, they obtain the effect of Christ's resurrection (the liberation from death) at the end of world, when they shall rise again.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, in Aquinas's view, the Christian belief that Christ's resurrection has liberated human beings from death requires Christians to believe by faith (*necessitate fidei credere*) in the future bodily resurrection of the

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<sup>17</sup>To my best knowledge, these texts have been most extensively discussed by Brown, *Aquinas and the Ship of Theseus*, 123–24; Eberl, *The Nature of Human Persons* and "Surviving Corruptionist Arguments"; Nevitt, "Survivalism, Corruptionism, and Intermittent Existence in Aquinas"; and Niederbacher, "The Same Body Again?" Especially Brown and Eberl have paid attention to the role that substantial form plays in Aquinas's hylomorphism in their elucidations of these texts. However, they do not see or explain in detail some important implications of Aquinas's doctrine of the unicity of substantial form which are essential to his defense of survivalism. For this reason, I would not grant — as Eberl does — that "Aquinas may not have been a survivalist, he could've and should've been" ("Surviving Corruptionist Arguments," 157). Rather, if these implications are made explicit, one can see that his hylomorphism has all the resources at its disposal to ward off the corruptionist objection under consideration and to explain how it is possible that human beings survive their death although they exist without a body at  $t_2$  in the interim period after their death and before their resurrection.

<sup>18</sup>Cf. SCG IV, cap. 79, "Consequently, Christ delivered us from both, namely, sin and death." Here and elsewhere, I use the English translations provided by the Aquinas Institute, Lander, Wyoming, which can be accessed at <https://aquinas.cc>.

<sup>19</sup>Cf. SCG IV, cap. 79: "But we shall obtain the effect of Christ's resurrection by being delivered from death at the end of the world, when we shall all rise again by the power of Christ."

dead.<sup>20</sup> For this reason, it is of utmost importance for Aquinas to defend the Christian belief in the *bodily* resurrection against possible objections, especially objections of those who argue that the future resurrection does not consist in a bodily but in a kind of merely spiritual resurrection.<sup>21</sup>

In the remainder of chapter 79, Aquinas formulates three arguments in favor of the Christian belief in the bodily resurrection. The first argument is the most relevant for the purposes of this article:

Reason also supplies an evident proof of the resurrection, provided we bear in mind what has already been proved. Thus we have shown that the human soul is immortal: thus it survives the body after its separation from it. It is also manifest from what has been stated that the soul is united to the body naturally, since it is by its essence the form of the body: hence it is unnatural for the soul to be without the body. Now nothing unnatural can last forever: consequently, the soul will not remain forever without the body. Therefore, since the soul is immortal, it must be reunited to the body, and this is to rise again. Hence the immortality of the soul would seem to demand the future resurrection of the body.

Before I proceed, I would like to highlight two aspects. First, Aquinas's reasoning is firmly anti-platonic. His argument is *not* that the Christian belief in the resurrection is supported by the Platonic idea that a human being is an immortal soul. This is not the case because a Platonic anthropology conflicts with the Christian belief in a *bodily* resurrection. Rather, he defends the Christian belief in the resurrection in hylomorphic terms. The soul is by its essence the form of a body (*secundum suam essentiam corporis forma*) and therefore not accidentally united to a body — a view which Aquinas attributes to Plato — but naturally united to the body of which it is the form.<sup>22</sup>

Second, according to Aquinas, after the resurrection at time  $t_3$  a human being X does not exist in virtue of the fact that God *re-creates* X who exists at  $t_1$  prior to death but ceased to exist at  $t_2$  after X's death and prior to X's resurrection. Rather, X exists at  $t_3$  in virtue of the fact that God *reunites* X's immortal soul which survived X's death and exists at  $t_2$  with the body X has at  $t_1$  prior to death but which ceased to exist at  $t_2$  after X's death. And the claim that X's soul survives X's death is explained and justified with reference to Aristotelian arguments (i.e., in hylomorphic terms) and not with reference to theological doctrines. Thus, the fact that X's soul survives X's death and exists at  $t_2$  plays an important role in Aquinas's argument for the Christian belief in the resurrection and this argument is *philosophical* in nature. To sum up, the survival of the soul immediately after death is not a theological but a *philosophical* claim which Aquinas uses

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<sup>20</sup>Cf. SCG IV, cap. 79: "Therefore, it is of faith to believe in the future resurrection of the dead."

<sup>21</sup>Cf. SCG IV, cap. 79: "There are some, however, who disbelieve in the future resurrection of the body. [...] Therefore, it is against faith to substitute a spiritual for a bodily resurrection."

<sup>22</sup>Cf. ST I, q. 76, a.1, corp.

to argue for the *theological* conclusion that the Christian hope in a future bodily resurrection is justified.

### 3.1 Aquinas's Rebuttal of the Second Objection Against the Resurrection

Having given three arguments in favor of the Christian belief in the bodily resurrection, Aquinas presents in chapter 80 seven possible objections against this belief which he rebuts in chapter 81. I will focus on Aquinas's rebuttal of the second and third objection because they help us best to understand why, in his view, the survival of the separated human soul is sufficient for the survival of the human being that died. Thus, the consideration of Aquinas's reasoning will help us see why a hylomorphic anthropology is compatible with survivalism.

Let us begin with the second objection against the Christian belief in the resurrection:

A thing cannot be identically the same if any of its essential principles be not identically the same, since the change of an essential principle always induces a change in a thing's essence, whereby a thing is, and is one. Now, when a thing is utterly annihilated (*omnino redit in nihilum*), it cannot resume existence as identically the same thing. Indeed, a new thing will be created, but the same thing will not be restored. And seemingly death annihilates several of man's essential principles. In the first place, his corporeity and the form of the mixture of elements, since the body is evidently dissolved. Second, the sensitive and nutritive parts of the soul, which cannot exist without the organs of the body. Finally, humanity itself seems to be annihilated, which is called the form of the whole, after the soul has left the body. Therefore, it would seem impossible for the same man to rise again.<sup>23</sup>

In conjunction with other hylomorphic premises to which Aquinas is committed to, the objection can be reconstructed as follows:<sup>24</sup>

P1: NUMERICAL IDENTITY: For any things X and Y, X is numerically identical to Y if and only if the essence of X is numerically identical to the essence of Y.<sup>25</sup>

P2: ESSENCE: For any things X and Y, X's essence is numerically identical to Y's essence if and only if X's essential principles of X are numerically identical to Y's essential principles.

C1: Therefore, it is impossible for a thing X at time  $t_1$  to be numerically identical with a thing Y at  $t_2$  if the essential principles of Y at  $t_2$  are not numerically identical with the essential principles of X at  $t_1$ .

<sup>23</sup>SCG IV, cap. 80. I have slightly altered the translation.

<sup>24</sup>I am thankful to an anonymous referee who helped me to see that a previous reconstruction of the objection needed to be improved.

<sup>25</sup>The formulation is taken over — slightly altered — from Brown, *Aquinas and the Ship of Theseus*, 119.

P3: IRREVERSIBILITY: It is impossible that something X exists at time  $t_1$ , that X is utterly annihilated at  $t_2$ , that Y comes into existence at  $t_3$ , and that Y is numerically identical to X.<sup>26</sup>

P4: DEATH: A human being X is corrupted and dies if X's soul ceases to configure prime matter and consequently ceases to be united to X's body as the substantial form of X's body.

P5: BODY: If X's soul is separated from the matter, i.e., X's body, of which it is the substantial form and to which it is naturally united in virtue of X soul's configuring prime matter, X's body is corrupted and ceases to exist.

P6: A human being X's soul as well as X's matter, i.e., X's body, are essential principles of X.<sup>27</sup>

P7: ANNIHILATION: Since X's body ceases to exist after X's death, several essential principles of X are annihilated, e.g., X's body, X's corporeity, and X's humanity.

P8: RESURRECTION\*: A human being X is resurrected at time  $t_3$  if X exists as a body-soul composite at time  $t_1$ , if X ceases to exist as a body-soul composite at  $t_2$  after X's death and before X's resurrection, if a body-soul composite Y comes into existence at  $t_3$ , and if Y's body and soul at  $t_3$  are numerically identical to X's body and soul at  $t_1$ .

C2: From C1 in conjunction with the premises P3 to P8, it follows that it is impossible that numerically the same human being X is resurrected because any human body-soul composite Y, that comes into existence at  $t_3$ , will be a human being Y, who has essential principles which are not numerically identical with the essential principles that X had at  $t_1$ .

Aquinas rebuts this objection in the following way:

The second objection does not prove that the same man cannot rise again. None of man's essential principles is utterly annihilated by death, because the rational soul, which is man's form, remains after death, as we have shown. The matter also, which was subject to that form, remains under the same dimensions which made it the individuated matter. Accordingly, the same man will be restored (*reparabitur*) as a result of the union of the same identical matter with the same identical form.

As to corporeity, it can be taken in two ways. In one way it signifies the substantial form of the body (*forma substantialis corporis*), considered as a substance; In this sense, the corporeity of any body is nothing but its substantial form, whereby a body belongs to a genus and species, and in virtue of which a body is a corporeal thing which has three dimensions.

For there are not several substantial forms in one and the same thing, by one of which it belongs to a supreme genus (substance, for example), and

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<sup>26</sup>The formulation is — slightly adapted — taken over from Brown, *Aquinas and the Ship of Theseus*, 122.

<sup>27</sup>It is important to note that not prime matter but the designated matter, i.e., the body, of a material substance is an essential principle of that substance; cf. *Quaestiones quodlibetales* XI, q. 6, articulus unicus, corp.

by another to its proximate genus (such as bodies or animals), and by yet another to its species (such as man or horse). For if the first form makes it a substance, the subsequent forms would be additions to that which is already an actual individual, subsisting in nature, so that they would not be constituents of that individual, but like accidental forms would be in the subject which is that individual.

Consequently, corporeity (taken as meaning the substantial form in man), is nothing else but the rational soul, which requires the three dimensions in its matter, since it is the actuating principle of a body (*actus corporis*).

In another sense, 'corporeity' signifies an accidental form in regard to which a body is said to be in the genus of *quantity*. This corporeity is nothing else but the three dimensions that enter into the definition of a body.

Therefore, although this corporeity is annihilated (*in nihilum cedit*) when the body is corrupted, this cannot prevent a man from being identically the same when he rises again, since corporeity, taken in the first sense, is not annihilated, but remains the same.<sup>28</sup>

In conjunction with other hylomorphic premises Aquinas is committed to, his rebuttal can be reconstructed as follows:

P1: SOUL: A separated human soul survives the death of a human being X, i.e., a human soul exists at time  $t_2$  after X's death and this human soul at  $t_2$  is numerically identical to the human soul X has at  $t_1$  prior to death.

P2: SUBSTANTIAL CORPOREITY: X's soul which configures prime matter at time  $t_1$  is responsible for X's substantial corporeity at  $t_1$  which means that it is X's soul at  $t_1$  and not the prime matter X's soul configures at  $t_1$  which accounts for the fact that X at  $t_1$  has designated matter under indeterminate dimensions, i.e., a three-dimensional body which belongs to a genus and species, but whose particular quantitative measure — the degree of extension in any dimension — is not specified or determined.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>SCG IV, cap. 81. I have slightly altered the translation. I leave out the subsequent parts of Aquinas's rebuttal where he explains why the other essential principles of a human being mentioned in the objection, i.e., the form of the mixture, the sensitive and nutritive parts of the soul, and the humanity are not annihilated with the corruption of the body. It is important to note that Aquinas explicitly states here that *something* is annihilated at a human being's death, namely, his accidental corporeity. Consequently, Nevitt's interpretation cannot be correct when he attributes to Aquinas the view that *nothing* is ever annihilated; cf. Nevitt, "Survivalism, Corruptionism, and Existence," 15. In the text which Nevitt cites from *Quodlibet* (IV, q. 3, a. 1) to support his interpretation, Aquinas does not give expression to the view that nothing is ever annihilated, but rather to the view that it would be contrary to God's will and foreknowledge to let *all things*, i.e., the entirety of His creation, be reduced to nothing. I am thankful to Turner Nevitt for private correspondence which made me aware of the need to clarify this issue.

<sup>29</sup>Two things are important to note here. First, the claim that it is a human being X's soul at time  $t_1$  and not the prime matter X's soul configures at  $t_1$  which accounts for the fact that X has designated matter under indeterminate dimensions at  $t_1$  does not imply that prime matter plays no role at all in Aquinas's explanation of X's substantial corporeity at  $t_1$ . As I have explained above, prime matter accounts for the materiality of X, i.e., the human soul alone cannot bring into existence a corporeal thing. I am thankful to an anonymous referee for

P3: ACCIDENTAL CORPOREITY: A human being  $X$ 's accidental corporeity is the accidental form of  $X$ 's body in virtue of which  $X$ 's body is placed in the genus of *quantity*, i.e.,  $X$ 's accidental corporeity are the determined three dimensions of  $X$ 's body which specify the extension and location of  $X$ 's body in space, and which are determined in virtue of accidental forms that belong to the category of *quantity*.<sup>30</sup>

P4: DEATH: A human being  $X$  is corrupted and dies if  $X$ 's soul ceases to configure prime matter and consequently ceases to be united to  $X$ 's body as the substantial form of  $X$ 's body.

P5: BODY: If  $X$ 's soul is separated from the matter, i.e.,  $X$ 's body, of which it is the substantial form and to which it is naturally united in virtue of  $X$ 's soul configuring prime matter,  $X$ 's body is corrupted and ceases to exist.

C1: From the conjunction of the premises P1 to P5, it follows that the accidental corporeity a human being  $X$  has at time  $t_1$  is annihilated at  $t_2$  after  $X$ 's death because the existence of the determined dimensions of  $X$ 's body at  $t_1$  depends on the existence of  $X$ 's body, i.e., a three-dimensional body which belongs to a genus and species but whose particular quantitative measure — the degree of extension in any dimension — is not specified or determined, and  $X$ 's body does not survive  $X$ 's death and does not exist at  $t_2$  after  $X$ 's death.

C2: From the conjunction of the premises P1 to P5, it follows that the substantial corporeity of a human being  $X$  that lives at time  $t_1$  is not utterly annihilated at  $t_2$  after  $X$ 's death because it is  $X$ 's soul at  $t_1$  and not the prime matter  $X$ 's soul configures at  $t_1$  which is responsible for  $X$ 's substantial corporeity at  $t_1$  — the fact that  $X$  has a three-dimensional body at  $t_1$  whose particular quantitative measure is not specified or determined — and because  $X$ 's soul survives  $X$ 's death and exists at  $t_2$  after  $X$ 's death.<sup>31</sup>

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pushing me here to clarify this point. Second, SUBSTANTIAL CORPOREITY also explains why human beings have numerically the same bodies from the moment of their existence till their death despite the obvious fact that their bodies are constantly changing. A human being  $X$ 's body at time  $t_1$  is numerically identical to a human being  $Y$ 's body at time  $t_2$ , if and only if  $X$ 's soul which configures prime matter at  $t_1$  is numerically identical with  $Y$ 's soul which configures prime matter at  $t_2$ .

<sup>30</sup>In other words, what results from a rational soul's configuring prime matter is designated matter under indeterminate dimensions, i.e., an individual human body or human being whose precise location or extension in space is not determined. In turn, the accidental corporeity of a human being  $X$ , i.e., the precise location or extension of  $X$  or  $X$ 's body in space, results from  $X$ 's metaphysical composition of designated matter under indeterminate dimensions —  $X$  considered in abstraction from  $X$ 's immaterial soul or intellect as extended in space and considered in abstraction from  $X$ 's precise location or extension in space — and accidental forms which belong to the category of *quantity* that determine these dimensions. See footnote 12 above for further details and references.

<sup>31</sup>An anonymous referee objected that this conclusion does not follow logically because from the preceding steps a possible conclusion other than C2 could be derived. It could be argued that in order to get the numerically same human being at the resurrection, numerically the same soul has to be united to numerically the same portion of prime matter, namely, the portion of prime matter that survived the human being's death, and was thereafter configured by other substantial forms between the death of a human being and her resurrection. There are two problems with this objection. First, the objection makes use of a concept

C3: From C2, it follows that premise P7 of the objection (ANNIHILATION) is false because it *does not follow* from the fact that the body of a human being X — who lives at time  $t_1$  — ceases to exist at  $t_2$  after X's death, that several essential principles of X are annihilated at  $t_2$  (e.g., X's body, X's corporeity, and X's humanity).<sup>32</sup>

C4: Therefore, the conclusion of the objection is false. It follows from C3 that it is possible that a human being X is resurrected at time  $t_3$  because it is possible that X exists as a body-soul composite at time  $t_1$  and ceases to exist as a body-soul composite at  $t_2$ , while a body-soul composite Y comes into existence at time  $t_3$ , and Y's body and soul at  $t_3$  are numerically identical to X's body and soul at  $t_1$ .

### 3.2 What We Can Learn from This Rebuttal

We can learn three important lessons from this rebuttal. First, the rebuttal makes evident *that* Aquinas is a survivalist. If Aquinas were a corruptionist one would expect him to accept claims such as ANNIHILATION according to which the dead have ceased to exist with their death in virtue of the loss of their bodies.<sup>33</sup> However, he explicitly rejects ANNIHILATION.

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of prime matter which conflicts with Aquinas's views on prime matter. According to Aquinas, the idea of 'portions' of prime matter makes no sense because prime matter is completely formless, i.e., pure potentiality, and therefore numerically one in all material things; cf. *DPN*, cap. 2. According to Aquinas's hylomorphism, only portions of matter, i.e., quantities of matter, are distinguishable and for having distinguishable quantities of matter, the relevant matter needs to be actual and to have forms which belong to the category of *quantity*, cf. *ST I*, q. 75, a.7, corp. Thus, in Aquinas's view, either you have prime matter, or you have portions of matter, but you cannot have portions of prime matter. Second, according to Aquinas's hylomorphism, it is prime matter which survives a human being's death and can be configured thereafter by other substantial forms between the death of a human being and her resurrection but not portions of prime matter, i.e., quantities of matter. Consequently, in Aquinas's view, the bodily resurrection of a human being cannot consist in the reunion of numerically the same surviving soul with numerically the same surviving portions of prime matter. The objector mistakenly attributes to Aquinas the view that a portion of prime, i.e., designated matter, survives the corruption of the substance of which it is part and serves as the substratum that undergoes substantial change. However, this cannot be Aquinas's view because the idea that substantial forms configure quantities of matter, i.e., already configured and therefore actual matter, conflicts with Aquinas's doctrine of the unicity of substantial form for the reasons we have seen above. Consequently, the possible conclusion other than C2 the objector is hinting at cannot be derived from the preceding steps, i.e., hylomorphic premises to which Aquinas is committed.

<sup>32</sup>Up to this point, it has been explained only why X's body and X's substantial corporeity as essential principles of X are not annihilated after the death of X. I will address the issue of X's humanity below.

<sup>33</sup>Cf. Nevitt, "Survivalism vs. Corruptionism," 128–29. In private correspondence, Nevitt has stated that he does not accept but rejects the view that an essential principle such as a human being X's body is annihilated with X's death. However, his corruptionist argument against survivalism works only if he accepts the former view. He argues against survivalism that the existence of X at  $t_2$  after X's death and before X's resurrection requires the existence of an essential principle of X at  $t_2$ , namely, X's body; cf. Nevitt, "Survivalism vs. Corruptionism," 133–140. And since there exists nothing at  $t_2$  with X's body, X does not exist at  $t_2$ . To



Second, the dialectical context of the rebuttal shows *why* Aquinas defends survivalism. Aquinas makes clear with his rejection of ANNIHILATION and acceptance of IRREVERSIBILITY that he considers survivalism a requirement for the possibility of RESURRECTION because if ANNIHILATION and IRREVERSIBILITY were both true it would follow that the resurrection of numerically the same human being is metaphysically impossible.<sup>34</sup>

Third, we can learn from Aquinas's rebuttal how his hylomorphism provides him with the resources to defend the survivalist claim that the survival of a human being's separated soul is sufficient for the survival of that human being in the interim period after her death and before her resurrection. In other words, Aquinas's rebuttal helps us to see why his hylomorphism — properly understood — is compatible with survivalism and consequently with an orthodox Catholic account of the resurrection.

According to Aquinas, it is true that a human being *X* who exists at  $t_1$  prior to death has lost his body, i.e., all actual matter, at  $t_2$  after *X*'s death. However, this loss does not amount to the annihilation of an essential principle of *X* at  $t_2$ , e.g., *X*'s body, *X*'s substantial corporeity, or *X*'s humanity. No essential principle is annihilated at  $t_2$  because *X*'s body, *X*'s substantial corporeity, and *X*'s humanity are given to *X* at  $t_1$  by the soul and not the prime matter the soul configures at  $t_1$ , and *X*'s soul survives the corruption of *X* and exists after *X*'s death at  $t_2$ .

Let us consider first *X*'s substantial corporeity and *X*'s body. A human being *X*'s substantial corporeity, i.e., the indeterminate dimensions which individuate *X*'s matter and make *X*'s human flesh and bones *this* human flesh and *these* human bones are given to *X* at time  $t_1$  prior to death by *X*'s soul and not the prime matter *X*'s soul configures at  $t_1$ . Thus, *X*'s designated matter or body is an essential principle of *X* that is not utterly annihilated at  $t_2$  after *X*'s death because it is *X*'s soul which configures prime matter at  $t_1$  in such a way that individual matter results, i.e., a particular human body, and *X*'s soul survives the corruption of *X* and the loss of

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evade the consequence that the body of a human being *X*, i.e., an essential principle of *X*, is annihilated together with *X*'s existence at *X*'s death, a corruptionist such as Nevitt would be forced to claim that *X*'s body survives *X*'s death and exists at  $t_2$  although *X* does not exist at  $t_2$ . However, this does not make sense because *X*'s body does not subsist by itself, i.e., *X*'s body is unable to survive *X*'s death. Corruptionists could of course try to argue that an essential principle such as *X*'s body is not annihilated with *X*'s death but survives *X*'s death and exists (in potentiality) at  $t_2$  in virtue of the survival and existence of *X*'s soul at  $t_2$ . However, if that is conceded, the corruptionist argument against survivalism collapses. The existence of *X* is no longer gappy or discontinuous as the corruptionist's doctrine of gappy existence maintains because the condition for *X*'s existence at  $t_2$  is fulfilled: *X*'s essential principles exist at  $t_2$  — some in actuality, some only in potentiality — in virtue of the survival and existence of *X*'s soul at  $t_2$ .

<sup>34</sup>Below, I provide further arguments to support the claim that a commitment to survivalism is a requirement for the possibility of RESURRECTION.

X's body and exists at  $t_2$  after X's death.<sup>35</sup> Thus, corruptionists do not pay sufficient attention to the role that form plays in Aquinas's hylomorphism.

Furthermore, corruptionists such as Nevitt do not take into account some important implications of his doctrine of the unicity of substantial form and consequently misunderstand what follows from his distinction between the form of the whole and the form of the part of a human being. Contrary to what Nevitt thinks, the distinction does not support corruptionism but rather survivalism.<sup>36</sup>

Aquinas explicitly addresses this issue, and his reasoning can be reconstructed as follows.<sup>37</sup> The explanation of the fact that the humanity of a human being X who lives at time  $t_1$  is not annihilated at  $t_2$  after X's death is *not* that X's humanity at  $t_1$  — the form of the whole human being X — is identical with the form of the part, i.e., X's rational soul at  $t_1$ . Thus, corruptionists such as Nevitt are correct that Aquinas *does not* embrace a survivalism which argues that X's humanity is not annihilated at  $t_2$  after X's death because X's soul at  $t_1$  is identical with X's humanity at  $t_1$  and that X's humanity survives X's death and exists at  $t_2$  after X's death in virtue of the survival and existence of X's soul at  $t_2$ . Aquinas rejects this possible survivalist solution precisely because it conflicts with his hylomorphic anthropology according to which a human being is not a soul but a material substance. However, corruptionists such as Nevitt are wrong to infer from Aquinas's rejection of this kind of survivalist strategy that he rejects survivalism root and branch as being incompatible with his hylomorphic anthropology.

To the contrary, Aquinas makes use of an important doctrine of his hylomorphism, namely, the doctrine of the unicity of substantial form to explain why X's humanity is not annihilated at  $t_2$  after X's death. According to this doctrine, any material substance can only have one substantial form. In Aquinas's view, a material substance cannot possess several substantial forms because as soon as a material substance comes into existence in virtue of a substantial form's configuring prime matter, the subsequent substantial forms would no longer configure prime matter but rather configure matter which is already configured by the first substantial form and would inhere like accidental forms in an already existing subject.<sup>38</sup> Thus, the doctrine of the unicity of substantial form follows from Aquinas's view that substantial forms configure prime matter and not already configured matter.

Consequently, the humanity of a human being X is not annihilated at  $t_2$  after X's death because X's humanity at  $t_1$  is *not* a form which X has *in addition* to X's rational soul at  $t_1$ . Rather, X's humanity at  $t_1$  is the form which X

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<sup>35</sup>Cf. SCG IV, cap. 81, "The matter also, which was subject to that form, remains under the same dimensions which made it the individuated matter."

<sup>36</sup>Cf. Nevitt, "Survivalism vs. Corruptionism," 130–32.

<sup>37</sup>Cf. SCG IV, cap. 81.

<sup>38</sup>Cf. SCG IV, cap. 81.

has at  $t_1$  in virtue of the fact that  $X$ 's soul configures prime matter at  $t_1$  such that  $X$ 's rational soul is the substantial form of a human body at  $t_1$ .  $X$  at  $t_2$  after  $X$ 's death ceases to have humanity since  $X$ 's soul ceases to configure prime matter at  $t_2$ . However, since humanity is given to the whole human being  $X$  at  $t_1$  in virtue of  $X$ 's soul configuring prime matter at  $t_1$  and not the prime matter that  $X$ 's soul configures at  $t_1$ ,  $X$ 's humanity is not annihilated at  $t_2$  after  $X$ 's death because  $X$ 's soul exists at  $t_2$ . Thus,  $X$ 's soul at  $t_1$  is not identical with  $X$ 's humanity at  $t_1$  because  $X$ 's soul as that in virtue of which  $X$  has humanity at  $t_1$  is not identical with the humanity which results from  $X$ 's soul configuring prime matter at  $t_1$ . However, since  $X$ 's humanity at  $t_1$  is not an additional form which  $X$  has at  $t_1$  but simply is  $X$ 's soul in an embodied state,  $X$ 's humanity is not annihilated at  $t_2$  after  $X$ 's death because  $X$ 's soul survives  $X$ 's death and exists at  $t_2$  in a disembodied state.

To sum up, Aquinas's hylomorphism does not conflict with survivalism but rather provides the means to explain why the survival of a human being  $X$ 's soul is sufficient for  $X$ 's survival in the interim period after  $X$ 's death and before  $X$ 's resurrection. The survival of  $X$ 's soul is sufficient for  $X$ 's survival because nothing essential of  $X$  is utterly annihilated with  $X$ 's death, i.e., no essential principle of  $X$  is utterly annihilated at  $t_2$  after  $X$ 's death and before  $X$ 's resurrection.

A corruptionist could try to object that it might be the case that none of the essential principles which  $X$  has at time  $t_1$  is utterly annihilated after  $X$ 's death at  $t_2$  but that  $X$  nevertheless does not survive  $X$ 's death and exist at  $t_2$  because  $X$  at  $t_1$  has essential principles such as  $X$ 's substantial corporeity,  $X$ 's body, and  $X$ 's humanity which  $X$ 's soul lacks at  $t_2$ . For this reason, so the putative corruptionist objector, Aquinas's hylomorphism is not compatible with survivalism because the former accepts NUMERICAL IDENTITY and ESSENCE which in turn conflict with the survivalist defense I reconstructed.<sup>39</sup> In other words, a corruptionist could object that it seems that the survival and existence of  $X$ 's soul at  $t_2$  in the interim period after  $X$ 's death and before  $X$ 's resurrection are not sufficient for the survival and existence of  $X$  at  $t_2$  because with  $X$ 's death a change of essential principles takes place:  $X$ 's soul at  $t_2$  after  $X$ 's death has a different essence than  $X$  at  $t_1$  prior to death in such a way that  $X$ 's soul, which survives  $X$ 's death and exists at  $t_2$ , is not numerically identical to  $X$  at  $t_1$ .

Aquinas's hylomorphism also provides the resources necessary to rebut this objection. According to Aquinas's hylomorphic metaphysics, it is of course true that a human being  $X$ 's soul at  $t_2$  after  $X$ 's death and before  $X$ 's resurrection lacks things which  $X$  has at  $t_1$  prior to death, e.g., a body, substantial corporeity, and humanity, precisely because  $X$ 's soul exists at  $t_2$  in a *disembodied* state in virtue of not configuring prime matter at  $t_2$ . However, the fact that  $X$ 's separated soul at  $t_2$  lacks a body and substantial corporeity does not imply that Aquinas's hylomorphism is forced to

<sup>39</sup>See, for example, Nevitt, "Survivalism vs. Corruptionism," 128–40.

concede that a change of essential principles has taken place at  $t_2$  after the death of  $X$ , i.e., that  $X$ 's soul at  $t_2$  has a different essence than  $X$  at  $t_1$  prior to  $X$ 's death. According to Aquinas's hylomorphism, the latter does not follow from the former.

To see why it is helpful to have a closer look at his response to the objection that with the corruption of a human being  $X$  and the consequent loss of  $X$ 's body the sensitive and nutritive powers of  $X$ 's soul  $X$ 's soul has at  $t_1$  prior to  $X$ 's corruption and death are annihilated at  $t_2$  after  $X$ 's death because these cannot exist without the organs of  $X$ 's body which does not exist at  $t_2$ :

This same applies to the sensitive and nutritive parts of the soul. If by these we mean the sensitive and nutritive powers, which are natural properties of the soul (or rather of the composite), they cease to be when the body ceases to be, and this does not interfere with the body's identity in the resurrection. If, however, by these parts we mean the very substance of the sensitive and nutritive soul, each of these is identical with the rational soul: for man does not have three souls, but one only, as we have proved.<sup>40</sup>

Aquinas says here that the separated human soul, as the surviving metaphysical part of a human being  $X$  at  $t_2$  after  $X$ 's death and before  $X$ 's resurrection, does not have all the causal powers that the whole human being  $X$  has at  $t_1$  prior to death. For example,  $X$ 's soul at  $t_2$  cannot smell or digest food because it does not configure prime matter at  $t_2$  in such a way that a body results with the relevant organs. Thus, these powers which the whole human being has at  $t_1$  prior to death are annihilated at  $t_2$  after  $X$ 's death.

However, this does not imply that an essential principle is annihilated at  $t_2$ , i.e., that a change of essential principles and consequently a change of essence has taken place, because the relevant causal powers the whole human being  $X$  has at  $t_1$  are in fact given to  $X$  by  $X$ 's soul and not by the prime matter that  $X$ 's soul configures at  $t_1$  nor by any other any other additional sensitive or nutritive soul that  $X$  has at  $t_1$ .

Again, Aquinas's doctrine of the unicity of substantial form plays an important role in his argumentation: A human being  $X$  at  $t_1$  prior to death possesses only one substantial form —  $X$ 's rational soul — which means that at  $t_1$ ,  $X$ 's rational soul has the active potentiality to confer to the whole human being  $X$  sensitive and nutritive causal powers by configuring prime matter. At  $t_2$  after  $X$ 's death, the sensitive and nutritive causal powers which  $X$  has at  $t_1$  are annihilated, but the active potentiality of  $X$ 's soul to confer to the whole human being sensitive and nutritive causal powers by configuring prime matter is not annihilated. This active potentiality is an active potentiality of  $X$ 's soul and not any other additional soul and  $X$ 's soul survives  $X$ 's death and exists at  $t_2$ . In its disembodied state at  $t_2$ ,  $X$ 's soul is just hindered to exercise or manifest this active potentiality

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<sup>40</sup>SCG IV, cap. 81.

precisely because it is no longer metaphysically composed with prime matter at  $t_2$ . Thus, no change of essential principles or essence has taken place although  $X$ 's soul at  $t_2$  does not possess all the causal powers that the whole human being possesses at  $t_1$  prior to death.

In an analogous way, it can be explained why no change of essential principles or essence has taken place at  $t_2$  after the death of a human being  $X$  despite the fact that  $X$ 's separated soul at  $t_2$  does not possess a body, substantial corporeity, or humanity. In Aquinas's view,  $X$  exists as a material substance at  $t_1$  prior to  $X$ 's death in virtue of the fact that  $X$ 's unique substantial form —  $X$ 's rational soul — is metaphysically composed with prime matter at  $t_1$  so that  $X$ 's soul can exercise or manifest its active potentiality to configure prime matter in such a way that a material substance  $X$  results which has a body, substantial corporeity, and humanity. At  $t_2$  after  $X$ 's death,  $X$ 's surviving separated soul does not have, in actuality, the body, the substantial corporeity, and the humanity  $X$  has at  $t_1$ . However,  $X$ 's body,  $X$ 's substantial corporeity, and  $X$ 's humanity as essential principles of  $X$  are not annihilated at  $t_2$  because  $X$ 's soul survives  $X$ 's death and exists at  $t_2$  after  $X$ 's death and  $X$ 's soul at  $t_2$  has not lost the active potentiality to configure prime matter in such a way that a material substance  $Y$  at  $t_3$  comes into existence which has a body, substantial corporeity, and humanity that are numerically identical to the body, substantial corporeity, and humanity that  $X$  has at  $t_1$ . In its disembodied state at  $t_2$  after  $X$ 's death and before  $X$ 's resurrection,  $X$ 's soul is just hindered to exercise or manifest this active potentiality precisely because it is no longer configuring prime matter at  $t_2$ . Thus, no change of essential principles or essence has taken place at  $t_2$  after  $X$ 's death because everything that is essential to  $X$  is preserved by and virtually present in  $X$ 's surviving soul at  $t_2$  although it cannot manifest itself due to the lacking composition of  $X$ 's soul with prime matter at  $t_2$ .

#### *4. Why Aquinas's Metaphysical and Theological Views Are Incompatible with Corruptionism*

In the preceding section, we have seen that Aquinas's hylomorphism is not only *compatible* with survivalism but that his views on form provide the means to rebut an important contemporary objection against the compatibility of a hylomorphic anthropology with survivalism. In this section, I will show that a close examination of Aquinas's rebuttal of another objection against the Christian belief in the resurrection will help us to understand why corruptionism is *incompatible* with Thomistic metaphysics as well as with the orthodox Catholic account of the resurrection Aquinas is committed to.

##### *4.1 Aquinas's Rebuttal of the Third Objection Against the Resurrection*

To see why Aquinas's metaphysical as well as theological views are incompatible with corruptionism, let us turn to the third objection against

the Christian belief in RESURRECTION Aquinas mentions in chapter 80 of his SCG:

It seems that what is not continuous, is not numerically identical. This is evident not only in sizes and movements, but also in qualities and shapes. If a healthy person falls sick and is subsequently healed, the health which he recovers will not be numerically identical with the health he lost. Now, it is evident that the being of a human being (*esse hominis*) is removed (*aufertur*) through death (*per mortem*), since corruption is the change of being (*esse*) into non-being (*non esse*). Consequently, it is impossible that numerically the same being of a human being (*esse hominis*) returns (*reiteretur*). Therefore, it will also not be numerically the same human being, because what is numerically identical has numerically the same being (*esse*).<sup>41</sup>

The objection can be reconstructed as follows:

P1: CONTINUITY: The numerical identity of a thing X at time  $t_1$  to a thing Y at  $t_2$  requires that the existence (*esse*)<sup>42</sup> X has at  $t_1$  is numerically identical to the *esse* which Y has at  $t_2$ .

P2: BODY: If a human being X's soul is separated at time  $t_2$  after X's death from the matter, i.e., X's body, of which it is the substantial form and to which it is naturally united in virtue of the soul's configuring prime matter at  $t_1$  prior to X's death, X's body is corrupted and does not exist at  $t_2$ .

C1: EXISTENCE CORRUPTION: It follows from BODY — composite of soul and matter corruption — that the *esse* X has at  $t_1$  is annihilated at  $t_2$  after X's death and that X therefore has ceased to exist at  $t_2$ .

P3: IRREVERSIBILITY\*: It is impossible that X has *esse* at time  $t_1$ , that X is utterly annihilated at  $t_2$ , that Y comes into existence and has *esse* at  $t_3$ , and that the *esse* Y has at  $t_3$  is numerically identical to the *esse* that X has at  $t_1$ .

C2: DISCONTINUITY: It follows from CONTINUITY, EXISTENCE CORRUPTION, and IRREVERSIBILITY\* that if a human being Y comes into existence at  $t_3$  after the resurrection, Y is not numerically identical to X at  $t_1$  because the *esse* Y has at  $t_3$  is not continuous with and consequently not numerically identical with the *esse* X has at  $t_1$ .

C3: Therefore, it is impossible that a human being X that exists at  $t_1$  prior to death, and that does not exist at  $t_2$  after X's death and before X's resurrection, is numerically identical to a human being Y that comes into existence and exists at  $t_3$  after the resurrection.

C4: Therefore, it is impossible that numerically the same human being is resurrected.

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<sup>41</sup>I have revised the translation.

<sup>42</sup>In what follows, I leave the Latin term '*esse*' untranslated to avoid unwelcome connotations which the English term 'existence' might have.

Aquinas rebuts this objection in chapter 81 in the following way:

The third objection, which said that *esse* is not one, because it is not continuous, rests on (*innititur*) a false foundation. For it is evident that matter and form have one *esse*, since matter does not have *esse* in actuality (*in actu*) except through a form. However, the rational soul differs from other forms in this respect because the *esse* of the other forms is nothing else but their being received in matter (*in concrezione ad materiam*), for they do not exceed (*excedunt*) matter, either in *esse* or in operation. But it is evident that the rational soul exceeds matter in operation, since it has an operation that is without the participation of any bodily organ, namely, understanding (*intelligere*). Consequently, the *esse* of the rational soul is not merely its being received in matter. Therefore, the soul's *esse*, which was that of the composite, remains after the dissolution of the body. And when the body is restored (*reparato*) at the resurrection, it receives again the same *esse* which has remained (*remansit*) in the soul.<sup>43</sup>

The rebuttal can be reconstructed as follows:

P1: The *esse* a human being X has at time  $t_1$  prior to X's death is given to X — the body-soul composite — by X's soul and not by the prime matter that X's soul configures nor by any other additional substantial form.

C1: From P1, it follows that the *esse* X — the body-soul composite — has at  $t_1$  in virtue of X's unique soul configuring prime matter at  $t_1$  is numerically identical to the *esse* X's soul has at  $t_1$ .

P2: X's soul is a subsistent form, i.e., X's soul having *esse* at  $t_1$  does not depend on X's soul configuring prime matter at  $t_1$ .

C2: SOUL\*: From P2, it follows that X's soul survives X's death and has *esse* at  $t_2$  after the corruption of X's body, i.e., after the corruption of the body-soul composite which results from X's soul configuring prime matter at  $t_1$ .

C3: From C1 and C2, it follows that the *esse* X's soul has at  $t_2$  after X's death is continuous with and numerically identical to the *esse* X — the body-soul composite — has at  $t_1$ .

C4: From C3, it follows that EXISTENCE CORRUPTION is false: It does not follow from BODY — composite of soul and matter corruption — that the *esse* X has at  $t_1$  is annihilated at  $t_2$  after X's death and that X therefore has ceased to exist at  $t_2$  because the *esse* X's soul has at  $t_2$  after X's death is continuous with and numerically identical to the *esse* X — the body-soul composite — has at  $t_1$ .

C5: From C4, it follows that DISCONTINUITY is false: If X's soul, that has *esse* at  $t_2$ , is reunited with prime matter in the resurrection, a whole human being Y — a body-soul composite — comes into existence and exists at  $t_3$  after the resurrection whose *esse* at  $t_3$  is continuous with and consequently numerically identical with the *esse* X has  $t_1$ .

C6: Therefore, the conclusion of the objection is false: It is possible that numerically the same human being is resurrected.

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<sup>43</sup>I have revised the translation.

#### 4.2 What We Can Learn from this Rebuttal

There are several important things we can learn from Aquinas's rebuttal of the third objection against the Christian belief in the resurrection. First, Aquinas's hylomorphism is incompatible with corruptionism because the former conflicts with EXISTENCE CORRUPTION, while the latter requires to accept EXISTENCE CORRUPTION in virtue of corruptionism's commitment to the doctrine of gappy existence.<sup>44</sup> And due to corruptionism's commitment to EXISTENCE CORRUPTION, corruptionism cannot be reconciled with an orthodox Catholic account of the resurrection.

Second, Aquinas's rebuttal sheds further light on the question why EXISTENCE CORRUPTION is false, i.e., why the survival of a human being *X*'s soul and the existence of *X*'s soul at  $t_2$  in the interim period after *X*'s death and before *X*'s resurrection is sufficient for the survival and existence of *X* at  $t_2$ . According to Aquinas's hylomorphism, it is not only that everything that is essential to a human being *X* is preserved by and virtually present in *X*'s surviving soul at  $t_2$  after *X*'s death and before *X*'s resurrection. Rather, the *esse* which *X* has at  $t_1$  prior to death is also preserved by *X*'s soul at  $t_2$  after *X*'s death. This is the case because the *esse* which *X* — the body-soul composite — has at  $t_1$  prior to death is given to *X* by *X*'s rational soul and not by the prime matter *X*'s soul configures at  $t_1$  nor by any additional substantial form. Consequently, *X*'s soul survives *X*'s death in virtue of being a subsistent substantial form and the *esse* that *X*'s soul has at  $t_2$  after *X*'s death is numerically identical to the *esse* that *X* has at  $t_1$ . Thus, in Aquinas's view, it is necessary for the continuous existence or persistence of numerically the same human being *X* that *X* at each moment of his or her existence is metaphysically composed of numerically the same substantial form and numerically the same *esse*.

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<sup>44</sup>EXISTENCE CORRUPTION is a specific kind of annihilism, namely, the view that a human being's *esse* is annihilated at death in the sense of being reduced to *non esse*, i.e., to non-existence or nothingness. Corruptionists are committed to this kind of annihilism because they state that the *existence* of a human being such as Mother Teresa is gappy: Teresa does not exist at  $t_2$  after her death and before her resurrection, i.e., there is nothing at  $t_2$  which has the *esse* which Teresa had at  $t_1$ . If there were something at  $t_2$  which had Teresa's *esse*, Teresa would exist at  $t_2$  and Teresa's existence would not be gappy. Thus, corruptionism implies the view that human beings are annihilated *in this sense* at their death. It is important to note that I do not claim that corruptionism is a view according to which nothing which formed part of a human being such as Mother Teresa at  $t_1$  before her death exists at  $t_2$  after her death and before her resurrection. Corruptionism is perfectly compatible with the view that, for example, Teresa's soul exists at  $t_2$ . Thus, I do not attribute to corruptionists such as Nevitt the following kind of annihilism: a human being such as Teresa is annihilated with her death at  $t_2$  in the sense that *nothing of Teresa* exist at  $t_2$ , i.e., that everything of Teresa is reduced to *non esse* or nothingness at  $t_2$ . Rather, I argue that corruptionists maintain that *something of Teresa* has survived her death and exists at  $t_2$ , e.g., her soul, but whatever has survived Teresa's death and exists at  $t_2$ , it is not sufficient for the survival and existence of *Teresa* at  $t_2$ . In other words, according to corruptionism, there exists nothing at  $t_2$  which could make claims such as "I am Mother Teresa" or "I, Mother Teresa, exist" true at  $t_2$ . Thus, my argument is that corruptionism requires to accept EXISTENCE CORRUPTION because corruptionists claim that *Teresa* has ceased to exist — is reduced to *non esse* — at  $t_2$  despite the fact that some parts of her might exist at  $t_2$ .



According to Aquinas's hylomorphism — contrary to what corruptionists such as Nevitt think — it is not necessary for the continuous existence or persistence of numerically the same human being *X* that *X* at each point of his or her existence is metaphysically composed of numerically the same body and soul.<sup>45</sup> Aquinas's hylomorphism is perfectly compatible with survivalism and an orthodox account of the resurrection because it is only the existence of *X*'s body, i.e., *X*'s existence as a body-soul composite, which is 'gappy', but not the existence of *X* as corruptionists maintain.<sup>46</sup>

Third, Aquinas's views of form which he expounds in the context of his rebuttal of the third objection against the resurrection help us also to formulate a powerful response to the corruptionist objection that the survival of a human being *X*'s soul is not sufficient for the survival of that human being because *X*'s soul, that exists at  $t_2$  after *X*'s death and before *X*'s resurrection, is not a human being.

According to Aquinas's hylomorphic metaphysics, the *esse* a human being *X* has at  $t_1$  prior to death, i.e., the *esse* *X* has as a body-soul composite at  $t_1$  is human *esse* (*esse hominis*). However, for the reasons we have just seen above, the *esse* which *X*'s soul has at  $t_2$  after *X*'s death and before *X*'s resurrection is numerically identical to the *esse* *X* has at  $t_1$ . Consequently, *X*'s soul has human *esse* at  $t_2$ . But anything, that has human *esse*, is a human being. Therefore, the survival of a human being *X*'s soul is sufficient for *X*'s survival, i.e., the survival of a human being.

It is important to note that this line of reasoning does not commit a survivalist such as Aquinas to the view that a human being *X* is a soul to which a body is accidentally added at some points of time during *X*'s existence. Rather, according to Aquinas's hylomorphism, a human being *X*'s soul is the substantial form of *X*'s body to which it is naturally united in virtue of *X*'s soul configuring prime matter. In other words, by its very nature the human soul is a substantial form which is supposed to configure

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<sup>45</sup>Cf. Nevitt, "Survivalism vs. Corruptionism," 139.

<sup>46</sup>In this way, it can be explained why MATERIAL SUBSTANCE\* is in fact compatible with survivalism. Prima facie, it seems that MATERIAL SUBSTANCE\* is incompatible with survivalism because, according to the former, a human being is a material substance which is composed of a rational soul and matter, i.e., a body, but, according to the latter, a human being in the interim state at  $t_2$  is not composed of matter, i.e., a body. However, the consideration of Aquinas' arguments has helped us to see that MATERIAL SUBSTANCE\* needs to be disambiguated as follows. MATERIAL SUBSTANCE\*\*: A human being, which comes into existence in virtue of a rational soul's configuring prime matter, is a material substance which is necessarily composed of a substantial form — a rational soul or intellect — and matter, i.e., a body. MATERIAL SUBSTANCE\*\*\*: A human being, which comes into existence in virtue of a rational soul's configuring prime matter, is a material substance which is normally and naturally, if not necessarily composed of a substantial form — a rational soul or intellect — and matter, i.e., a body. MATERIAL SUBSTANCE\*\* is compatible with corruptionism and incompatible with survivalism. However, as we have seen above, the texts don't support Aquinas accepting MATERIAL SUBSTANCE\*\*, but rather support Aquinas accepting MATERIAL SUBSTANCE\*\*\*, which is compatible with a survivalist interpretation of Aquinas and incompatible with a corruptionist interpretation. I am thankful to an anonymous referee for the suggestion to introduce this clarification.

prime matter in contrast, e.g., to the substantial form of an angel. However, in Aquinas's view, a human being *X*'s existence at  $t_2$  is unnatural because it is unnatural for *X*'s soul not to configure prime matter and not to bring a body-soul composite into existence as it does at  $t_1$  prior to death and at  $t_3$  after the resurrection.<sup>47</sup>

To sum up, the difference between a human being *X* who is constituted by matter and form at  $t_1$  prior to death and at  $t_3$  after the resurrection and *X* who is constituted only by *X*'s soul at  $t_2$  after *X*'s death and before *X*'s resurrection is not a difference of species, essence, or *esse*. Rather, the difference between *X* at  $t_1$  and  $t_3$  and *X* at  $t_2$  can be explained in terms of the difference between a power *X* has — *X*'s 'active potentiality' or 'first actuality' in Aquinas's terminology — and the manifestation of that power (*X*'s 'second actuality'). For example, the difference between *X* at  $t_1$  and at  $t_3$  and *X* at  $t_2$  is that *X* does not have a body in first and second actuality at  $t_2$  but only in first actuality. *X* at  $t_2$  possesses only the active potentiality to bring numerically the same body into existence which *X* has at  $t_1$  and  $t_3$  because *X* is not metaphysically composed with prime matter at  $t_2$ . And *X* possesses numerically the same body not only in first actuality but also in second actuality at  $t_1$  and  $t_3$  in virtue of *X*'s soul configuring prime matter at  $t_1$  and  $t_3$ .<sup>48</sup>

Thus, *X* does not have essential principles such as a body, substantial corporeity, or humanity in second actuality at  $t_2$ , which *X* has in first and second actuality at  $t_1$  and  $t_3$ , because *X*'s soul at  $t_2$  does not configure prime matter. However, *X* possesses these essential principles in first actuality at  $t_2$  because it is the active potentiality of *X*'s soul, which is responsible for the fact that *X* at  $t_1$  and  $t_3$  — the whole human being — possesses these essential principles also in second actuality in virtue of configuring prime matter at  $t_1$ , and *X*'s soul exists and has not lost this active potentiality at  $t_2$ . *X*'s soul at  $t_2$  is just hindered to exercise or manifest this active potentiality because it is not composed with prime matter at  $t_2$ . In the resurrection, God provides *X*'s soul again with prime matter in such a way that a body-form composite *Y* comes into existence and exists at  $t_3$  after the resurrection which possesses essential principles in second actuality numerically identical to the essential principles *X* possesses in second actuality at  $t_1$  prior to *X*'s death.

### 5. Conclusion

In this essay, I have shown that Aquinas's hylomorphism is compatible with survivalism and consequently with an orthodox Catholic account of the resurrection. In Aquinas's view, the dead do not cease to exist after their death. They survive their death and exist at  $t_2$  in the interim period after their death and before their resurrection in virtue of their immortal souls.

Contemporary corruptionists wrongly suppose that the survival of a human being *X*'s separated soul is not sufficient for the survival of *X* because they do not sufficiently pay attention to the role that form plays in

<sup>47</sup>Cf. SCG IV, cap. 81.

<sup>48</sup>For a similar approach, see Eberl, *The Nature of Human Persons*, 245.

Aquinas's hylomorphism and do not take into account some important implications of his doctrine of the unicity of substantial form. According to Aquinas's hylomorphism, neither any of the essential principles of *X* nor *X*'s *esse* are annihilated at death because both are in fact given to the whole human being *X* by *X*'s soul and not by the prime matter that *X*'s soul configures nor by any additional form, and *X*'s soul survives *X*'s death.

Thus, a worldview is coherent which combines Aquinas's hylomorphic philosophical views with his Christian theological views about the afterlife. Consequently, it remains open to Christian philosophers, who are members of the Catholic tradition and who want to be faithful to the authoritative teachings of their tradition about the afterlife, to make use of the resources of a hylomorphic metaphysics to explain and solve philosophical and theological problems.

However, only a Thomistic hylomorphism, which shares Aquinas's views on form and matter, can be reconciled with orthodox Catholic faith for the reasons given above. Therefore, Christian philosophers should be careful and not too enthusiastic about the recent renaissance of hylomorphism in contemporary analytic philosophy because these analytic accounts of hylomorphism often entertain views about form and prime matter, which conflict with Aquinas's views.<sup>49</sup>

*Munich School of Philosophy*

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<sup>49</sup>For example, Kathrin Koslicki argues that the substantial form of a material substance *X* is something like *X*'s 'structure' which does not configure prime matter but *X*'s actual matter. Thus, if *X* is a human being, *X*'s substantial form does not configure prime matter but *X*'s integral parts—e.g., *X*'s legs and organs—which themselves are hylomorphic compounds; cf. Koslicki, *Form, Matter, Substance*, 57–61. However, for the reasons I have given above, such a hylomorphism conflicts with Aquinas's doctrine on the unicity of substantial form, which in turn plays an important role in his defense of survivalism. Consequently, Koslicki's hylomorphism does not provide the resources necessary to explain why the survival of a human being *X*'s soul is sufficient for the survival of *X* and why a hylomorphic metaphysics does not conflict with an orthodox Catholic account of the resurrection. For an excellent philosophical critique of contemporary hylomorphic views on form and matter which diverge from Aquinas's views, see Rooney, *Material Objects in Confucian and Aristotelian Metaphysics* and Skrzypek, "Three Concerns for Structural Hylomorphism." I would like to thank two anonymous referees and the following persons for many helpful and valuable comments on previous versions of this article: Jason T. Eberl, Ralf Klein, Turner C. Nevitt, James Dominic Rooney, Jeremy Skrzypek, and Eleonore Stump.

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