



The Human Body and Human Happiness in Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*

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Abstract

There appears to be no serious treatment of the positive role played by the body in Aquinas's account of human happiness. This would seem to be a significant gap in the literature given Aquinas's well known insistence on the human person as a body-soul unity. This paper aims at taking a first step in filling-in the gap by considering Aquinas's discussion of the body's part in human happiness in the *Secunda Pars* of the *Summa theologiae*. In particular it considers the place of the body in each of the three different forms of happiness that Aquinas talks about there. It is perhaps the role of the body in the third form of happiness – the perfect happiness of the beatific vision – that is most crucial to understand since this is human happiness *simpliciter*. Although the body has a part to play here too, Aquinas's understanding of it is not without problems.

Keywords

Aquinas, body, human person, happiness, beatific vision

Forgetting the Body

My purpose in this paper is to understand the positive role that Aquinas assigns to the body in his account of human happiness. Aquinas *does* think that the body has a positive part to play in our happiness. Yet in many treatments of Aquinas's views on happiness scant or no attention is paid to what he has to say about the human body's contribution. Sometimes it is even denied that Aquinas assigns the body a part in our happiness. In his account of Aquinas's concept of human happiness in his *History of Western Philosophy* Bertrand Russell, for example, only mentions the body in order to say that it does not figure in the way that Aquinas sees happiness.¹ It must be granted that in an attempt to give a history of Western philosophy in a single volume we cannot fairly expect Lord Russell to provide

¹ *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945), pp. 458–459.

a detailed analysis of Aquinas's thought. Nevertheless, this does not justify Russell in utterly misrepresenting Aquinas. If Aquinas denies that body is involved in our happiness, we would assume that he would not see much difference between human and angelic happiness, but this is not the case. Robert Pasnau and Christopher Shield's discussion of Aquinas's views on human happiness in *The Philosophy of Aquinas* is better than Russell's insofar as they do not positively distort his views.² And yet, their chapter on "The Goal of Human Life," which takes an extended look at human happiness in Aquinas, has virtually nothing to say about the positive part that the body has in this happiness.³ Perhaps we could also excuse Pasnau and Shields since their book is meant to consider Aquinas at a very general level.

We will have a little better luck if we look at an essay by Georg Wieland, which takes Aquinas's concept of happiness as its sole topic.⁴ Commenting on this concept, Wieland observes that for Aquinas, "[i]n the future life, the human spirit, which connects us to God, is of course, independent of sense activity," but immediately adds: "However, after the resurrection, the body and therefore the senses share in the complete happiness of the soul. Thomas stresses this point by appealing to Augustine (Ia IIae, q. 3, a. 3). He thus presents a Christian anthropology that takes seriously the embodied state of humanity."⁵ This sounds promising. But we will discover that the essay is short on details about how Aquinas "takes seriously the embodied state of humanity" in his account of happiness. While Wieland will go on to note that "temporal happiness depends somewhat on the body and its organs"⁶ and that in the beatific vision "the soul lets the body participate in its perfection,"⁷ he will not spend any time expanding on these claims.

Clearly, what is needed is a study that takes Aquinas's understanding of the body's positive contribution to human happiness as its main focus. To my knowledge, nothing of the sort exists. Perchance there would be those who would say that such an undertaking would have little point since Aquinas, in fact, thinks of human felicity as a primarily spiritual event inasmuch as it consists in the activity of the intellect, which, Aquinas claims, is the highest activity that the human person is capable of.⁸ What is more, it is the intellect that sets the human person apart from other animals and places him at

² *The Philosophy of Aquinas* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2004).

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 197–215.

⁴ "Happiness (Ia IIae, qq. 1–5)," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, S.J. Pope, ed. (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002), pp. 57–68.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ I-II.3.5. In most cases, the English translation of the *Summa* is taken from the 1920 translation by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province.

the summit of the sublunary world. So, distinctively *human* happiness will, again, be above all an activity of the intellect.

But I would answer that it is likewise true (something almost too obvious to insist upon) that, for Aquinas, the human person is not solely an intellect but a unity of a body and an intellectual or spiritual soul. Neither the soul alone nor the body alone is the human person, Aquinas consistently tells us. In themselves they are at best *parts* of the human person. If this is the case, then human happiness must involve not only the human soul but the human body as well and it would be worthwhile to inquire into how Aquinas sees the body's role in happiness.

According to Aquinas, human happiness assumes three basic forms, which ascend in their degrees of perfection⁹: the first is possible in this life and consists, as Aquinas puts it, "primarily in contemplation, but secondarily in an operation of the practical intellect directing human actions and passions."¹⁰ Aquinas calls this *beatitudo imperfecta*, imperfect happiness. The second form that happiness takes in Aquinas's view is the post-mortem contemplation of God after the soul has separated from the body: this is more perfect than the previous form of happiness but is not without certain defects. And the third and highest form of happiness consists in the contemplation of God that occurs when the body and soul are re-united following the body's resurrection: this Aquinas regards as *beatitudo perfecta*, perfect happiness.

So, where does the human body figure in these different forms of happiness? In the first the body has an essential role to play; in the second it has no role to play – and so this form of happiness, I would suggest, could only be called "human" in a nominal sense; and in the third, the body does have a role but a minimal one. In regard to this last we might ask whether it too, because of the body's minimal contribution, really deserves to be called *human* happiness. It is not unreasonable to wonder how consistent this supposedly perfect state of human happiness is with Aquinas's anthropology, which is so emphatic about the body and soul *both* being essential to the human person's nature. One might want to ask, for instance, whether Aquinas's account of *perfecta beatitudo hominis* is compromised by a latent Platonism or possibly even a Porphyrian form of Neo-Platonism.¹¹ In investigating the role of the body in human happiness I will also try to respond to such concerns.

⁹ Aquinas discusses these different forms of happiness in any number of places. Here I am mostly drawing on what he says about them in I-II.1–5.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Thomas Gilby seems to have a similar worry. Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, vol. 16, *Purpose and Happiness (1a2ae. 1–5)* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), p. 103, note c.

There are a number of texts where Aquinas talks about the body's place in human happiness but taking them all into account in a careful manner would require a much lengthier inquiry than is possible here. Thus, I propose to concentrate on some of the relevant texts in the *Summa theologiae*, which we can take as representative of Aquinas's mature thought on this question.

My paper hereafter will be divided into three parts. In the first part I will review Aquinas's understanding of the relationship between the body and soul in the human person as this is presented in the *Summa theologiae*. This will set up my consideration in the next and main part of the paper of the *Summa's* treatment of the body's role in human happiness. Finally, by way of conclusion, I will sum up the results of my questioning and offer some reflections on the direction I think that further research on the topic should take.

Body and Soul

Aquinas's teaching on the relationship between the body and the soul in the human person is a fairly well known area of his thought. So, here I will offer only a summary of that teaching in view of my discussion of the body's role in human happiness.

Aquinas was familiar with antique philosophical doctrines that, on the one hand, viewed human persons in a reductively materialist way, a position he attributed to certain Greek Pre-Socratics.¹² And, on the other hand, Aquinas was aware of Plato's conception of human persons as essentially spiritual beings with a merely extrinsic relationship to the body.¹³ In Aquinas's opinion this entailed that the body and soul were not naturally but only accidentally joined. Aquinas saw a similarly extrinsicist position in the doctrine of Origen according to which the human soul preexists the body and is subsequently united to it as a punishment for sin.¹⁴ Of course, Aquinas found none of these anthropologies satisfactory, neither from the standpoint of reason nor from that of faith.

Against the Pre-Socratic materialists, Aquinas argues that the human capacity for knowledge of all material things¹⁵ and the abstract nature of this knowledge¹⁶ point to a spiritual dimension in the human person. Against body-soul extrinsicism Aquinas argues that sense perception is not an activity of the spiritual soul alone but requires a body.¹⁷ Because we *do* have sense perceptions, we must

¹² I.75.1.

¹³ I.75.3–4.

¹⁴ I.118.3.

¹⁵ I.75.1 ad 2; 75.2.

¹⁶ I.75.5.

¹⁷ I.75.4.

be both a body and a spiritual soul.¹⁸ Moreover, Aquinas affirms that it is natural for the body and the soul to be united in the human person.¹⁹ The human body, so Aquinas argues, cannot exist as a *human* body without being animated by the intellectual soul, which is its form.²⁰ And the intellect, for its part, needs the body's mediation to acquire knowledge, for human knowledge naturally begins in the bodily senses being affected by other bodies in their environment.²¹ In the jargon of contemporary epistemology, one might say that Aquinas is something of a "strong externalist."²²

Despite the intellect's dependence on the deliverances of the bodily senses for the material that it works upon, namely, the phantasms produced by the senses, Aquinas maintains that the intellect's very act of understanding does not depend on the body and as the soul can perform an operation on its own, it can exist on its own. It is this ability of the soul to exist independently of the body that Aquinas is claiming when he says that the human soul is "subsistent." But as subsistent, the soul, of course, is not a complete substance in itself.²³ It is still just a part of a larger whole to which it naturally belongs.²⁴

Obviously, Aquinas regards the relationship between the body and the soul in the human person as a mutually beneficial one. Each provides something important for the other. However, it is not a democratic relationship. For Aquinas, following Aristotle, the relationship between the body and the soul is hierarchical and teleological.²⁵ "[T]he union of soul and body," Aquinas writes, "exists for the sake of the soul and not of the body; for the form does not exist for the matter, but the matter for the form."²⁶ The goods of the body are thus ordained to the goods of the soul.²⁷ So, the body's perfection is not for its own sake but for it to be the soul's pliable instrument.²⁸ As Étienne Gilson observes, in Aquinas's mind, this hierarchical and teleological relationship between the body and soul is but an instance of a general metaphysical principle according to which the less perfect is ordered to the more perfect, the less

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ I.118.3.

²⁰ I.76.1; 118.3.

²¹ I.84.6; 118.3.

²² Cf. J.P. O'Callaghan, *Thomist Realism and the Linguistic Turn: Toward a More Perfect Form of Existence* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), pp. 237–274; Roger Pouivet, *After Wittgenstein: St. Thomas* (South Bend: St. Augustine's Press, 2006), pp. 2–4, 124–125, 127.

²³ I.75.2.

²⁴ I.75.2 ad 2.

²⁵ See Aristotle's remarks in *De Anima*, 416b15–20; *Parts of Animals*, 645b14–19.

²⁶ I.70.3.

²⁷ I-II.2.5.

²⁸ Ibid.

noble to the more noble.²⁹ When we consider, then, that the intellect depends on the bodily senses for the acquisition of knowledge, we should not think that in this the body establishes a certain superiority over the soul. We should see it, rather, as analogous to the way that Aquinas understands, say, the relationship between *sacra doctrina* and the philosophical sciences that it makes use of. *Sacra doctrina*, Aquinas tells us, “does not depend upon these other sciences as upon the higher, but makes use of them as of the lesser, and as handmaidens.”³⁰ Similarly, the body is the servant of the soul. Aquinas would not see this at all as a denigration of the body but as simply a proper understanding of the body’s function in the reality of the human person. Material reality, Aquinas says in the *Summa*’s treatise on creation, is in itself good.³¹ However, its goodness is of a lower level than spiritual reality and, like the goodness of any finite thing, is limited and must be properly ordered.³²

Let these brief remarks suffice for a review of Aquinas’s understanding of the relationship between the human body and soul in the *Summa*. There are many more details that could be added and a number of controversies that could be discussed but none of that is necessary for the immediate purposes of this paper. I would now like to proceed to a consideration of the role the body has in human happiness as this is portrayed in the *Summa*.

Happiness With and Without the Body

As I stated earlier, in Aquinas’s view, human happiness has three forms. Beginning with the first, we will look at all three of these forms and reflect on the contribution that the body makes in each.

Aquinas holds that in our present existence we can achieve a kind of imperfect happiness. This happiness can be had through the speculative and practical uses of our intellect in a life of intellectual and moral virtue. All knowledge in this life, whether in speculative or practical matters, has its origin in sense experience. It is not difficult to see, therefore, that the body has an integral role to play in imperfect happiness. Here is how Aquinas puts it: “It is evident that the body is necessary for the happiness of this life. For the happiness of this life consists in an operation of the intellect, either speculative or practical. And the operation of the intellect in this life cannot be without a phantasm, which is only in a bodily organ . . . Consequently

²⁹ *Thomism: The Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas*, L.K. Shook and A.A. Maurer, trans. (Toronto: PIMS, 2002), p. 222; Cf. ST, I.65.2.

³⁰ I.1.5 ad 2.

³¹ I.65.1 ad 2. Cf. II-II.25.5.

³² I.65.1 ad 2.

that happiness which can be had in this life, depends, in a way, on the body."³³

Aquinas will add to this that for the happiness of the present life the body must be healthy and sufficiently provided for with respect to material goods. Regarding the importance of bodily health, Aquinas tells us that a well-disposed body is required for that happiness which man can acquire in this life because bodily impairments can hinder all virtuous activities.³⁴ Evidently, that would include the virtuous use of the intellect. It is not hard to imagine circumstances in which the condition of the body would prevent us from using our intellect well: if I am in a coma or if I am dead drunk and not aware of what I am doing, I certainly could not use my intellect virtuously and perhaps I could not even use it at all. Does this mean that the body must be in perfect health for us to achieve intellectual excellence, and thus imperfect happiness, in this life? I do not find Aquinas making that claim. He only seems to commit himself to the body being in such a state of health that it does not stop the intellect from being used excellently.

As for the body needing to be supplied with the requisite material goods, Aquinas says that while these goods are not the essence of happiness, even imperfect happiness, they do serve as instruments to this end insofar as "man needs in this life the necessaries of the body both for the operation of contemplative virtue and for the operation of active virtue."³⁵ This does not strike me as a very problematic claim. Although Aquinas does not offer any example in the article in which he discusses this issue, coming up with our own should be fairly easy. If I am dying from lack of food or because of constant exposure to the elements, I will hardly be in an advantageous position to cultivate the intellectual virtue that is requisite for imperfect happiness.

If we accept Aquinas's version of the body-soul relationship, I do not think that we will have much trouble also accepting what he has to say about the body's role in the imperfect happiness possible in this life. His claims on this score will seem pretty straightforward to us. The body is obviously necessary for the imperfect happiness of the present life, and, just as obviously, it will have to be a sufficiently healthy body not lacking the basic goods to maintain that health. But what about the two higher forms of happiness that Aquinas envisions? With these we might possibly have more difficulty. Let us turn to these other forms of happiness now.

In responding to the question about whether the body is required for perfect happiness in I-II.4.5 Aquinas first makes an observation about the history of theology. "Some have maintained," he says, "that perfect happiness, which consists in the vision of God, is not possible

³³ I-II.4.5.

³⁴ I-II.4.6.

³⁵ I-II.4.7.

to the soul separated from the body and have said that the souls of the saints, when separated from their bodies, do not attain to that happiness until the day of judgment, when they will receive their bodies back again.”³⁶ Aquinas does not mention who these theologians are who deny that the soul can enjoy the beatific vision without the body.³⁷ In any event, it is quite true that in the early Church there were not a few who held the opinion described by Aquinas. Justin Martyr, for instance, in his famous *Dialogue With Trypho*, teaches that the souls of the just do not arrive in heaven immediately after death but travel to some mysterious abode between this life and the next until they are re-united with their resurrected bodies.³⁸ Only then are they permitted to enter into heavenly bliss.³⁹ Origen, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Lactantius, Hilary, Gregory of Nazianzus, Bernard of Clairvaux and a good many others appear to have held a similar view.⁴⁰

Aquinas, for his part, finds this doctrine unacceptable. It can be shown to be false, he claims, by both revelation and reason: by revelation because of certain remarks that St. Paul makes in his first letter to the Corinthians. “While we are in the body,” the Apostle writes, “we are absent from the Lord.” And we are absent, he says, because in this life “we walk by faith and not by sight.” St. Paul correlates being absent from the Lord with being present in our bodies and being present to the Lord with being absent from, or without, our bodies. In the former we are said to walk by faith and in the latter we are said to walk by sight. Taking his cue from these statements of the Apostle, Aquinas asserts that “it is evident that the souls of the saints separated from their bodies ‘walk by sight’ seeing the essence of God in which true happiness is found.”⁴¹ In other words, when the just die there is no waiting around for the beatific vision until the moment that their soul is reunited with their body. They are able to and do enjoy the vision of the divine essence immediately without their bodies.

Aquinas also offers a philosophical argument for the same conclusion. “This is made clear by reason,” he explains, “because the intellect does not need the body for its operation, save on account of the

³⁶ I-II.4.5.

³⁷ In *Contra gentiles* IV.91 Aquinas says that this is the error *quorundam Graecorum*. Cf. Gilby’s note on pp. 102–103 of vol. 16 of the Blackfriars’ *Summa*. Incidentally, Gilby mistakenly references Book III of the *Contra gentiles* and may have some of Aquinas’s Latin wrong.

³⁸ PG 6, 485–489; 664–668.

³⁹ Cf. H.M. Luckock, *The Intermediate State Between Death and Judgment* (New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1890), p. 23.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 22–26; Cf. Gilby’s note on pp. 102–103 of vol. 16 of the Blackfriars’ *Summa*; H. de Lubac, *Catholicism*, L.G. Sheppard, trans. (New York: Longmans, 1950), pp. 54–57.

⁴¹ I-II.4.5.

phantasms, wherein it looks on intelligible truth.”⁴² Aquinas is alluding here to his view that the act of understanding itself does not need a bodily organ even if it does require a phantasm to have something to understand. But Aquinas also holds that it cannot be through a phantasm or any created similitude whatsoever that the blessed behold God in heaven given that nothing created can perfectly disclose God's very essence. In his treatment of human knowledge of God in the *Prima Pars* Aquinas contends that it is by the uncreated light of glory that the intellect is strengthened to see God as he really is. If this is the case, Aquinas goes on to reason in the *Secunda Pars*, then the body cannot be required for the soul's enjoyment of the beatific vision, and consequently the soul can be happy apart from the body since in seeing God the human intellect is perfected.⁴³

While this may be happiness of some sort, should we really call it *human* happiness? If we were to call it human happiness, I would say that we should add that it can only be given this designation loosely. Indeed, the intellect is perfected in such a state and human happiness consists primarily in the perfection of the intellect. But if, as Aquinas believes, neither the body by itself nor the soul by itself is a human person, then true human happiness cannot be had by a disembodied but perfected human intellect.

In I-II.4.5 Aquinas does speak of this second level of happiness as happiness and as the perfection of the intellect, but he never speaks of it in an unqualified way as perfect *human* happiness. His hesitancy is clear. If there is a latent Platonism in Aquinas, he is definitely trying to keep it in check.

Aquinas is aware that perfect human happiness can only be had once the soul is reunited to the resurrected body. But since he makes human perfection so dependent on the intellect, it becomes difficult for him to articulate just what the body contributes to true human happiness. One might get the impression that Aquinas is brining the body back just to be formally consistent with his definition of the human person and is having a devil of a time trying to find something for the body to do in the beatific vision.

Consider the very problematic conclusion to the *respondeo* of I-II.4.5. After insisting that the soul can be happy without the body, Aquinas makes an attempt to bring the body back into the picture. “Note, however,” he writes, “that something may belong to a thing's perfection in two ways. First, as constituting the essence thereof; thus the soul is necessary for man's perfection. Secondly, as necessary for its well-being [...] Now the body does not belong in the first way to the perfection of human happiness, yet it does in the second way. For since operation depends on a thing's nature, the

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

more perfect is the soul in its nature, the more perfectly it has its proper operation, wherein [man's] happiness consists."⁴⁴ It is hard to know what to make of this passage. Aquinas tells us that there are at least two ways that something can belong to a thing's perfection. Either *p* can belong to the perfection of *X* as being the very essence of *X*'s perfection, or *p* can belong to the perfection of *X* as necessary for the perfection's 'well-being.' Aquinas claims that the soul is the *essence* of the human person's perfect happiness while the body is *not* essential to it but still *necessary* for the well being of perfect happiness. How are we to understand this relationship between what belongs to the essence of something's perfection and what is necessary for the perfection's well-being? In the case under discussion Aquinas seems to be suggesting that the soul will perform its proper operation well – that is, the act of understanding which is key to, or the essence of, human happiness – if the soul is perfect in its nature. Put differently: perfect human happiness is only possible if the human person is able to understand well and he cannot do this if his soul is lacking something that it requires. Separated from the body, apparently, the human soul would be in just this state of deprivation.

But how can the body be necessary for the soul to be capable of a perfect act of understanding? We might be able to make a claim like this if we are talking about the soul's condition in the present life. The intellect cannot act at all without the phantasms provided by the bodily senses, as we have seen. But Aquinas argued earlier in the *respondeo*, in the preceding paragraph to be exact, that in the life to come – which is the life that we are dealing with now – phantasms will be useless since the intellect will be made to see God by the light of glory. This being so, how will the body affect the intellect's perfect operation in the beatific vision?

In his reply to the first objection in I-II.4.5 Aquinas points out that even in the beatific vision the soul still is the natural form of the human body and, separated from the body, it remains imperfect in this sense. But he also says that the soul without the body is not imperfect in regard to happiness because apart from the body the soul nevertheless enjoys the beatific vision. Does this not flatly contradict Aquinas's perplexing statement about the body aiding the soul in perfectly performing its proper operation? Perhaps.

Replying to the objections in any given article, Aquinas typically clarifies and elaborates on points he makes in the *respondeo*. However, looking at Aquinas's replies to the objections in I-II.4.5 I can find nothing that really clarifies or elaborates on his contention that the body is necessary for the intellect's excellent functioning in the beatific vision. But if we turn to the next article (I-II.4.6), I

⁴⁴ Ibid.

think we might find something that could help us to see just how the body should fit into perfect human happiness, as Aquinas would understand it.

In I-II.4.6 Aquinas asks whether bodily perfection is necessary for human happiness. His answer is an unequivocal yes. It is necessary for imperfect happiness for the reasons that we talked about before. But it is also necessary in two ways for perfect happiness. (1) It is necessary for this happiness in a consequent way because, Aquinas believes, the soul's happiness will overflow into the body. The precise manner in which this will happen is not clearly dealt with. However, this is not what interests me in this article. What interests me is the other way Aquinas says that bodily perfection is necessary for perfect happiness. (2) He argues that it is also necessary antecedently insofar as a body that is in any way indisposed will hinder the intellect in its operation. Aquinas turns to Augustine to make his point: "Augustine says (Gen. ad lit. xii, 35), 'if the body be such that its governance is difficult and burdensome, like flesh which is corruptible and weighs upon the soul, the mind is turned away from that vision of the highest heaven.' And therefore he concludes that, 'when this body will no longer be "natural," but "spiritual," then it shall match the angels, and that will be its glory, which once was its burden'." And a little later, speaking in his own voice, Aquinas will add: "Although the body does not have a part in that operation of the intellect whereby the essence of God is seen, yet it might prove a hindrance to this operation. For this reason, then, perfection of the body is necessary, lest it hinder the mind from being lifted up."⁴⁵

Let me now sum up how I think Aquinas would have us understand the body's role in the perfect happiness of the human person. The body must eventually be reunited with the soul in the beatific vision for us to be able rightfully to call this perfect *human* happiness. However, it must not be together with the body in any old way. The body and the soul's relationship in the human person is a hierarchical one, as was pointed out before. Therefore, the body must be rejoined to the soul in its role as the soul's servant. The body's perfection is to serve the soul and to do this well, and the body can only do this when it is itself well-disposed. The body can help the intellect to function excellently when it is a well-disposed body. Does this mean that bodily perfection is necessary in an absolute sense to the intellect's excellent functioning? We would have to say that it does not mean this, for, as we have seen already, the intellect can achieve its perfection in the vision of God in complete separation from the body. But, let us add, the *human person* cannot achieve his perfection through his intellect in complete separation from the body.

⁴⁵ I-II.4.6 ad 2.

And the intellect, when it is truly the intellect of a human person, is an embodied intellect. We must say, then, that the body as a well-disposed body is necessary for the excellent working of the intellect and, thus, for the perfect happiness of the human person.

Concluding Remarks

I have tried to show some of the chief contributions that the body makes to human happiness in Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*. I think that the effort is an important one because it seems to me that although Aquinas does have something to say about this and needs to have something to say about it, since he understands the body to be essential to the human person, it does not appear that commentators on Aquinas have given this question sufficient attention. We have seen that, for Aquinas, in this life the body has a very obvious role to play in the imperfect happiness available to us now. But once we come to the post-mortem forms of happiness that he discusses, it is much harder to see where the body is supposed to fit. Indeed, in the first form of this happiness, when the souls of the just are immediately ushered into the beatific vision, the body is totally absent. The intellect is perfected and happy, but we cannot say that the *human person* is. And Aquinas does seem to steer clear of making such a claim. In the second form of this happiness, the resurrected body and the soul are reunited and we can now speak of perfect *human* happiness. Nevertheless, it is not easy to see how the body does anything significant for the human person at this point. I have suggested that, in any case, it *must* be there if this is to be the state of perfect bliss of the human person, and it must be present as servant of the soul. This is, as a matter of fact, how Aquinas appears to see it figuring in our perfect happiness. Whether or not this solution is a satisfactory one given Aquinas's emphasis on the essential place of the body in his anthropology is a question that requires further discussion.

This paper can only be regarded as a first foray into these questions. I have focused entirely on the *Summa* and mostly only on a few articles in the *Secunda Pars*. A more complete treatment of these questions in the *Summa* would have to be much more wide-ranging. For a start, we would need to look more carefully at the articles on human knowledge of God in I.12 and at the articles on the knowledge of the separated soul in I.89. Then there should be a more in-depth consideration of the role of the body in the acquisition and maintenance of the perfective moral and intellectual virtues. Here we would again return to the *Secunda Pars*. And, given that Aquinas's thought is essentially theological, we would have to ask about where the body figures in the perfective theological virtues and the sacramental life. Finally, it goes without saying that we would have to

look at the other relevant texts in Aquinas's *corpus* if we were to attempt something like a complete treatment of the body and human happiness in Aquinas. I hope that the present paper will serve as a helpful first step toward this larger project.⁴⁶

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⁴⁶ A slightly different draft of this paper was presented at a satellite session of the American Catholic Philosophical Association meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana on November 1, 2009. I am very grateful to Barry David and James Jacobs for their helpful comments on that draft.