

The Discussion on the Separated Soul in Early Modern Jesuit Psychology

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In many religious and philosophical traditions the clear distinction between soul and body is a central tenet. The Catholic tradition, at least in the Middle Ages and in the early modern period, presents a significant exception, because it embraced as a dogma the view that the intellectual soul is the (only) form of the body. Catholic schoolmen argued that in man the mental and the physical, although two distinct realms are intimately connected: rich psychological experiences, including perception, cognition and emotions are rooted in the body and are dependent upon physical and sensitive processes. However, due to its substantial and spiritual nature, the intellectual soul is presumed to survive its embodiment. This raises several issues, among which the most important are the characteristics of the soul-body separation, and the typology of the operations of the separated soul, featuring its cognitive and locomotory capabilities.

From the late thirteenth century the status and the range of activities of the separated soul have been analyzed in the commentaries on Peter Lombard's *Sentences* and the theological *summae* of the major schoolmen, including Thomas Aquinas, John Duns Scotus, and Durandus of Saint Pourçain, but in the late sixteenth century the subject also appeared in special sections of the *De Anima* commentaries and scholastic manuals. Early modern Jesuit philosophers, such as Baltasar Álvares (author of the treatise on the separated soul added to the commentary of the Coimbra College), Francisco Suárez and Antonio Rubio, are cases in point. Surprisingly, in historical studies on the works written by fathers of the Society of Jesus, the topic of the separated soul has been relatively neglected. And yet, it raises several issues interesting from a systematic and doctrinal point of view, such as (1) the distinction between the realm of natural entities and that of entities that are said to transcend or to go beyond nature; (2) the bond with the body in the soul's terrestrial and in its heavenly life; (3) the interaction among the members of the heavenly regions, that is, God, the angels and

the blessed souls; (4) and, again, the range of activities to be attributed to the soul in its disembodied state.¹

This intricate set of issues is further complicated by the variety of arguments used to sustain or reject specific positions, in particular with respect to the interpretation of momentous biblical passages openly referring to the afterlife, among which the most important are the passage of the Witch of Endor, who apparently summoned Samuel's spirit at the demand of King Saul (I Samuel, ch. 28, vs. 3–25), the descent of Christ in hell during the period commonly defined as *triduum*, and the references to the rich man and Lazarus in the hereafter (Luke, ch. 16, vs. 19–31)

In section 1, I offer a summary view of how the philosophical agenda of the separated soul problematics was largely drawn upon Aristotle's psychology and Thomas Aquinas's interpretation of it. The views of Álvares, Suárez and Rubio on the relationship between separated soul and the body are discussed in section 2, while their analyses of the separated soul's operations, split up in an immanent operation (cognition) and a transient one (motion), is scrutinized in the final section.

1. On the Origin of the Issue: Aristotle to Thomas Aquinas

From its outset, the basic problem of any Christian psychology was its scriptural justification. The Bible provides scanty elements, and the New Testament appears to contradict the Old Testament. The Gospels and the Letters of Paul stress the salvation of the human soul, while it is not evident that the Old Testament throughout either asserts or implies the distinct reality of the soul. As a consequence, Christian psychology was largely dependent upon extra-

¹ The disembodied soul raises a further difficulty, which will not be analyzed here: although most schoolmen deny that the human soul is identical to either the human being or the human person – the disembodied soul has agency and self-reference in the period between death and bodily resurrection. If the soul is not identical to man as a person, however, who is it? And how can man be brought back at the resurrection? For discussion, see Eleonore Stump, “Resurrection, Reassembly, and Reconstitution: Aquinas on the Soul”, in Bruno Niederberger, Edmund Runggaldier (eds.), *Die menschliche Seele: Brauchen wir den Dualismus?* (Frankfurt: Ontos Verlag, 2006), 153–174.

biblical sources and from the thirteenth century in particular on Aristotelian philosophy.

In *De Anima* Aristotle defined the soul as the first actuality of a natural body potentially possessing life. The soul is the form of the body, and both constitute the living being. This apparently implies that when the body dies, the soul too ceases to exist, just as an impression made on a wax tablet perishes, when the wax melts.² And yet, notwithstanding his commitment to a biological view of man, Aristotle suggested upon several occasions that the intellect or rational soul, unlike the vegetative and sensitive souls, might be ‘separable’, that it might survive the body. His statements are, however, never developed into a consistent argument. He hinted that “the intellect seems to be an independent substance engendered in us, and to be imperishable”, or “something more divine”.³ And in book III, he clearly qualified the active part of the intellect as immortal and eternal.⁴ By contrast, at the outset of this work, Aristotle stated that if we consider the majority of the soul’s functions, “there seems to be no case in which the soul can act or be acted upon without involving the body.” Thinking seems the most probable exception, but “if this proves to be a form of imagination or to be impossible without imagination, it too requires a body as a condition of its existence.”⁵

The rediscovery and rapid spread of Aristotle’s works in the thirteenth century triggered new discussions because Latin theologians and philosophers had to reconcile the traditional idea of the soul as an independent substance with the Aristotelian view of the soul as form of the body. In the second half of the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas provided a new synthesis of Augustinian and Aristotelian views. He explained how to account for the unity of man and how to save at the same time the substantial nature of the soul. Thomas argued that the immortality of the soul is ‘personal’, in the sense that after the dissolution of the body the soul of each person continues to subsist in its own personal individuality. It is ‘natural’, in the sense that the immortality of the soul depends on its own nature and not on a free gift from God. It is ‘rationally de-

² Aristotle, *De Anima* II. 1, 412a28–29; 412b6–8.

³ *Ibid.*, I. 4, 408b19–20, 29–30.

⁴ *Ibid.*, III. 5, 430b23–30.

⁵ *Ibid.*, I. 1, 403a5–10.

monstrable', in the sense that there are rationally convincing arguments with which it is possible to prove the soul's immortality.⁶

Orthodox scholastic psychology, as it developed from the fourteenth century, can be synthesized as follows. The intellect, which is one with the sensitive and vegetative principle, is the form of the body. This was defined as an article of faith by the Council of Vienne in 1311. The human soul is a substance, but an incomplete substance, i.e., it has a natural aptitude and exigency for existence in the body, in conjunction with which it makes up the substantial unity of human nature. Though connaturally related to the body, it is itself of an unextended and spiritual nature. It is not wholly immersed in matter, its higher operations being intrinsically independent of the organism. The intellectual soul is produced by special creation and is presumed to survive the death of the body.

Thomas provided a detailed and influential account of the nature and operations of the soul in its separated state.⁷ In Thomas's view, the human soul does not break into different parts at the moment of death, because humans have just *one* soul, having vegetative, sensitive and rational capacities. Thus, the vegetative and sensitive capacities remain in the soul after the corporeal separation, not as actualized powers, but merely as basic potentialities.⁸

The separated soul does not gain another nature but it gains another mode of existence. With this changed mode of existence, the soul's mode of operation also changes, as it understands without use of the body.⁹ When the soul is embodied it understands by way of using phantasms, when separated by turning to things that are 'purely intelligible'.¹⁰ The separated soul receives its knowledge through the separate substances that stand between God, the highest of all intellectual beings, and man, the lowest of the intellectual creatures. God, as the source of the divine light and therefore of all knowledge, passes His knowledge to the superior separate sub-

⁶ Olaf Pluta, *Kritiker Der Unsterblichkeitsdoktrin in Mittelalter und Renaissance* (Amsterdam: Grüner, 1986), 16–19.

⁷ For the following summary view I am indebted to Jord G. Ackermans, *Thomas Aquinas on the Soul. An Inquiry into the Cognitive-Psychological Functioning of the Embodied and the Disembodied Soul Based on the Summa Theologiae of Thomas Aquinas*, Master thesis, Faculty of Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies (Nijmegen: Radboud University, 2014).

⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 77, a. 8.

⁹ *Sth.* I, q. 89, a. 1.

¹⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* II, 96, 5.

stances. In turn, these separate substances pass knowledge to inferior separate substances.¹¹ Thus, cognitive contents coming from God are passed gradually to the separated soul, which stands lowest in the hierarchy of intellectual beings.

Thomas argued that, freed from the body, the soul understands in a better way than when it was embodied. This raises an issue, however. The soul can exist and function on its own, being a subsistent entity. Then why does the soul incarnate in the first place, especially when we see that the soul functions better without a body?

When separated, the soul understands in a mode that is inherent to separate substances. This is a more ‘perfect’ way of knowledge because the knowledge separate substances receive is not mediated through any corporeal organs. Nevertheless, the soul does not receive ‘perfect’ knowledge, because it ranks lowest among the hierarchy of intellectual beings. This separated mode of existence is not natural for the soul, however. The soul’s natural mode of existence is embodied, which means that its proper mode of cognitive functioning is also embodied. Thomas acknowledges that the separated mode of understanding, albeit providing more ‘pure’ knowledge, is contrary to the nature of the soul. However, this separate mode of existence will not last perpetually.

Departed souls do not stay for all eternity in heaven (or hell, depending on the judgment delivered by God on the departed souls), but will on the day of resurrection be reunited with their bodies. At that moment, the soul returns to its natural mode of existence and cognitive functioning. The doctrine of resurrection proves to be a crucial part of Thomas’s view of the separated soul’s mode of existence and cognitive functioning. The embodied soul functions in a way that is natural for the soul, namely by using sensory input. The separated soul can still function cognitively, albeit that this mode of understanding provides the soul with confused knowledge. The resurrection of the body proves a way out of this unnatural mode of existence of the separated soul.¹² The separated soul can, once

¹¹ For the hierarchy of separate substances in Thomas, see *Sth.* I, q. 89, a. 1 and q. 93, a. 3; *ScG* II, 98, 1836, and *In librum De causis* IV, 44–45.

¹² *ScG* IV, 79, 10: “*Est igitur contra naturam animae absque corpore esse. Nihil autem quod est contra naturam, potest esse perpetuum. Non igitur perpetuo erit anima absque corpore. Cum igitur perpetuo maneat, oportet eam corpori iterato coniungi: quod est resurgere. Immortalitas igitur animarum exigere videtur resurrectionem*

reunited with the body, return to its proper mode of functioning, namely by way of using the (risen) body.

2. The Status of the Separated Soul: The Mind-Body Issue Upside Down

The first extensive analysis of the issue of the separated soul among the authors of the Society of Jesus is to be found in the treatise *De Anima Separata*, published in appendix to the *De Anima* commentary of the Coimbra College. The commentary on the Aristotelian text was written by Manuel de Góis in the 1580s,¹³ but the *Treatise on the Separated Soul* was composed by Baltasar Álvares, who was also the editor of Suárez's *De Anima*.

In the seventh article of the first disputation¹⁴ Álvares tackled the issue whether the rational soul is essentially distinguished from the angel. He first referred to three views, which he eventually rejected all. Origen held that the (rational) souls and the angels are equal in virtue of the perfection of their specific nature. The second view is Francesco Giorgio's, who argued for the superiority of the human souls over the angels.¹⁵ As also the inferiority of the

corporum futuram." John F. Wippel, "Thomas Aquinas on the Separated Soul's Natural Knowledge", in James McEvoy, Michael Dunne (eds.), *Thomas Aquinas: Approaches to Truth* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), 114–140, especially 116–117.

¹³ Collegium Conimbricense, *Commentarii in tres libros De anima Aristotelis Stagiritae* (Conimbricae: Typis & expensis Antonij á Mariz Vniversitatis typographi, 1598), 561–670. For the date of this work see Mário de Carvalho's essay in this book.

¹⁴ The first six articles of this disputation are devoted to the immortality and nature of the rational soul.

¹⁵ Francesco Giorgio, *De harmonia mundi totius cantica tria* (Venetiis, in aedibus Bernardini de Vitalibus calchographi, 1525), in Francesco Zorzi, *L'armonia del mondo*, Testo latino a fronte, Saggio introduttivo, traduzione, note e apparati di Saverio Campanini (Milano: Bompiani, 2010), 2004–2010. Apparently, angels are superior to men because created out of time and without matter. However, the angels 'serve', while men 'sit at the table'. Therefore, man's condition is superior to that of the angels. *Ibid.*, 2004–6: "Quod etiam declarat productionis ordo, nam ultimum Dei opus fuit homo, qui primus et excellentior erat in divina mente." Also the human nature of Christ is superior to the angels; and as the most perfect in its kind is perfect, then the entire kind is superior.

souls with respect to the angels is rejected, only equal dignity remains. The intellect of the angel may be more perfect than that of man (Thomas), but both intellects are of the same kind. Indeed, they may be specifically distinguished as to the inhering subject, but they convene “specie ratione obiecti” (Scotus).¹⁶

The second disputation tackles the ‘state’ of the separated soul or its mode of being detached from the body, splitting up in three issues: (1) what this state exactly consists in; (2) whether it is natural to the rational soul; (3) whether the soul in the separate state tends to the ‘state of information’ (of the body).

Now as to the first issue, the separation between soul and body is not a physical separation, like the disjunction of the accidental forms from the subject, because this kind of separation entails the destruction of the composing parts. Then Álvares gives two examples of another type of ‘disjunction’: (i) the distinction between the Word and the body of Christ during the *triduum* (when Christ’s humanity was ‘extinct’ but not separated); and (ii) the ‘removal’ of the substance of bread and wine in the Eucharist. These examples push Álvares to the conclusion that the soul-body separation should not be confused with a “nuda puraque negatio” because the union between soul and body is a spiritual union.¹⁷ Rather, the separation of the intellectual soul consists in a privation of its second act, that is, “informationis, seu unionis erga corpus.” In sum, the soul undergoes a ‘privative’ mutation.¹⁸

Then Álvares formulates two objections: (a) the accidents in the Eucharist, separated by divine intervention, acquire a new mode of being; (b) when Christ is absent from the accidents of bread and wine, he assumes some positive way of being, otherwise this separation would entail the ‘corruption of Christ’, which is absurd. Analogously, the separation of the soul from the body apparently cannot be only a privation of the union. However, (ad a) also in the union with the body the soul subsists as a substantial form, and thus the separated soul does not need a ‘new mode’ of being. And

Moreover, man contains the entire ‘machina mundi’, including the archetype and the angels (*ibid.*, 2008–2010).

¹⁶ Collegium Conimbricense, *In De An.*, Tractatus de anima separata, disp. I, a. 7, 589–592.

¹⁷ Collegium Conimbricense, *In De An.*, Tractatus de anima separata, disp. II, a. 1, 595–596.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 597.

(ad b) Christ's absence from the species of the Eucharist is a pure privation; his real presence does not produce anything positive, and thus the physical mutation caused by Christ's absence regards the species and not His body. *A fortiori* this holds for the separation between divine Word and the human nature, which in the *triduum* was 'extinct'.

The second issue, namely whether the separate state is to be seen as 'natural', is discussed analysing three theses (*assertiones*), the first one of which states that the separation of the soul from the body is not natural, neither *in fieri*, nor *in facto*, on the basis of the following arguments: (1) the union with the body is natural; (2) the form's natural existence is in matter; (3) the information of the body is the soul's natural 'task'; (4) the separated soul apparently lacks any *impetus naturae*; (5) it is congruent to the soul's nature to be united to body.

But against this view it can be objected that the separation of the soul is the natural consequence of man's development: from foetus to man and then to separated soul. Arguments for this contrary view are formulated and solved: (i) the soul can be compared to a tree losing its leaves or a man losing his hair (however: the soul is a unique life-giving principle, which animates the entire man, not only his hairs); (ii) the rational soul is linked to the body for its necessary equipment, and when it does not need the latter anymore, it abandons the 'ship' (however: the soul is linked to the body through the vegetative and sensitive soul); (iii) the operational mode without phantasms is natural to the soul (however, this begs the question, because only the separated soul is able to be active without phantasms); (iv) what is not natural cannot last for long (however: the fire of the heavens shows the contrary).¹⁹

Then, Álvares started to discuss the second thesis, namely that the separation between body and soul is not violent, defining 'violent' as the situation when an entity is urged in opposite state. Indeed, (1) the rational soul does not have any effective influence in the union with the body but only a formal one. (2) Analogously to the heaven, which after the Day of Judgment will lose its motion in eternity, the soul is detached from the body. And (3), if the separa-

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, disp. II, a. 2, 599–602.

tion of the soul were violent, the Resurrection would be due naturally to man, which is absurd.²⁰

Finally, the third, 'positive' thesis is proposed: the separation is "praeter naturam",²¹ and this view paves the way for an analysis of the final issue of this disputation: 'whether the separated soul is naturally apt to the union with the body'. First, Plato's and Origen's (absurd) views of an existence or a creation of the soul before the body are rejected. Second, the author referred to Scotus's idea that the soul is not united with the body for some peculiar good. Indeed, (1) if the separated soul desired the body, it would suffer perpetual violence; (2) the union with the body blocks the soul's aspirations; in effect, the desires of the spiritual body Saint Paul referred to will be free from all corporeal impediments; (3) the soul does not receive any perfection from the body; (4) if the separated soul were naturally inclined to the body, the Resurrection would have a natural cause.²²

By contrast, Thomas held that the separated soul desires the union with the body,²³ and this can be defended with the following arguments: (a) the perfection of the soul lies in its union with the body; (b) as an aptitude the form inclines to matter; (c) separation is not the natural state of the soul.²⁴ Thus, the doctrine of the two 'grades' of the soul (form of the body and separated state) is rejected. And yet, some theologians argue that the separated soul does not desire the reunion with the body: (1) the desire would be directed at an infinite goal; (2) the reunion with the body would disturb a perfect contemplation; (3) the fear of dissolution during life is due to the ignorance of the posterior state; (4) the desire to reunion is not natural; (5) the reunion is to be viewed as miraculous.²⁵

In turn, Álvares stated that the separated soul naturally desires the resurrection, and this lays the groundwork for the confutation of these arguments.²⁶ Eventually, he embraced Aquinas's view that the resurrection can be said to be natural *in facto esse*, but that it is

²⁰ *Ibid.*, disp. II, a. 2, 602–603.

²¹ *Ibid.*, disp. II, a. 3, 604.

²² *Ibid.*, disp. II, a. 3, 604–5.

²³ *Sth.* I, q. 76, a. 4, ad 6. See above.

²⁴ Collegium Conimbricense, *In De an.*, disp. II, a. 3, 605–6.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, disp. II, a. 3, 607.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, disp. II, a. 3–4, 608–10.

supernatural *in fieri*. It is set by God, and it can only be revoked by “an extraordinary law of nature”.²⁷

Francisco Suárez discussed the state of the separated soul in his *De Anima*, which was composed in the period 1571/5, but published as late as in 1621 by Baltasar Álvares.²⁸ Focusing on the operations of the separated soul (see below section 3), at the outset of his treatise on the separated soul Suárez briefly addressed the issue whether the soul acquires something ‘substantial’ through its separation from the body.

He first discussed the comment on Aquinas’s *Summa theologiae* by Cajetan, who argued that the separation does not change the soul’s existence, but its ‘personality’ because after separation the soul is a “semi-persona”. This ‘mutilated’ state is supposed to finish upon Resurrection when the soul is re-united with body. Thus, Cajetan suggested a distinction between separated soul and the entire human personality.

Suárez’s own position is based on a section of the 34th Metaphysical Disputation. In this work he stated that in man the integral subsistence of humanity consists of the partial subsistences of soul and body such that when this union is dissolved, in both parts of the composite remains a part of the subsistence. Thus, the integral subsistence of man is divisible, both essentially and naturally.²⁹ This entails that the soul in the body subsists “per se sustentata non ab alio.” In other words, the soul is united to the body in order to use the latter as its instrument. And this entails that the separated soul only changes ‘mode of being’: (1) a change in entity is superfluous; (2) the soul is also subsistent in the body, although “per incompletam entitatem”; (3) the soul does not ensoul any ‘entity’. This, in turn, allows to formulate three corollaries. First, any mutation is not “ab uno modo positivo in anima, sed in priva-

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 610; ScG IV, 81.

²⁸ Salvador Castellote, “Introducción”, in Francisco Suárez, *Commentaria una cum quaestionibus in libros Aristotelis De Anima. Comentários a los libros de Aristóteles ‘Sobre el Alma’*. Introducción y edición crítica por Salvador Castellote. Traducción castellana por Carlos Baciero y Luís Baciero, 3 vols. (Madrid: Sociedad de Estudios y Publicaciones, Editorial Labor, Fundación Xavier Zubiri, 1978–1991), vol. I, XXXVIII, XL.

²⁹ Francisco Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, 2 vols. (Moguntiae: Mylius Birckmannus, 1614), vol. II, disputatio XXXIV, sectio 5, n. 27, cols. 248–249.

tionem illius”. Second, the separated soul is not “magis personam”, because both the embodied and the separated soul are a ‘semi-person’. Soul, both in its embodied and its separate state, is “subsistens communicabiliter respectu corporis”. Third, on Resurrection no new mode of being is required.³⁰

In 1613 Antonio Rubio started the discussion of the separated soul with an analysis of the origin and immortality of the rational soul,³¹ and then he tackled the issue whether the state of separation of the rational soul is either natural, or against its nature (like a stone flying in the air), or beyond its nature (like the circular motion of fire, imposed by the first heaven). Now the term ‘natural’ allows three definitions: (a) ‘not supernatural’; (b) ‘not against nature’; and (c) ‘opposed to violent’. Which one applies to the separated soul? The first opinion, according to which separation is against nature, and by consequence violent, is attributed to Francesco Silvestri (also named Ferrara, where he was born), who grounded it on Aquinas’s authority,³² and on the following arguments: (i) the separation of the soul is against its very inclination; and (ii) the separation is a privation of a natural perfection.

The second opinion, according to which the separation is neither natural nor violent, is sustained by Henry of Ghent, Cajetan and the Coimbra commentary.³³ That soul-body separation is not natural can be proved with arguments supporting the first opinion. Furthermore, it is not violent, because: (a) if it were violent, the soul would tend to return to the body after death (and by consequence

³⁰ Francisco Suárez, *In De An.*, vol. III, disputatio XIV: “De anima separata”, disp. XIV, q. 1, n. 1–6, 114–116.

³¹ Antonio Rubio, *Commentarij in libros Aristotelis Stagyrtae philosophorum principis, de Anima: unà cùm dubijs & quaestionibus hac tempestate in scholis agitari solitis* (Lugduni: apud Ioannem Pillehotte, sub signo Nominis Iesu, 1613), 517–532.

³² *ScG* IV, 89, 2; *Sth.* I, q. 118, a. 3.

³³ Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibetum* VII, q. 13, in Henricus de Gandavo, *Aurea quodlibeta*, 2 vols. (Venetiis: apud Iacobum de Franciscis, 1613), vol. I, 404r–v; Cajetan, in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, in *Opera omnia*, editio Leonina, ad codices manuscriptos Vaticanos exacta cum commentariis Thomae de Vio Caietani, cura et studio Fratrum Praedicatorum, vols. IV–XII (Romae: ex Typographia Polyglotta, 1888–1906), vol. V, ad I, q. 89, a. 1; Collegium Conimbriense, *In De An.*, 598–604.

the Resurrection would be natural); (b) there is no extrinsic agent required for separation.³⁴

For his own view, namely that separation is a natural state Rubio referred to the arguments against the first and second opinion. Then he formulated the following three ‘indubitable’ principles: (1) the soul is *per se* immortal; (2) the soul is the true form of the body; (3) it informs the body in a ‘losable or dissolvable way’ (“modo amissibili seu dissolubili”). This entails that (ad 1) the soul cannot preserve immortal existence in the body; (ad 2) the union with the body is not perpetual; and (ad 3) the rational soul is “born to inform the body losably.”³⁵

This allows the formulation of a double conclusion: (a) the way of operating follows the way of being; the “modus operandi” of the separated soul is connatural and thus derives from a connatural “modus essendi”; (b) the dissolution of the union between soul and body is due to a natural imperfection.³⁶

In the 7th *quaestio* Rubio tackled the issue whether the separated soul has a natural appetite to inform the body. For a reply in the negative he referred to Scotus, Francesco Silvestri (Ferrara), and Domingo Báñez,³⁷ and summarized their arguments in the following way: (1) the re-union is not natural and thus there is no appetite for this re-union; (2) natural appetites regard goals that can be naturally reached but in the entire nature there is no agent the virtue of which may unite the separated soul with the body.³⁸ However, Augustine and Aquinas held that in the separated soul there is a natural appetite to be re-united to the body. This view is probable and should be sustained, because the soul is created to inform the body; and it does not need any superadded accident for this job.

³⁴ Rubio, *In De An.*, Tractatus de anima separata, q. 6, 533–534.

³⁵ Rubio, *ibid.*, 535.

³⁶ Rubio, *ibid.*, 536.

³⁷ Ioannes Duns Scotus, *Ord. IV*, dist. 43, q. 3, art. 3, in *Opera omnia*, studio et cura Commissionis Scotisticae ad fidem codicum edita, praeside Carolo Balic (Civitas Vaticana: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1950–, vol. XIV; Franciscus de Sylvestris (Ferrara), in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, in *Opera omnia*, editio Leonina, ad codices manuscriptos Vaticanos exacta cum commentariis Francisci de Sylvestris Ferrariensis, cura et studio Fratrum Praedicatorum, vols. XIII–XV (Romae: ex Typographia Polyglotta, 1918–1930), vol. XIII, liber I, cap. 60; Domingo Báñez, *Scholastica commentaria in primam partem angelici doctoris S. Thomae* (Venetij: ad signum Concordiae, 1585), q. 26, a. 1, dub. 5.

³⁸ Rubio, *In De An.*, q. 7, 537–538.

Thus, (1) the ‘appetite to inform’ cannot be distinguished from the form itself; (2) this appetite is nothing but a ‘formal aptitude’.

Now, does the separated soul also have an ‘elicited’ appetite (that is, an appetite dependent upon an act of the will) to be reunited with body? Rubio argued that it does not, because there is no natural knowledge grounding a similar appetite. Indeed, the blessed souls desire with a supernatural appetite to be reunited to the body.³⁹

Tackling the issue of the separated soul, scholastic philosophy faced a formidable problem: how it is possible that the form of a body survives the death of the latter.

Álvares, the author of the treatise on the separated soul of the Coimbra College, focused on the modality of the soul-body separation, and the separated soul’s re-union with the body. In an intricate and suggestive comparison with two other central tenets of Catholic faith, namely the status of Christ’s body during the descent in hell and its presence in the sacrifice of the Mass, Álvares established that the separation of body and soul does not consist in a destruction, but in a privation. Apparently, the separation is unnatural, but it should be grasped in the light of traditional, scholastic embryology (man is endowed first with a vegetative soul and then with sense and reason) and as the final stage of man’s intellectual development, that is, the long road from sensation to intellectual cognition, to knowledge through infused species. By consequence, separation can be defined as just ‘beyond nature’. Finally, the soul does not have any natural inclination to a re-union with the body, but it certainly desires the resurrection. Thus, the latter can be said to be natural *in facto esse*, but it is supernatural *in fieri*.

Suárez started from an analysis of the concepts of ‘person’ and ‘semi-person’. Quite enigmatically, he argued that the subsistence of man is made up of ‘partial subsistences’, which entails that it is divisible. The dualist tendency that pervades his psychology surfaces also in his treatment of the separated soul: the soul does not subsist in the body as it is “*per se sustentata*”.

Also Rubio sought to solve the issue by a conceptual analysis, basing his view of the soul-body separation on the thesis that the

³⁹ Rubio, *ibid.*, 538–539. He refers to *Apocalypse* 6, probably vs. 10–11.

soul informs the body “in modo amissibili seu dissolubili” and on the distinction between a ‘natural’ and an ‘elicited’ appetite.

3. The Operations of the Separated Soul

Among later schoolmen there is a general consensus about the activity of the separated soul. After death of the body, the soul that then alone represents the personality must be capable of knowledge and of action. In its state of separation, the soul does not lose its intellectual memory, but it is also capable of pure intellectual speculation without having recourse to the medium of sense-bound representations. The representations of things in our minds will then be altogether spiritual, such indeed as are proper to angelic spirits who, being free from matter in their essence, are also free from every concurrence of phantasms in their speculations. Furthermore, the soul may contemplate its own being, namely either by an immediate introversion on its own essence, or through a species. And, through its very essence, the soul will also see God in so much as it is in itself a spiritual reflection of the Deity. There are, however, several specific issues that were tackled and solved in different ways by the first Jesuit fathers.

3.1 Knowledge

As in the case of the soul-body separation, Álvares presented an extensive and influential account of the immanent operations of the separated soul. Among the cognitive faculties only the intellect ‘accompanies’ the separated soul, the sensitive faculties perish not only with respect to their act (as Gregory of Rimini thought), but also as to their very ‘entity’.⁴⁰ Against the Arab philosophers (Avicenna and Averroes) and the traditional opponents of (intelligible) species (Henry of Ghent and William Ockham), Álvares argued that the separated soul preserves its memory (consisting of species and habits).⁴¹ This does not mean, however, that the separated soul is able to produce, on the basis of its mere essence, new mental rep-

⁴⁰ Collegium Conimbricense, *In De An.*, Tractatus de anima separata, disp. III, a. 1, 611–614.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, disp. III, a. 3, 617–622.

resentations, because this would imply that it transcends the separate substances.⁴²

Álvares listed three distinct doctrines: (a) in addition to the species acquired in its terrestrial life, the separated soul gathers natural and new species in its communication with other souls and the angels; (b) the separated soul does not abstract species but receives them from God alone (ascribed to Aquinas and his followers Capreolus, Cajetan and Ferrara); and finally (c) the separated soul gathers species ‘from objects’. This final view, attributed to Scotus,⁴³ is qualified as ‘probable’, that is, with due qualifications taking into account the distinction between sensible and spiritual object, the sharpness of the separate intellect and the favourable circumstances for the diffusion of species.⁴⁴ For this view also supporting arguments are presented: (i) separate substances have intuitive knowledge of many objects (which entails that these make themselves known); (ii) the intellectual part of the soul is more active after death; (iii) it is highly improbable that the separated soul would know eternally an object on the basis of one species only; (iv) objects that are too far away are not known through the intervention of separate substances (for example, what happens in Purgatory or Hell).⁴⁵

Thus, after an evaluation of both Aquinas’s and Scotus’s arguments, Álvares concluded that the ‘natural’ acquisition of species after the mind-body separation, although not generally accepted, is well grounded, because the presumed cognitive capabilities of the separated soul are superior to those of the embodied soul.⁴⁶

In the fourth Disputation Álvares addressed the question whether the cognitive act is ‘really’ (*re vera*) exercised by the separated soul. That knowledge is sense-dependent suggests a negative reply. And yet, nobody who accepts immortality denies knowledge in the hereafter, as it would turn the separated soul into an idle entity. Indeed, the separated soul is active and knows through naturally acquired species and through those given by God.⁴⁷

⁴² *Ibid.*, disp. III, a. 4, 623–626.

⁴³ Duns Scotus, *Ord. IV*, dist. 45, q. 2.

⁴⁴ Collegium Conimbricense, *In De an.*, Tractatus de anima separata, disp. III, a. 5, 626–629.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, disp. III, a. 5, 629–630.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, disp. III, a. 6, 630–633.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, disp. IV, a. 1, 633–637.

Replying to several doubts Álvares explained his position in some detail: (1) the knowledge of the separated soul is discursive; (2) the rational soul may elicit the cognitive act with the same species as the embodied soul, but the species is a *quo* in this life, and a *quod* in the afterlife, i.e., it evolves from instrument to object of knowledge; (3) the knowledge of the same objects is more clear through infused species than on the basis of acquired species; (4) the separated soul may be idle some of the time, but not continuously so; (5) the separated soul does not elicit habits and acts through an intense and frequent effort; (6) it may know on the basis of memory traces.⁴⁸

A final issue is discussed, namely the cognitive *object* of the separated soul. A distinction between natural and supernatural objects requires a preliminary classification of entities: (a) natural in entity, production and existence; (b) natural in entity and existence, but not in production (the abilities of a blind man); (c) natural in entity, but supernatural under a certain respect (the humanity of Christ); (d) those which transcend nature in all three forenamed respects (e.g., *lumen gloriae*); (e) supernatural entities that exist “extra subiectum”. Two other kinds are added, though both are defined as impossible: (f) supernatural existence, but natural production; and (g) supernatural entity, natural production.

Now (i) as to natural entities, the separated soul knows all sensible things; (ii) it knows itself and its internal acts, as well as other souls distinctly; and (iii) it is probable that it knows with a natural and distinct knowledge the angels and their natural properties and operations.

And as far as supernatural entities are concerned, the separated soul (a) may know that for God many things are possible that go beyond the possibilities of a created nature (without counting *prodigia* as, for example, the liberation of Saint Peter in Acts, ch. 12); (b) it knows naturally but not distinctly the possibility and the existence of some essentially supernatural beings; and finally (c) some supernatural objects transcend the knowledge of the separated soul, among which the modalities of the Incarnation and the Eucharist.⁴⁹ Thus, the knowledge of the separated soul is extended with respect to that of the embodied soul, but it continues to be

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, disp. IV, a. 2, 637–644.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, disp. V, a. 1–2, 644–651.

circumscribed, excluding full-blown intellectual insight in the central tenets of Catholic faith.

Suárez also devoted extensive sections to the cognitive modalities and contents of the separated soul. Now, as the intellect and will remain in the separated soul, the blessed souls see and love God, while the damned souls are aware of their loss and have the ‘worm of conscience’. The separated soul does not know only through the species acquired in life, but also develops new knowledge; otherwise a child who died at a (very) young age would be deprived of knowledge for ever. These species are not derived from the objects as Scotus thought,⁵⁰ but are infused by God.⁵¹

As to the objects of its knowledge: it is nearly self evident that the separated soul knows itself because (i) there are no impediments, (ii) the soul’s natural desire for self-knowledge cannot be in vain, and (iii) the essence of our (created) soul is finite and can be grasped by the intellect. The separated soul does not know itself through its own substance, as Aquinas thought, because that should also hold for the embodied soul. Suárez also rejected Cajetan’s view that the soul is potentially intelligible, because it is impossible to establish how this potentiality is actualized. Considering the ‘imperfection’ of the human soul Suárez argued that for direct self-knowledge the soul lacks the ‘required immateriality’ and thus that it needs a species.⁵²

Furthermore, the separated soul also knows God, not through His uncreated divine essence, which is supernatural, but through its own essence, as knowledge of the effect leads to knowledge of causes (man being created in the image and likeness of God).

Furthermore, the separated soul knows angels and other immaterial beings, not through its own essence, but through species, probably impressed by these separate entities themselves (and not by God). Indeed, the soul is “sociabilis”, and this grounds knowledge of other souls and intelligences. The separated soul has proper and intuitive knowledge (in the sense of being based on

⁵⁰ *Ord. IV*, dist. 45, a. 46, q. 2.

⁵¹ Suárez, *In De An.*, vol. III, disputatio XIV: “De anima separata”, disp. XIV, q. 3, n. 1–6, 119–123.

⁵² *Ibid.*, disp. XIV, q. 5, n. 1–7, 124–126.

specific species) of angels and this knowledge is quidditative and distinct.⁵³

Finally, the separated soul (i) knows all individual entities which it knew in terrestrial life through their species; (ii) it cannot develop knowledge of new material individuals; (iii) it knows particular actions and material effects only through angels; and (iv) probably, the separated soul has a distinct knowledge of natural things through natural light and the help of God.⁵⁴

Thus, the knowledge of the separated soul is superior to that of the embodied soul: (a) it has at its disposal a quidditative knowledge of its own essence, knowledge of the intelligences, a better knowledge of God, and being free from body it better sticks to cognitive acts; (b) it also has a better knowledge of material objects, as these are grasped both through acquired and infused species.⁵⁵

Like his predecessors, Rubio held that no organic or corporeal potencies remain in the separated soul, but only the agent and possible intellects. The agent intellect is an integral part of the (separated) soul, but after death it loses its function because without phantasms no intelligible species can be abstracted. Rubio also endorsed the view that the habits and intelligible species acquired in life remain in the separated soul, and that new species are also acquired. He puzzles about their origin, but eventually he endorsed the view that they are probably due to infusion, as they cannot be actualized by the agent intellect, as Scotus proposed.⁵⁶ As to the issue which species provide better knowledge, Rubio remains 'incertus', unable to make a decision for the position endorsed by Thomas (who argued for the species acquired in our earthly life), and the *opinio* of other unnamed authors.⁵⁷

The discussion of knowledge acquisition by the separated soul principally regards two issues: the preservation of earthly cognition after death and the origin of fresh concepts. The authors discussed here all defended the intellectual memory of the separated

⁵³ *Ibid.*, disp. XIV, q. 6, n. 1–12, 126–131.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, disp. XIV, q. 7, n. 1–9, 131–135.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, disp. XIV, q. 8, n. 1–3, 135–136.

⁵⁶ See above Scotus, *In Sent.* IV, q. 45, q. 2.

⁵⁷ Rubio, *In De An.*, Tractatus de anima separata, q. 8, 539–542.

soul, based on sensibly acquired species (which now are a *quod* and no longer a *quo intelligitur*) and habits. Again Álvares set the agenda proposing three scenarios for newly acquired cognition: through the communication with angels and other separated souls, the influx of species by God, and the acquisition of species ‘from objects’ (ascribed to Scotus). He argued that the separated soul cannot be viewed as an idle entity or as intellectually fully dependent on sense bound knowledge, and he concluded his section with an illuminating classification of ‘what there is’.

Suárez also accepted the distinction between knowledge based on earthly memory and on newly acquired species. He then focused on self-knowledge, which, notwithstanding the opinion of authorities like Aquinas and Cajetan, is also in the separated soul based on species. Remarkably, while the knowledge of angels and other souls depends on infused species, the knowledge of God is based on the soul’s self-knowledge. Indeed, the soul is the ‘image of God’ and, according to a well-known Aristotelian adagio, knowledge of the effect leads to knowledge of the cause. Like Suárez, Rubio endorsed the view that the knowledge of the separated soul is partially based on species acquired from objects, and partially on infused species.

3.2 Local Motion

Most afore named scholastic commentaries, treatises and manuals devote a distinct section to the motion of the separated soul. Now, how should we fathom the motion of an immaterial entity without bodily organs? Let us start again with Álvares’s analysis in the treatise on the separated soul in the Coimbra commentary.⁵⁸

Álvares started to list arguments for the absence of motor drive in the separated soul: (i) the Holy Scripture talks about souls transported by angels, not about separated souls moving themselves; (ii) with a motor force the separated soul could also exercise its capabilities in the body; (iii) the separated soul does not need a similar force; (iv) what exists “indivisibiliter” can only be immobile; (v) a mobile soul would be submitted to time and place; (vi) a *per se* mo-

⁵⁸ It should be kept in mind, that Antonio Rubio did not discuss the issue.

bile soul could free itself from the body; (vii) the separated souls would frequently return.⁵⁹

Then some views are discussed, the first one being that the separated soul is nearly immobile as it cannot be moved by itself or by others (a view attributed to Durandus of Saint Pourçain and Pico della Mirandola). This view is rejected because every created being is “per se mobilis”, and if the (separated) soul were immobile, Christ’s descent in hell would have been impossible. The second view (attributed to recent Thomists) establishes that the separated soul can be moved by God or the angels only, but not by itself. This plainly contradicts Aquinas’s teachings, however. The third view is the one entertained by Álvares himself: the separated soul may move itself and other beings. Referring to Alfonso Tostado Ribera’s⁶⁰ comment on the Gospel according to Matthew (ch. 8, vs. 28–32), Álvares stated that the separated soul is not inactive and that it is able to move bodies “localiter”, although with less vigour, because it is not linked anymore to a proper body. Indeed, all mobile beings are capable of moving others, based on local contact.⁶¹ Subsequently, Álvares refuted the aforementioned arguments against the motor drive of the separated soul, as well as those for the view of the soul primarily moving itself.⁶²

Then, Álvares addressed some specific doubts, solving them contextually: (1) whether, when the mind and the body move something, this is performed by a thrust, or by motion only (rejected: motion requires that the *qualitas impulsoria* is first produced in the thing to be moved); (2) whether different kinds of local motion exist in the separated soul, such as *pulsio*, *vectio*, *tractio*, *volutatio* (these motions exist in separated souls only *per analogiam*); (3) whether the separated soul has a definite motor power (affirmative, both as regards speed and kind of mobile object); (4) whether the motion of the separated soul has an ‘external limit’ (reply: it

⁵⁹ Collegium Conimbricense, *In De An.*, Tractatus de anima separata, disp. VI, a. 1, 651–653.

⁶⁰ Alonso Tostado known in Latin as “Abulensis” or “Dominus Abulensis” (ca. 1400–1455) was a Spanish exegete and bishop of Ávila, whose real name was Alonso Fernández de Madrigal.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, disp. VI, a. 2, 653–657.

⁶² *Ibid.*, disp. VI, a. 3, 657–663.

has an intrinsic limit of magnitude that does not go beyond that of the human kind).⁶³

Suárez argued that the separated soul, deprived of nutrition, growth and other bodily processes, is not in a place, as it cannot act or suffer with respect to bodies. However, Christ descended in hell, and thus it should be borne in mind that being in a place is different for corporeal and incorporeal beings. A spiritual being can move a body through information (the human soul) or by ‘thrusting’ (*impellendo*) (for example, angels and celestial bodies). Only supernaturally may a soul suffer (in hell) or move a body. This allows the formulation of some conclusions: (1) separated souls may be in a place, but not as corporeal beings; (2) the (separate) soul is not in a place through action, passion or through application of a virtue to act or to suffer, neither in heaven nor in the limbo, purgatory, and hell; (3) the separated soul is in place ‘through the presence of his substance’; (4) the separated soul is moved locally when the presence of its substance changes (the case of Christ’s descent in hell). How the soul exactly moves cannot be decided in this context, however, and therefore Suárez referred to his question on angels.⁶⁴

4. Concluding Remarks

In a period when modern science and mechanical philosophy definitively emerged in Western Europe, prominent members of the most representative order of the Counterreformation viewed the separated soul a suitable subject of philosophical investigation and broke their heads over issues that, from a scientific point of view, had a purely hypothetical, or even chimerical status. The issue of the separated soul, in most Jesuit manuals and commentaries discussed as an integral part of psychology, constitutes a most particular meeting point of Biblical exegesis, dogmatic theology and (traditional) natural philosophy, triggering a persistent series of philosophical and theological problems. Contradictions and frictions between Aristotelian philosophy and the Biblical message, for

⁶³ *Ibid.*, disp. VI, a. 4, 663–670.

⁶⁴ Suárez, *In De An.*, vol. III, disputatio XIV: “De anima separata”, q. 2, 116–119.

the most latent in the other sections of scholastic psychology, inevitably come to the front and require solutions that are satisfactory both from a philosophical and a theological-ethical point of view.

In scholastic philosophy there is a general consensus about the status of the human soul in its earthly life and in its separation from the body. The embodiment is a *natural* but not a *perpetual* state, and thus the soul-body separation is not 'per se' violent or unnatural. The soul survives the death of the body not in a hibernated state, but as fully conscious. Its stimuli are not provided anymore by physiological processes in the sense organs and the sensitive part of the soul, but by its own memories and by the communication with other blessed souls and separate substances. Furthermore, the soul is not deprived of the capability of local motion, because according to the principles of Aristotelian natural philosophy all finite beings are mobile and some biblical passages (Christ's descent in hell, the expulsion of demons in the Gospel) strongly suggest that souls (spirits) may move locally. After death the soul proceeds to a higher level in the realm of spiritual beings, but its capabilities do not become unlimited from one moment to the other. The hierarchy of scholastic psychology is strictly gradual.

The Jesuits made a considerable effort to determine and solve the issues concerning the soul's bond with the body and its cognitive and mobile operations. By way of conclusion I return to some explanatory strategies representative for the theological as well as the philosophical analyses of the issue under scrutiny, i.e., the comparison with the presence of Christ's humanity during the so-called *triduum* and in the Eucharist, on the one hand, and some conceptual and terminological aspects, on the other.

The *triduum* indicates the days that elapsed between Christ's passion on Friday and his resurrection on Sunday, the period during which he descended into hell (Matthew, ch. 12, vs. 38–41, Romans, ch. 10, v. 7, and Ephesians, ch. 4, vs. 7–10). The descent into hell is difficult to grasp unless we understand that here hell refers not to the place of eternal punishment or damnation but to the underworld or the abode of the dead (*sheol* in the Hebrew scriptures). There is no consensus, however, about the aim of this descent. Some suppose that Jesus Christ went down to hell, not to undergo punishment, but to release from punishment those who were detained there because of the sin of the first parent. Others stress that in the underworld the Son is neither active nor victorious but

that he is really dead among the dead, locked in a place of absence, emptiness, and profound loneliness. In this interpretation, instead of heroically rescuing the forsaken in hell, the Son identifies with them.

Now among the issues that the descent in hell raised was the status of Christ's human nature during these days. Was it separated, dead, extinct or what else? In this sense, for Catholic authors the *triduum* was functional in the explanation of the equally problematic status of a soul, which according to the doctrine of the Church was the form of the body, and yet could exist in a separate dimension. Paradoxically, at least for a modern reader, they attempted to explain an extraordinary phenomenon (the separated soul) with a Christological crux (Christ's human nature) due to a unique mystery of faith (Christ's descent in hell).

Also the comparison between the status of the separated soul with Christ's presence in the Eucharist is puzzling because the latter is characterized by apparent contradictions, namely: (1) the continued existence of the Eucharistic species, or the outward appearances of bread and wine, without their natural underlying subject ("accidentia sine subiecto"); (2) the spatially uncircumscribed, spiritual mode of existence of Christ's Eucharistic body ("existentia corporis ad modum spiritus"); (3) the simultaneous existence of Christ in heaven and in many places on earth. Also in this case an intricate mystery of faith, partially explained in Aristotelian philosophy, is invoked to throw light on the status of the separated form of the human body.

In general, the possibility of separated forms and souls was explained in the context of a Neoplatonized Aristotelianism where the human soul was located on the horizon of time and eternity, on the border of the material and the immaterial realms. In the course of time this framework was refined, as can be made up from Álvares's classification of (finite) beings referred to above, articulated along the lines of the possible combinations of the categories of natural and supernatural on the one hand, with those of entity, production and existence on the other. Remarkably, this classification bears some similitude to that used by Pomponazzi for analyzing the possible relationship between (unique and/or multiplied) mortal and immortal soul(s) in man, but it surely is put to a different purpose. Indeed, the hierarchy expressed in Álvares's classification clearly presupposes a central position of the human soul in

reality, but it explicitly points at a philosophically grounded explanation for separate existence and operation.

Let us now turn to some conceptual and terminological aspects of the issue under scrutiny. Late scholastic treatments of the separated soul reveal a highly developed and ramified theoretical apparatus for analyzing issues at the cross road between philosophical psychology and dogmatic theology. Conceptual and terminological innovation and specification may lead to inventive and convincing solutions. A classical case in point is the idea of a hypostatic union which describes the union of Christ's humanity and divinity in one hypostasis or individual existence, and which eventually solved the Christological battles of the first centuries. However, terminological tools and specification should not become an end in itself, as it may lead to sterile, artificial, and elusive theorizing. Let us examine, by way of conclusion, an illustrative example of a central conceptual cluster in the discussion of the separated soul, in particular as to its bond with the earthly body.

Analyzing the soul-body separation and the subsequent survival of the human soul in an active dimension, the qualification of 'natural' becomes increasingly elastic, as most authors tend to label this separation as a natural, and nonviolent event, frequently seen as a step in the evolution of the human soul from its infusion in the embryo to its elevation among the blessed. First, the distinction drawn between the soul as conceived *in se* and in its union with the body leads to the conclusion that what might be seen as violent for the composite is not necessarily violent for the soul conceived as a substantial principle. Second, the doctrinal link with the distinction between *in fieri* and *in facto esse* suggests that the separation of the soul is the result of a process that can be seen, at least from a certain point of view, as natural and nonviolent. Thus, Álvares concluded that the resurrection is natural *in facto esse*, but that it is supernatural *in fieri*.

By contrast, quite slippery grounds are tread upon by Rubio, who in order to save immortality and separation argued that in its earthly life the soul informs the body in a 'losable or dissolvable way', jeopardizing the ontology of man as a compound of body and soul, and thus pushing the Aristotelian inspired scholastic psychology towards clearly Platonic strands. In a similar vein, but surely more convincing, Rubio analysed the issue whether the separated soul has a natural appetite to inform the body (on Resurrection)

with the aid of the distinction between a ‘natural’ and an ‘elicited’ appetite. On the authority of Augustine and Thomas he accepted as probable that the separated soul has a natural appetite to be reunited to the body, but this appetite is nothing but a ‘formal aptitude’. The separated soul does not have an ‘elicited’ appetite (that is, an appetite dependent upon an act of the will) to be reunited with body because there is no natural knowledge grounding a similar appetite.

And thus, the discussion of this issue by the Jesuit fathers also reveals not only the elasticity and latent possibilities for doctrinal innovation of the scholastic conceptual framework, but also its limits in the tendency to solve problems on the level of terminological *ad hoc* distinctions only.

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ABSTRACT

The status and range of activities of the separated soul were analysed by several early modern Jesuits including Baltasar Álvares, Francisco Suárez and Antonio Rubio. Surprisingly, in historical studies on the works written by fa-

thers of the Society of Jesus the topic of the separated soul has been relatively neglected. And yet, it raises several issues interesting from a systematic and doctrinal point of view, such as the distinction between the realm of natural entities and that of entities that are said to transcend or go beyond nature; the bond with the body in the soul's terrestrial and in its heavenly life; the interaction among the members of the heavenly regions (God, the angels, and the blessed souls); and the range of activities to be attributed to the soul in its disembodied state. This paper discusses this intricate set of issues focussing on the broader theological context and the philosophical strategies involved.