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AQUINAS ON THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL: SOME REFLECTIONS

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Aquinas's thoughts about the human soul present us with a puzzle. On the one hand, Thomas has been applauded within the analytic tradition as an anti-dualistic thinker, who emphasises the animal nature of human beings and denies that there could be disembodied human persons. Yet on the other hand he holds, as a faithful Catholic theologian, that the human soul survives death, and maintains that the post-mortem soul, prior to its reunification with the body is the subject of characteristically personal intellectual activities. This paper reviews the state of the debate regarding whether these commitments of Aquinas's can be reconciled, and concludes that they cannot in his own terms. However, a recognisably thomist approach to the post-mortem survival of the soul is available, proceeding on the basis that to be rationally ensouled is to have a life-story.

> Which weep the comrade of my choice,
> An awful thought, a life removed,
> The human-hearted man I loved,
> A spirit, not a breathing voice.
> Tennyson – *In Memoriam*

Aquinas's thoughts about the human soul present us with a puzzle. On the one hand, Thomas has been applauded within the analytic tradition as an anti-dualistic thinker, who emphasises the animal nature of human beings and denies that there could be disembodied human persons.[1] Yet, on the other hand, he holds, as a faithful Catholic theologian, that the human soul survives death[2], and maintains that the post-mortem soul, prior to its reunification with the body, is the subject of characteristically personal intellectual activities. Can these commitments be squared?

The problem is reconciling:

1. Human beings are not to be idenitified with souls but with animals. Animals are living bodies. A soul is the substantial form of a living body.

With each of:

1. Human souls survive death.
2. Post-mortem human souls are the subjects of actions. In at least some cases (for example, the prayers of the souls of the saints), these actions can be attributed to the deceased human being.

The terminology in (1), (2), and (3) will be explained below, and the case for the apparent incompatibility of (1) with each of (2) and (3) will be set out. It ought to be emphasised that the coherence of (1)-(3) is not an idle worry, a matter of mere abstract metaphysics or historical book-keeping. Rather, Aquinas's articulation of (1) is a highly plausible account of the kind of

things we are, whilst (2) and (3) are articulations, within the context of that account, of a living religious tradition and its attitude towards death. (2) and (3) arise out of, and provide a doxastic context for, Catholic practice with respect to the dead: veneration of the saints, asking for their prayers, prayer for the dead, and so on. If this practice cannot be squared with an account of human beings as animals then this is a serious matter. It is of far more than academic interest, then, how Aquinas—a key thinker within the tradition—justified individually and reconciled collectively (1)-(3).[3]

§1 below outlines Aquinas's philosophy of the human person. §2 examines his argument for the immortality of the soul and the tensions between belief in separated souls and his non-dualistic philosophy. §3 discusses Aquinas's account of post-mortem action. §4 puts together these discussions and sketches a contemporary way of understanding (1), (2) and (3) such that they can be held jointly. The lesson of the enterprise is that Aquinas's thinking about the human person is of enduring value and the tensions in his thought around the post-mortem soul are ones which demand our ongoing attention.

I. AQUINAS'S DESCRIPTIVE METAPHYSICS OF HUMAN BEINGS

What is Aquinas doing when he offers an account of the human soul and its place in the constitution of a human being? There is a temptation to suppose that he is engaging in substantial metaphysical theorising, of the type that would be recognised by many current day philosophers working in a post-Quinean context.[4] On this view, Aquinas ought to be understood as formulating an explanatory theory of various phenomena, in the case of his theory of the soul, of human thought and action. This theory need not correlate with ordinary ways of understanding the world, and may well be revisionary of them. Its success is to be judged on a cost-benefit basis.

If Aquinas is rightly read as engaged in this kind of metaphysics then there is a compelling solution to any tension between (1), (2) and (3). Since (1) is a claim of perhaps interesting and creative but nonetheless far from epistemically basic metaphysics, it is prone to be revised or rejected in light of other commitments. The person who considers themselves bound to accept (2) and (3) as a matter of faith will have ample reason to discard (1).[5] Aquinas's account of human beings is on this outcome simply to be rejected by the Christian believer: it is a matter of speculative metaphysics, with all the epistemic humility that calls for, and its conflict with claims of faith is a cost that will, for the believer, outweigh whatever benefits may be claimed for Aquinas's metaphysical theory.

This approach depends on treating Aquinas as a revisionary metaphysician, in terms of Strawson's useful distinction between descriptive and revisionary metaphysics.[6] This is the natural way for someone working in contemporary metaphysics to engage with Aquinas, and some thinkers have defended a reading of Aquinas as a revisionary metaphysician even after explicit methodological reflection.[7] But there are good reasons to think that Ernst and Haldane are correct in classifying Aquinas as a *descriptive* metaphysician.[8] Following Aristotle, one of Strawson's paradigms of the descriptive metaphysician, Aquinas aims to categorise reality in very general terms which, although technical and arcane in feel to a present day reader, are supposed to reflect distinctions within the structure of our thought and talk about the world.[9] So once we have had the relevant expressions and their inter-relations explained to us, the claims of Aquinas's metaphysics ought, if that metaphysics is correct, to strike us as obvious. If Aquinas is right that there is a distinction between substantial and accidental forms, for example, and we cannot *see* that, the conclusion has to be that we do not understand what is meant by 'substantial form' or 'accidental form'.

That Aquinas is a descriptive metaphysician matters because it limits our room for manoeuvre in addressing any tension in his thought about the afterlife. For (1) is not intended as the tentative expression of a metaphysical hypothesis but as drawing our attention to truths which, once brought clearly to light, are undeniable. If we are to hold on to (1) at all, and there is a problem reconciling (1) with (2) and (3), then that problem is real indeed. The rest of the present section will lay out what (1) means for Aquinas, sketching as it does so a case that the understanding of human beings contained in it is deserving of assent.

Human beings are, according to Aquinas, certain kinds of living animals. This might seem beyond controversy and, if Aquinas is a successful descriptive metaphysician, there is a sense in which it should be. However, philosophical and religious accounts have called into question the intrinsic animality of human beings, rendering it less than obvious in some contexts, and there is a need therefore for Aquinas to answer these in order to sustain his favoured view of our nature. In *STh Ia, q 75, a4*, Aquinas discusses whether a human being[10] is to be identified with their soul. He answers in the negative, rejecting appeals to scriptural talk of the 'inner man' and arguments from the claim that the soul is a substance (to which we shall return below), and therefore a person. There is an implicit appeal in the formulation of the latter objection to Boethius's definition of a person as 'an individual substance of a rational nature'.[11] Aquinas's response brings out clearly his view of human beings as animals:

> Not every particular substance is a *hypostasis* or a person, but that which has the complete nature of its species. Hence a hand, or a foot, is not called a *hypostasis*, or a person; nor, likewise, is the soul alone so called, since it is a part of the human species.[12]

The nature of the human species is to be a rational animal; a disembodied soul, not being an animal of any kind, cannot be a human person.[13] Commenting on St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, Aquinas writes '*anima mea non est ego*' – my soul is not me.[14] No soul is identical with any human being. What, then, is the human soul?[15] Like Aristotle, Aquinas maintains that the soul is the substantial form of a living body. What does this involve?

Form is what provides an answer to either a 'what' or a 'how' question. Confronted with Lola the lurcher you might ask 'what is she?', to which I would reply 'a *dog*', thereby specifying the *kind of thing* Lola is (in contemporary terms, I am supplying a maximally specific sortal concept under which she falls). For Aquinas, I have thereby made apparent Lola's substantial form: to be Lola is to be this dog, and so we can talk of this case of being a dog, this canine life, as belonging to Lola. And this is Lola's substantial form.[16] You may go on to ask various 'how' questions about Lola: how is she coloured (to which the answer is 'white [with black spots]') or how is she feeling (to which the answer is 'hungry')? The answers to these questions characterise Lola, but do not explicate what it is to be the kind of thing she is.[17] In so characterising Lola, one makes apparent some amongst her accidental forms.

It is not misleading to think of Thomistic forms as, in contemporary terms, *tropes* – particular instances of properties – so long as the reductive account of substance present in some trope theories, aspiring to a one-category ontology by recourse to a bundle-theoretic account of substance, is discounted.[18] The substantial forms of material things inform matter, and accidental forms are instanced by these compounds of substantial form and matter, which is to say that it is in virtue of there being things of a particular kind, and these being particular kinds of ways, that potentialities are realised in the material world. Aquinas's metaphysics is correctly described as hylomorphic to the extent that he thinks that material substances, including ourselves, are composites of form and matter. He does not, however, hold that

there is a kind of stuff appropriately described as matter, which exists independently of any form being realised. Equally, the general metaphysical framework is not one in which it makes obvious sense to speak of a form of some material substance existing apart from its being instantiated. To be the substantial form of Lola is to be the life (the being-alive, which for Lola is just being-a-dog) of *this particular dog*. To be the hunger of Lola is to be the hunger of that same particular dog. To suggest that these characteristics of Lola's might exist in the absence of Lola has the feel of a category mistake. This problem will detain us further below.

The human soul, then, is the substantial form of a rational animal, that is of a particular kind of (living) body. We need, however, to disambiguate two senses in which the phrase 'form of the body', as used of the soul (and often so used by Aquinas), might be intended:

- The soul informs the body, which is matter. (Bod1)
- The soul belongs to the body, which is a composite of form (the soul) and matter. (Bod2)

The first reading has a dualistic feel, suggesting the view that human beings are composites of body and soul. However enduringly attractive the picture of human persons as bodies animated by metaphysically distinct souls or spirits might be[19], from a Thomistic perspective it is unacceptable. As Kenny forcefully puts the point,

> [B]ody and soul are not at all the same pair of items as matter and form. This is a matter on which Aquinas himself insists: the human soul is related to the human body not as form to matter, but as form to subject… A human being is not something that has a body; it is a body, a living body of a particular kind.[20]

Writing in response to this, Toner draws on the second chapter of *De Ente et Esentia*.[21] Here, Aquinas dismbiguates between two senses of the expression 'body', understood as designating under the genus of substance. The word can be used 'strictly to mean something having three dimensions, *and nothing else*'.[22] Only according to this strict usage (which is retained today in mathematics and physics - 'a body accelerates at $2ms^{-1}$') is reading (Bod1) above acceptable. But there is another sense of 'body', more naturally used when talking of living creatures.

When we speak in this sense, we speak in a non-excluding way, or without precision. We still use the term to mean something having three dimensions, but we leave it open whether the body is gifted with further perfections.[23] When we speak of body in this sense, then, we can call an animal a body, for the animal is a three-dimensional object. The fact that it is a *living* three-dimensional object is not *specified* when we call it a body, but neither is it *excluded*.[24]

We human beings are three-dimensional things of a certain sort – in particular, for Aquinas (and not unreasonably so), we are things that are alive in a particular way, such that our lives are those of rational creatures, capable of meaning and understanding. Hence we are bodies, the living bodies of rational creatures. (Note on this view that my future corpse is not my body in this sense; by the time my corpse exists, my living body will no longer exist). To say that I have a soul is to say that I am alive in a certain way; it is emphatically *not* to say that along with my kidneys, spleen, and so on, there is another part of me belonging to the same category as those organs. Think rather of my soul as my life considered in abstraction; since life involves those constituents of me that are genuine material parts, notably my organs, working together in a systematic way in order to sustain the life of the organism, it is not wrong to think of my soul as the particular equivalent of what has

been termed a structural universal.[25] From the perspective of modern metaphysics, this is something of a bonus, since, as Campbell has argued, tropes are particularly well-suited to performing the structuring role.[26]

So far, nothing has been said about the place of the soul in the intellectual life of human beings. At the most abstract level, that it has such a place is obvious; after all, what it is to have a rational soul is to be an animal capable of a certain kind of intellectual life. Beyond this, however, Aquinas holds that the intellect and the rational will[27], that is the 'power to have wants which only the intellect can frame'[28], are powers of the soul. By this, he means that, whilst (of course) thinking and willing are actions of the *person* – it is Socrates who considers the solution to an equation, and Socrates who wants to co-author his next book with Taylor Swift – these personal actions cannot be considered to be operations of a material part of the person, as kicking might be regarded as an operation of the foot[29], or chewing of the teeth.[30] In particular, contrary to a common contemporary instinct, Aquinas would not agree that it is the brain which thinks. Quite apart from this violence to linguistic use – it is simply wrong to say 'Aisha's brain is thinking about the party later' – the immaterial nature of thought renders its having a material organ impossible. For these reasons, we should say that, rather than the person as such acts mentally, these actions belong to her life considered as a whole and, in this sense, may be appropriated to the soul. It would be a mistake, however, to conclude that Aquinas holds the soul to be a part of the human animal responsible for thinking just as the foot is a part of the human animal responsible for kicking. As Geach puts it, having first noted that we cannot infer from the fact that someone does not think with a material part of themself that they think with an immaterial part,

> [Y]ou may say that a man thinks with his soul, if you mean positively that thinking is a vital activity, an activity of a living being, and negatively that thinking is not performed by any bodily organ.[31]

For Aquinas, to be humanly ensouled is just to be alive in a certain way, the kind of way which characterises us as the kind of rational animals that we human beings are. It ought to be clear that this view is a long way from any kind of substance dualism and, as we will now see, this seems to be in tension with Aquinas's conviction that the soul survives death.

II. THE POST-MORTEM SOUL

When I die I cease to exist.[32] It is therefore confused to talk about me surviving my death.[33] I am an animal, and for an animal to exist is for it to be alive; when it dies, an animal ceases to be alive. Thus, 'dead' functions as an *alians* adjective, like 'fools' in 'fools' gold': fools' gold is not a type of gold, similarly a dead person is not a person, rather it is the remains of what was once a person. If I come to live again, as Christian belief holds that I will at the resurrection of the dead, then the right thing to say is that I have a temporally gappy existence – there is will be a time when I cease to exist, and then I will come to exist again.[34] The following positions, which Aquinas accepts, either embody or follow from what in a contemporary idiom we could term his *animalism*:

> If *x* is a human person then *x* is a human animal. (A1)If *x* is a human person then *y* is identical with *x* if *x* is the same human animal as *y*. (A2)[35]

Aquinas also contends that my soul will survive my death. By (A2), it follows that my post-mortem soul is not me. This would seem to be the right result in light of the earlier quoted

passage from the commentary on 1 Corinthians. Before we go on to detail the difficulties with the suggestion that the human soul persists after death, however, we should note a current in analytic Aquinas scholarship which reads Thomas as identifying the post-mortem soul with the deceased person (and so as denying at least what many of us would take as following from (A2)). In an extremely useful paper on this area, Toner describes this position (which he goes on to attack) as *survivalism*.[36] Eleonore Stump is a prominent and sophisticated survivalist. She reads Thomas as holding that the soul is a constituent of the human person – one constituent before death, the only constituent after death. On this reading, I am constituted after death by my soul, and so survive. Since I survive, a human person – indeed a human animal – survives my death, because that is what I am.[37]

It is extremely doubtful that the notion of an immaterial animal is intelligible.[38] In any case, the textual evidence, carefully picked over by Toner, tells decisively against Aquinas's being a survivalist. Perhaps the most clear-cut passage is from the *Summa*:

> [I]t belongs to the truth of the death of man or animal that by death the subject simply ceases to be man or animal (*STh III, q. 50, a. 4*).

But if I will not survive my death, thinks Thomas, my soul will continue to exist. From what we have already seen of Aquinas's anthropology, this looks like a difficult position to sustain. The human soul is a form and, to state the fundamental difficulty in an Aristotelian idiom, forms are *said of* something. Their existence is not independent of the substances they qualify. To suggest that the form of some substance outlasts the substance itself is, for this version of descriptive metaphysics, to make oneself vulnerable to the charge of having committed (in the most literal sense) a category mistake, treating the form itself as though it were a substance, an independently existing, that is subsistent, entity.

Aquinas is of course aware of the tensions here, and argues that, in the particular case of the human soul[39], form is subsistent. This argument is presented at *STh Ia, q. 75, a.2*. In the *responseo*, he says,

> It must necessarily be allowed that the principle of intellectual operation which we call the soul, is a principle both incorporeal and subsistent. For it is clear that by means of the intellect man can have knowledge of all corporeal things. Now whatever knows certain things cannot have any of them in its own nature; because that which is in it naturally would impede the knowledge of anything else. Thus we observe that a sick man's tongue being vitiated by a feverish and bitter humor, is insensible to anything sweet, and everything seems bitter to it. Therefore, if the intellectual principle contained the nature of a body it would be unable to know all bodies. Now every body has its own determinate nature. Therefore it is impossible for the intellectual principle to be a body. It is likewise impossible for it to understand by means of a bodily organ; since the determinate nature of that organ would impede knowledge of all bodies; as when a certain determinate color is not only in the pupil of the eye, but also in a glass vase, the liquid in the vase seems to be of that same color.

He concludes,

> Therefore the intellectual principle which we call the mind or the intellect has an operation per se apart from the body. Now only that which subsists can have an operation "per se." For nothing can operate but what is actual (*entis in actu*): for which reason we do not say that heat imparts heat, but that what is hot gives heat. We must conclude, therefore, that the human soul, which is called the intellect or the mind, is something incorporeal and subsistent.

What are we to make of this? First we have an argument that the soul is immaterial ('incorporeal' in the quotation above) since its intellectual operations are immaterial. Following on from this is a swift argument that, since it has its own operations ('operations *per se*'), the soul must be subsistent. The first argument is likely to strike modern readers as sophistical. It is helpful, then, to bear in mind Herbert McCabe's comment regarding Aquinas's insistence on the immateriality of intellectual operations: 'The doctrine will be totally misunderstood if it is not recognized that it is intended to be *obvious*'.[40] I can, thinks Aquinas, have knowledge of any material thing. Now, according to Aquinas's metaphysics, to know something is for its nature to be contained in my intellect. Yet we must be careful about what we mean by a nature being 'contained within my intellect'. If the nature of a rhinecoros is contained in my intellect in the same way that it is contained within a rhinecoros, that is as informing matter, then my intellect is a rhinoceros and is wholly incapable of the kind of knowledge of any material object that was our initial premise. Hence there must be a relationship between intellect and forms which is distinct from the relationship of inherence between forms and matter.

So then we have a picture of the soul as immaterial on account of the manner in which it relates to forms. But it is not simply immateriality, but rather subsistence, which needs to be established in order for Thomas to show that the soul survives death. Here the argument is disarmingly swift: 'only that which subsists can have an operation "per se."' The soul, goes the implicit argument, has *per se* operations, therefore the soul subsists. But why accept that only subsisting entities may have operations *per se*, that is operations which may be properly attributed to those entities? The argument at *STh Ia, q. 75, a.2* is again rapid, only what has actual being (*entis in actu*) can operate. The contrast here is with those entities whose existence is merely derived from substances – it is not the heat of the coal, a form inhering in the coal, which performs the operation of heating but the coal itself. So to have actual being, in the present sense, is just to be subsistent. As a matter of descriptive metaphysics, this has something to be said for it, but now look at the shape of the argument:

- If *x* operates *per se* then *x* is subsistent. (P1)
- The soul operates *per se*. (P2)
- The soul is subsistent. (C)

This is an instance of *modus ponens*, and so valid. (P1) flows from the background descriptive metaphysics. It is with (P2) that problems arise. For as we've already seen, it is confused to say souls (or minds) reason, or will, or believe.[41] If you ask me, 'who was it again who thought that possible worlds were concrete?', it is not only infelicitous but wrong to answer 'David Lewis's soul.' It is persons who believe and think, not souls. For sure, Aquinas thinks that these are operations of the soul, but by this is to be understood that they are operations of the human animal as such, yet cannot be appropriated to any bodily organ (since, as we have seen, they are immaterial, involving the reception of forms other than those inhering in matter). What this does not deliver is that there are *per se* operations of the soul, operations of the soul as the principle agent, as distinct from operations which the person performs by means of the soul, or operations of the person considered as ensouled. It is this that is required for (P2), yet not only have we seen no reason to affirm it, it sits uncomfortably with the anti-platonism which has made Aquinas's account of the human person so attractive to recent philosophers.

It could be thought that there is not a great problem here. Aquinas himself allows that a person may believe by faith what he cannot establish by reason (*STh Ia, q.1, a. 1*). So if his

arguments to the immortality of the soul do not stand up to scrutiny, might we not allow that one can be broadly Thomistic whilst accepting some sort of post-mortem existence of the soul as a matter of faith, facing only then the less exacting task of defending this belief against charges of inconsistency?[42] Certainly this avenue is available, but it would be a mistake to simply set aside the worries we have encountered concerning operations of the soul. As we will see in the next section, similar issues arise in a religiously significant fashion.

III. THE DEAD AND DEVOTION

The souls of the dead feature in Catholic religious life.[43] They are prayed to and for, praised, commemorated liturgically and appealed to in popular piety. These basic facts about the cult of saints and practices around souls in purgatory ought to be in the foreground of our minds when thinking about Aquinas on the separated soul. For the question whether the soul can survive in separation from the body is not simply a metaphysical exercise, but goes to the heart of how the practices of praying for the dead and of venerating the saints might be justified within a wider Christian theological framework. The connection to practice is even more evident in Aquinas's explicit discussions of prayer to the saints and prayer for the dead. Yet the apparent demands on reality made by these practices exacerbate the already significant issues around the separated soul. Praying is ordinarily thought of as an action, whereas the journey of the soul through purgatory seems to require that it be capable of being contained within a narrative framework. Religious practices with respect to the departed, moreover, presuppose that the departed soul is in some kind of a communion with the living.[44] All of this makes the separated soul sound very much like a person in the modern sense. Does Aquinas's view not seem like a version of the dualism aversion which has directed so many recent philosophers to his work?

A good framework for thinking about Aquinas on the states and actions of separated souls, following Christina van Dyke's work, can be had by attending to his reading of the story of the rich man (Dives) and Lazarus from Luke 16:19-31 (which he takes to be a literal account of a genuine happening.) This, holds van Dyke (and not unreasonably), shows Aquinas to believe that the soul in separation from the body possesses a 'robust agency', being capable of standing in a variety of mental states, indeed 'the souls of the rich man, Abraham, and Lazarus can communicate and can even suffer in separation from matter.'[45] Once again, this suggests that the separated soul 'functions as a person in the modern sense of the term.'[46]

Now consider Lazarus's soul, supposing it to be separated. We will refer to Lazarus's soul using the proper name 'Lazarus'. In due course, we shall justify this usage; recall that, for Aquinas, Lazarus's soul is not Lazarus, so it is not obvious how a referring term for one can be correctly used to refer to the other. In verse 22 of the Lukan passage, Lazarus dies. After this, he is carried away by angels, seated with Abraham, and perceived by the departed rich man. The rich man asks that Lazarus be sent to comfort him in the flames. This request assumes that this is a genuine possibility, and so that Lazarus can interact with other departed souls. In reply, the rich man is told that Lazarus is being comforted. The rich man responds by asking that Lazarus be sent to warn the rich man's brothers of the torment which awaits them. What van Dyke says in support of holding the Lukan rich man to be a person (in the modern, if not the medieval, sense) applies equally to Lazarus,

> There are at least two main reasons, both of which can be seen clearly in the context of the story of the rich man and Lazarus. First… the rich man's soul appears to have intentional states, discursive thought, desires, and so on; as such, it meets virtually every contemporary standard for personhood. Second, the rich man's soul uses first personal reference in a way that cannot apply to the rich man himself.[47]

What van Dyke says here is readily transfered across to talk of the souls in purgatory and the souls of the saints in heaven.[48] A number of problems follow directly from consideration of the Lazarus story in light of Aquinas's philosophical anthropology.[49] First the *who* problem: given that Lazarus's soul is not Lazarus, *who* is it that is comforted in heaven, is noticed by Dives and is referred to in speech, using the name 'Lazarus'? Then there is the *that* problem: how can it so much be that a separated soul exists, and that it act and be the object of actions (in the case of the Lazarus story we would focus on the actions recounted in the gospel narrative; in what follows, I shall be concerned with the religiously significant actions of *praying* and *being transformed*)? Finally, there is what van Dyke terms the *Two Person Problem*: how come that there are two persons called 'Lazarus', Lazarus and Lazarus's soul? And given that there is clearly an intimate relationship between them, what is the nature of that relationship?

It seems to me that, if we are to be true to what is surely Aquinas's core conviction about human persons, that we are animals (and that, therefore, our distinctive way of being persons is an animal way), we ought to refuse to even let the Two Person Problem get going. There is no person after my death. The Thomist, who I take to want to preserve Christian orthodoxy and practice[50], needs to account in some way for prayer for and to the dead. But she need not do so in a way which understands the post-mortem soul as a person.

Two things need to be supplied by an adequate Thomist account of the separated soul: an answer to the who problem which explains the use of referring terms for the deceased person to refer to their separated soul, and an answer to the that problem which explains, in particular, the religiously important talk of praying to and for separated souls. In the next section, I will sketch a form each answer could take, in both cases drawing on the possibility of using language analogically. First, something should be said about van Dyke's own preferred resolutions of the tensions in Aquinas's thought about the human soul.

Citing Brown and Ross as philosophers who have already advanced the view[51], van Dyke thinks that belief in an immediate resurrection is the most adequate way of 'salvaging a Thomistic account of human nature' in a way compatible with belief in the resurrection of the body[52]:

> On this revised account, at the very moment a human being ceases to exist at death and her soul separates from her body, God reunites it with matter at the final judgement. A Thomistic account of an "immediate resurrection" would solve the Two-Person Problem decisively, since the soul would never exist apart from matter (and, therefore, would never cognize or have other intentional states in separation from matter). The soul would persist through death and resurrection, but it would never exist *as separated*.

I am not sure that talk of the *final* judgement here is apt. What seems to be envisaged is a form of what Christian theology has usually called a *particular* judgement, simply doing away with a genuinely *final* reckoning. This seems to upset the corporate, historical, and political nature of Christian eschatology more than is required to set Thomas's account of the separated soul right.[53] A properly philosophical worry about van Dyke's account is as follows. At some point in the future, call it t_1, I will die. As Thomas would put it, substantial

change will occur. What was once my body will now be my corpse; there will be a collection of matter that was once me. But simultaneously at t_1, my resurrection body appears. There is now some different matter, informed by my soul which is my body. Now, in Aquinas's account, I am my body (in the relevant sense of 'body'). So at $t_1 + \epsilon$, there is something that both was me until a moment ago, and something that now is me. How can this be? How can numerically the same body persist through complete and instantaneous replacement of all its matter? We are not dealing here with the familiar kind of phenomenon whereby I constantly lose skin cells yet remain the same. We are talking about the simultaneous replacement of all of my material parts. What kind of criterion of identity over time, compatible with animalism, could allow this? I am aware of none.

There is a pull towards thinking otherwise. '*a* is the same body as *b* because *a* has the same soul as *b*'. However, this can only serve as an informative instance of a criterion of identity if something like a Cartesian understanding of the soul is at work in the background. On a Thomist understanding, to say of humans *a* and *b* that they have the same soul is just to say that *a* is *b*, for the soul is the substantial form of a human being, and it is as humans that *a* and *b* are individuated. The proposal, then, is really that $a = b$ because $a = b$. At best, we have a restatement of the problem, not a solution.

Maybe these considerations are not decisive. They seem sufficient to me, however, to seek an alternative account.[54]

IV. TOWARDS AN ACCOUNT[55]

Recall how we began. We saw that Aquinas's descriptive metaphysics of the human being identifies us with animals; our souls are our substantial forms (1). Yet our souls survive death (2). And these souls are understood as acting (3) and, for that matter, being transformed in religiously significant ways. The problem is that (1), which has it that to have a human soul is just to be alive in a certain kind of way, namely one capable of reason, makes it very difficult to see how (2) and (3) could be the case. In what remains of this paper, I will sketch a possible way towards resolution.

When I die I cease to exist. There is no *who* problem, since there is no person who survives my death and is appropriately referred to using my name. To the question of how the use of referring expressions after the apparent referrent's death ought to be understood ('Saint Anne, pray for us', 'Eternal rest grant to her'), we will return. The more immediate problem, underlying the apparent incompatibility of (1) with (2), and to some extent with (3), is the *that* problem. I do not think there is a way to give an account of the post-mortem soul which affirms (1) yet preserves van Dyke's 'robust personhood'. So, to that extent, we are going to have to say something more modest than Thomas. Nor do I know of a way to argue from non-revelation-based premises to the conclusion that the soul survives death (which is not, of course, to say that there is no such way, but rather that, if there is, I don't know it). I want to sketch out a way of making sense of the post-mortem soul. Like all those sketches which are preparatory for something more precise, it will need filling in. Still, I think it at least reassures us that we can make some kind of sense of ongoing soul-talk concerning the deceased. Once this has been done, I will return to the question of the religiously significant appeals to the souls of the dead, namely with respect to purgatory and the intercession of the saints.

Articulating a present-day Thomistic account of the afterlife

To have a rational soul is to be alive in a particular kind of way, characteristic of those animals who are capable of meaning. Those of us who are ensouled in this way can communicate with, and understand, ourselves and others. Having a human soul is a matter of inhabiting a world of meaning, Sellars' *space of reasons*.[56] In particular, our lives can be understood narratively.[57] Equipped as we are with linguistic capacity and the ability to reflect upon ourselves, our lives can be understood as stories.[58] In fact, there is a sense of the word 'life' in which my life is just my story; think of Butler's *Lives of the Saints*. Now there is an uncontroversial sense in which our story survives us. I can tell you Kurt Cobain's life story, in spite of his being dead. But because he is dead, the way in which that story may be told is constrained. There is a clear sense in which it is *finished*. Cobain will perform no more actions and, however much he might be renarrated, the extent of his contribution to music reassessed, the ripple of his effects through history traced, this will not be because of anything new *from him*. Similarly, neither I, nor anyone else walking the earth, can experience Cobain's story as he once did, *from the inside*. His story is not my story, nor is it the story of any of us.

I want to suggest that the post-mortem soul can be understood as the persisting existence of a life in this narrative, 'from the inside' sense, sustained by God, and not depending on remembrance or retelling by human beings. The dead are no longer human beings, although they will be again at the resurrection, yet the meaning of their bodily existence (their story, their life, their *anima*) remains. We, the living, thinking about this from our side of death cannot, of course, say what it would be for our lives to persist in this way, still less what it would be *like*. Nor is this the aim of a philosophical sketch of the afterlife. That is much more modest: merely to suggest that there is a coherent way of thinking about the post-mortem soul, such as to defeat the suggestion that belief in the soul's survival must be wrong, and to sustain the tenability of something like (1), (2), and (3). Let's see how this last task might be carried out on the basis of understanding the soul as a life story.

The key stage, if the result is to be recognisably in continuity with Thomas, is rendering (1) in soul-as-story terms. This, it seems to me, whilst not continuous with the explicit language of rational ensoulment is highly congruous with the motivating thoughts behind that language. It is characteristic of human animals that we are rational, susceptible to reasons and capable of interpreting the world. It can intelligibly be asked of a human animal *why* she did this or *how* she understood that.[59] For this reason, we can give an account of our lives as a whole in terms of our motivating reasons (reasons here are not dryily intellectual: emotions are included within the remit of reasons, for instance) and significant projects.[60] Our lives can be understood as stories – not in a sense of 'story' which implies falsehood, although we do of course conceal the truth about ourselves from ourselves much of the time, just as others misrepresent us. One reason why a personal eschatology is desirable is the hope that there will one day be neither deceit nor the need for deceit: 'I will know even as I am known' as St Paul puts it, whilst Rowan Williams quotes approvingly the spiritual 'Nobody Knows Who I Am 'Til the Judgement Morning.'[61] Still, in the meantime, to be a rational human creature is to be part of the material world organised in a way susceptible of meaning, and for this to be the case is for that part of the material world to be susecptible of being the subject of a story in which it is the primary actor.[62] This, the contribution to the meaning of a human animal, looked at diachronically, I call the *life story* of that animal and identify it with the *soul*.

The life of a dead person is, however, ended. There is a clear sense in which no more contributions may be made to their story.[63] Their story, or versions of and approximations to their story, can be told – witness the case of Kurt Cobain above. Is there a way of affirming (2), given my exegesis of (1), which yields the survival of the soul in a more interesting sense than the secular truism that the departed live on in our hearts and minds (we can, after all, tell their stories[64])? Yes, because whilst at my death I will cease to exist, I will not cease to exist forever. I will rise again and, at that point, the living animal that I am will live again. Yet *because* I will live again, because the story of my life is, so to speak, only temporarily homeless, that story has an ongoing significance. It persists, is kept open, by God as the story of a once and future person. (Compare here Aquinas's view that the numerical distinctness of the post-mortem soul is secured by its potential to be re-united with matter at the resurrection).

How can a story be kept *open* if, as I claimed above 'no more contributions may be made to a [dead person's] story'? Apart from the sense of openness in which that story will one day become the story of a currently living human person, at the resurrection, there is another sense of openness implicit in (3).

Post-mortem human souls are the subjects of actions. In at least some cases (for example the prayers of the souls of the saints), these actions can be attributed to the deceased human being.

When someone dies, the actions that are constitutive of their life story are finished. But the significance of those actions, and in particular how they relate to the life stories of others, remains to an extent open.[65] We may view purgatory in light of this as akin to a process of editing, where the individual's life story, consistently with the actions which have formed that story during her life, is brought into harmony with the story of the whole creation, redeemed in Christ. Possibilities for reconciliation, implicit in the story but not brought out in the draft version, are realised. Analogously to the action of a good editor God, working with the prayers of the Church makes our life stories more (rather than less) like what we, at our best, would have intended to write. Meanwhile, the lives of the departed may be held before God, asking that he look on them, in the light of the saving work of Christ, and that they may be regarded with favour on our behalf. This, whilst lacking van Dyke's 'robust agency', provides a way of understanding the intercession of the saints.

We speak of the souls in purgatory and the souls of the saints using names which refer to the human person to whom those souls once belonged.[66] This is best understood as a form of analogy, in particular *synecdoche*, an apparent reference to a whole as a way of making reference to a proper part. When I say, 'St Anne is the patron of grandmothers', I cannot be refering to St Anne since, at the time of the relevant patronage, St Anne does not exist.[67] She is dead and awaits the resurrection. However, the soul of St Anne, her life story according to the account I have been sketching, persists. And it is to this constituent of St Anne that we typically refer when we speak of St Anne as part of the communion of saints.

V. IN CONCLUSION

It is to Aquinas's credit that there are tensions between his philosophical anthropology and his account of the post-mortem soul. In insisting on what is too easily forgotten or downplayed in religious understandings of the human person—that we are animals, part of the material world—he inevitably invites the question as to how the soul can be said to survive death. He is right to make this insistence, however, and, within a Christian perspective, the

tension is a pregnant one, corresponding to the scriptural insight that our final destiny is not as disembodied souls but as resurrected animals. The souls of the departed are not what they are destined to be, nor do they occupy their natural place in reality, as animated living animals. It is little surprise, then, that attempts to think about them are often tough and unsatisfying. The inadequacy of thought reflects the incompleteness of reality. Tension is one thing, though; incoherence another. An incoherent account is not a candidate for truth. In sketching a way in which (1), (2), and (3) can be jointly maintained, I have pointed to the present-day possibility of signing up to a Thomistic account of the post-mortem soul, even if that account is not Thomas's own. That is enough to defeat the claim that the tension in Aquinas is actually inconsistency. There is certainly a rich mine of ideas in his writings, and the topic is perpetually urgent.

Notes

1 See, for example, Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind* (London: Routledge, 1993).

2 *STh Ia, q.75, a. 6*. The survival of the soul post-mortem and prior to the general resurrection was to be affirmed by Benedict XII in his 1334 bull *Benedictus Deus*, confirming as Catholic orthodoxy the position taken by Thomas.

3 The presentation of the issue here is in terms of Aquinas's thought, but of course similar issues arise for contemporary theology. See, for instance, Appendix One of Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1988).

4 The classical Quinean reference is 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism'. For a book length defence of abductive method in philosophy, see Timothy Williamson, *The Philosophy of Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997).

5 Aquinas himself thinks that (2) and (3) may be known by natural reason unaided by faith (although he also thinks that things knowable by reason *may* be assented to as a matter of faith: *STh Ia, q1, a1, ad. 2*). We shall assess his arguments to this end below, but note that it will in no way help him if it is right to read him as a revisionary metaphysician. He is just in possession of a metaphysical theory potentially beset with internal tensions and requiring revision.

6 P.F. Strawson, *Individuals* (London: Routledge, 1959).

7 Jeffrey E. Brower, *Aquinas's Ontology of the Material World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

8 See Cornelius Ernst, OP, *Multiple Echo: Explorations in Theology* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1979), 10; and John Haldane, *Reasonable Faith* (London: Routledge, 2010), 19-21.

9 *Objection:* 'Our… talk about the world'. Who are we? Why should we assume that the structure of a twenty-first century conceptual scheme is at all relevantly similar to Aquinas's? *Reply*: Note that Strawson takes descriptive metaphysics to concern very general features of reality – the distinction between objects, say, and properties or events. It seems far from clear that our conceptual schemes could differ radically with respect to this kind of thing with those of our ancestors compatibly with us still being able to engage readily with their texts, etc.

10 Latin: *homo*.

11 *Naturae rationalis individua substantia*.

12 See also *STh Ia, q29, a1, ad. 5*.

13 In this discussion, I talk about human *persons* when Aquinas does, but use the language of human *beings* otherwise, to avoid suggesting post-Cartesian notions of personhood. Aquinas thinks that *x* is a human being if *x* is a human person. On this, see Christina van Dyke, 'The End of Human Life as We Know It: Thomas Aquinas on Bodies, Persons, and Death', *The Modern Schoolman* 89 (2012): 243-57.

14 *I ad Corinthios, XV, 1, 11*.

15 There is an assumption here, of course, that there *are* human souls. One option in the light of the rejection of the identification of souls with human beings is simply to adopt eliminativism about the human soul. This would have been unthinkable for Aquinas, whose liturgical and everyday life was saturated with talk of *animae*. If, moreover, he succeeds in laying out a descriptive metaphysics of the human soul then eliminativism ought to be unthinkable for us too. That it is not might be attributable to the pervasive Cartesian assumption that if the soul is anything at all it must be an incorporeal personal substance.

16 Indeed, for Aquinas, it is Lola's *soul*, even though Lola – being a non-human animal – does not have a *rational* soul (*STh Ia, q75, a3*). The way in which Lola is alive is not one which involves making rational sense of the world in the way human lives typically do.

17 The distinction here is not that between necessary and contingent properties of Lola's. It is, let us suppose (on the basis of a Kripkean essentialism), a necessary property of Lola's that she is female. Yet the femaleness of Lola is an accidental form, since being female is no part of what it is to be a dog (Lola's friend Archie is male).

18 Anna-Sofia Maurin, *If* (Tropes, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2002).The one-category view of tropes is a case of the kind of revisionary metaphysics that I am denying Aquinas engages in. Think of tropes as, instead of quasi-scientific postulates, the referents of noun-phrases, such as 'the thickness of this rope' and 'the foolishness of Donald Trump', and you have a handle on the notion of trope comparable to Thomistic form.

19 The classic description remains Ryle's, although attention to Aquinas calls into question Ryle's view that religious belief is an important factor in the Cartesian myth getting hold. Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963): 24. Recall that Descartes had to defend his philosophy of mind against the suspicion of unorthodoxy.

20 Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind*, 28.

21 Patrick Toner, 'St Thomas Aquinas on Death and the Separated Soul', *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 91 (2010): 587-99.

22 Toner, 'St Thomas Aquinas on Death', 590.

23 Aquinas, *De Ente et Essentia*, Ch. 2: 'This term "body" can also be understood as signifying a certain thing that has a form such that three dimensions can be designated in it, whatever form this may be… understood this way body will be the genus of animal'.

24 Toner, 'St Thomas Aquinas on Death', 590-1.

25 David Lewis, 'Against Structural Universals', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 64 (1986): 25-46.

26 Keith Campbell, *Abstract Particulars* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

27 *voluntas*

28 Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind*, 59.

29 Of course, for Aquinas, it is an operation of the foot, as part of a living (that is, ensouled) body, so he will describe the power to kick as a power of the *composite*, that is, of the matter-form composite which is a living body (*STh Ia, q1, a5*).

30 '…some operations of the soul are performed without a corporeal organ, as understanding (*intellectus*) and will. Hence the powers of these operations are in the soul as their subject' (*STh Ia, q1, a5, co.*).

31 P.T. Geach, 'What do we think with?' in *God and the Soul*, South Bend: St Augustine's Press, 1969.p. 38.

32 Although my concerns here are metaphysical, it seems to me that there is an urgent human imperative to take death seriously in a way that a survival account fails to (hence, in part, the epigraph). The dead are no more; there is a real loss. Thus, grief (albeit not St Paul's 'grief of those who have no hope'). Thus, raging against the dying of the light. Thus, the comprehensibility of John's Jesus weeping for Lazarus.

33 This point is made correctly by D.Z. Phillips*, Death and Immortality* (London: Macmillan, 1970):. Ch. 1.

34 That some things at least have temporally gappy existences seems unproblematic. Suppose that Theseus, instead of going about his notorious ship restoration programme, simply dismantled his old ship and put the parts in a warehouse for a decade. Then he reassembled the ship. One and the same ship ceased to exist and then was restored. The temptation to think that, during the fallow decade, the ship was in the warehouse arises from failure to take seriously the nature of *ship* as a functional kind.

35 Whatever other differences there might be between Aquinas and a contemporary animalist such as Olson, they agree on these fundamentals. Eric Olson, *The Human Animal: Personal Identity Without Psychology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

36 Toner, 'St Thomas Aquinas on Death', 587.

37 Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2003): 53.

38 Toner writes, 'I myself find [this] very difficult to make any sense of. But that's a very weak argument against it' ('St Thomas Aquinas on Death', 589). I think he underestimates the force of his incomprehension. Discussion of the afterlife is an area in which the danger of using words beyond their capacity for sense-making is ever-present, so we ought to be attentive to our intuitions regarding sense. In any case, if Thomas is engaged in descriptive metaphysics, attribution to him of a position that looks like the fruit of metaphysical speculation way beyond the limits of our ordinary conceptual framework looks problematic.

39 Particular, at least with respect to the empirical world. Compare though Aquinas's discussion of angels at *STh Ia, q.50, a. 2*.

40 Herbert McCabe, OP, 'The Immortality of the Soul', in *Aquinas: Modern Studies in Philosophy*, ed. Anthony Kenny (London: Palgrave, 1969): 304.

41 Appeal to post mortem souls will not, of course, help at this point, since the immortality of the soul is part of what we are supposed to be establishing.

42 Ecclesiastical definition subsequent to Aquinas has insisted that the immortality of the soul can be known by reason alone. One can, of course, believe this without oneself being in possession of an argument for the immortality of the soul – possibility does not entail actuality.

43 Reflection on the recent literature on *continuing bonds* might be helpful in appreciating the importance of this. See Dennis Klass and Edith Maria Steffen (eds.), *Continuing Bonds in Bereavement* (London: Routledge, 2017).

44 Hence the Apostles' Creed: 'I believe in… the communion of saints'.

45 Christina van Dyke, 'I See Dead People: Disembodied Souls and Aquinas's Two-Person Problem', *Oxford Studies in Medieval Philosophy* 2 (2014): 28.

46 van Dyke, 'I See Dead People', 34.

47 van Dyke, 'I See Dead People', 34.

48 Little noticed, but important in the context of Catholic practice, is that it follows from the doctrine of the Assumption that these difficulties do not occur in the case of Mary.

49 Of course, with the benefit of modern biblical criticism, we are going to want to say that it is to misunderstand the story, both in terms of the evangelist's intention in placing it in the gospel, and in terms of its pre-gospel origins, to read it as communicating a metaphysics of death. That is right but misses the point. As we have seen, Aquinas needs to believe in post-mortem souls existing and being in some sense active and malleable. The Lazarus story serves as a useful foil for making this point, but is not the sole justification for this belief.

50 Lots could be said about what counts as a Thomist methodology in philosophy. As well as Christian orthodoxy (which, of course develops, so being properly Thomist could well involve disagreeing with Thomas on doctrine – the Immaculate Conception provides an obvious example), I would want to argue that fidelity to the main contours of Thomas's account of reality—his animalist account of human persons, his descriptive metaphysics, his classically apophatic philosophical theology, and so forth—counts for far more than the sheer number of passages in the *Summa* that one can quote approvingly.

51 Montague Brown, 'Aquinas on the Resurrection of the Body', *Thomist* 56 (1992): 165–207. James Ross, 'Together with the Body I Love', *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 75 (2001): 1–18.

52 van Dyke, 'I See Dead People', 42-3.

53 It is worth observing that van Dyke seems to be close to as eminent a theologian as Karl Rahner. See his 'The Interpretation of the Dogma of the Assumption' in *Theological Investigations: Volume One – God, Christ, Mary and Grace* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1961), trans. with an introduction by Cornelius Ernst, OP. But then Rahner himself has not escaped criticism on the basis of adopting an individualistic, apolitical, approach to theological anthropology. See Fergus Kerr, OP, *Theology After Wittgenstein* (London: SPCK, 1997) (second edition), 10-14.

54 Again, properly theological considerations cause me to worry about van Dyke's account. Not only does the corporate aspect of resurrection fall out of the picture, but it is difficult to do justice to the Pauline language of bodies being changed at the resurrection. Only something existent can be changed, coming into existence is not a kind of change. That it is numerically the same body which both shares the fullness of life in the Kingdom of God and walked the earth might be taken to be implicit in the biblical accounts of the empty tomb and in the ecclesial doctrine of the Assumption.

55 The 'towards' in this section title should be taken seriously. I am attempting here to sketch a form of account of the post-mortem soul, recognisably in the lineage of Aquinas, yet not subject to the difficulties we have identified for Thomas's own account. There are a number of questions which could be directed at my account, not least—as a referee has asked—whether the idea of the persistence of narrative represents a sufficiently 'personal' form of post-mortem existence to do justice to the beliefs implicit in Catholic practice. Myself, I think it does, and it also takes seriously what also needs to be acknowledged: the magnitude of the genuine loss involved in death. However, these points require further discussion, and the present paper should be understood as an invitation to that discussion.

56 Wilfrid Sellars, *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956).

57 I do not know what to say in response to Galen Strawson's suggestion that philosophical emphasis placed on narrativity is misplaced ('Against Narrativity', *Ratio* 17 [2004]: 428–52). I think that those who adopt this view are missing something important about being human, but I suspect that this is something that can only be shown in practice, not established abstractly by philosophical argument.

58 I am influenced here by Herbert McCabe, 'Why God?', in *Faith Within Reason* (London: Continuum, 2007): 41–7.

59 Of course, we can ask of Lola (a dog) why she did something. It is just that the range of intelligible answers to that question is limited. 'Because she is engaged in a series of experiments testing the second law of thermodynamics' is not a good, non-jokey, answer to the question 'Why did Lola upset her water bowl for the tenth time today?'

60 This first approximation might make it seem as though rendering our existence significant is entirely our own individual doing. This is never right. I cannot even occupy the space of reasons without possessing a public language. That one's life has significance *within a communal context* seems to me an important insight for adapting the kind of approach to para-eschatology sketched here to the case of infants and people with severe cognitive impairment.

61 1 Corinthians 13:12 (NRSV). Rowan Williams, 'Nobody Knows who I am til the Judgement Morning', in *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000): 276–89.

62 Of course, there is another way of putting matters in which *God* is the primary actor, even in my own life story, as holding me and my actions in being over and against nothing, but the use of 'actor' here is analogous.

63 The liturgical affirmation, 'for your faithful people… life is changed not ended' (Preface of Christian Death I) can, I think, only be understood as a denial of the earlier mentioned doctrine of John XXII.

64 Actually, arguably we *cannot* faithfully tell their stories. We so easily censor those stories, either canonising or rubbishing the dead according to our own needs. One motive (if not a reason, strictly speaking) for accepting something like the account here is that it holds open the possibility of a truthful telling of our stories

65 Not, according to Catholic belief, *absolutely* open – it is at least possible that an individual make a decisive turning away from salvation during their life (that is, that they die in unrepentant mortal sin). Whilst no Catholic is bound to believe that anyone has ever done this, that it is an existential possibility points to the importance of earthly life as formative of the person in relation to God and to others.

66 Again, in Catholic understanding, Mary is an exception here.

67 I can, I think, refer to non-existent entities (see here G.E.M. Anscombe, 'Existence and Truth'*, Language, Meaning, and Truth: Writings by G.E.M. Anscombe*, ed. Mary Geach and Luke Gormally, eds.), Exeter: Imprint, 2015, pp. 283-93. But that cannot be what I'm doing here since no non-existent entity can stand in the presence of God and plead.